



Board Member Information Pack

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Info Online

Scan the QR code below to hear direct from the Chair, watch [Our Story: The History of Extern](#), and access a range of supporting documents on how we're configured and our strategy.



Become a Board Member with Extern

Lead Change That Lasts

Dear Candidate

Stepping into the role of Board Member at Extern isn't just about governance — it's about shaping the future of one of the most impactful charities across the island of Ireland. This is an opportunity for individuals who want their experience, voice, and vision to create real, lasting change for people and communities who need it most.

Extern is at a pivotal moment in its history and is continuing to expand and develop its service provision. Every day, our teams walk alongside individuals facing some of life's toughest challenges. As an organisation there are key challenges that we face over the coming years including funding pressures and both workforce and financial sustainability. As a Board Member, you will guide and support the organisation at the highest level, ensuring we remain courageous, compassionate, and ambitious in everything we do.

What this role offers

- A platform to influence meaningful social impact – you will help steer strategy, strengthen governance, and champion innovation across a charity that reaches thousands of lives each year.
- A partnership with a dedicated Board Chair, Board and committed Chief Executive, Strategic Leadership and Operational Team – you will shape the organisation's future direction, culture, and long-term sustainability.

- A chance to represent Extern on a wider stage – you will build relationships with key stakeholders, funders and donors, inspire confidence and amplify the voice of those we support.
- A purposeful leadership experience, this voluntary role offers the rare opportunity to give back at scale — you will use your skills, networks and insight to help drive positive change.

Based on a recent skillset audit of our current Board Members, this role is ideal for someone who:

- Has experience of or a background in one or more of the following areas:
 - Finance/Treasury
 - IT/Management
 - Fundraising
 - HR
 - CyberSecurity
 - CSR
 - Legal
- Believes in the power of second chances and human potential.
- Brings strategic clarity and calm, confident leadership.
- Values collaboration, integrity, and social justice.
- Wants to leave a legacy that genuinely matters.

We are working with our selection partners Engage on this appointment, and they will be delighted to field any questions you might have about the role in the first instance.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Brendan Johnston
Chairperson 

Who we are

Extern Group was founded in Belfast in 1978, when a small collective of practitioners working with marginalised and disadvantaged adults sought to create more structured, compassionate support than the limited options then available. Their early work quickly materialised in the opening of the Ormeau Centre, one of Belfast's first dedicated services for people experiencing homelessness and complex needs. The Centre became a cornerstone of Extern's ethos: meeting people "as they are" and providing practical, person-centred help.

Through the late 1970s and 1980s Extern expanded its remit from homelessness and early criminal-justice interventions to broader social care and community-based alternatives to custody, reflecting Northern Ireland's emerging understanding of trauma, exclusion and rehabilitation. By the organisation's 40th anniversary, it had become a leading social justice charity operating across the island of Ireland, supporting thousands of people every year. Its growth was underpinned by professionalisation, volunteer leadership, and a culture of innovation, particularly in addressing upstream causes of offending, homelessness, addiction and mental-health crises.



[Online? Click here for:
Extern History Video](#)

Today, Extern has grown to a turnover of £23m with over 500 staff. It delivers over 80 projects across more than 40 locations, offering services ranging from youth justice and family support to addictions recovery, mental-health interventions, homelessness services, refugee support and community resilience programmes. It now supports more than 22,000 people annually, maintains an island-wide structure through Extern Northern Ireland and Extern Ireland, and continues to champion social justice, trauma-informed practice and the belief that everyone deserves another chance.

We are commissioned by public sector bodies and government departments from across the island of Ireland.

As a community and voluntary organisation, our primary purpose is to provide services to support adults, young people, families and children who are:

- Facing family breakdown
- Dealing with substance misuse
- Impacted by suicide and poor mental health
- Living with past offences or in the criminal justice system
- Experiencing homelessness
- Children looked after
- Refugees' support
- Engaged in alternative education and employability supports
- Members of the Traveller Community
- Living with neurodiversity

What we do

Detailed below are some of the services we offer

Education and Employment

Extern's education and employment services focus on supporting individuals who are economically inactive or not in education, training, or employment. Through initiatives like the Moving Forward, Moving On project, they provide mentoring and employability skills to young people, including those from alternative education backgrounds. Referrals come from statutory agencies, social services, and self-referrals. The aim is to build confidence, overcome barriers, and help participants progress into education, training, or sustainable employment opportunities.



[Online? Click here for: Alternative Education Video](#)

Refugee Support

Extern's Refugee Support services assist refugees and displaced individuals through resettlement and



floating support programmes. They provide housing guidance, practical help, and integration support, including for initiatives like Homes for Ukraine. Services aim to promote stability, independence, and community inclusion, working closely with statutory agencies and local

partners to meet diverse needs effectively.

Justice Services

Extern's Justice Services support individuals involved in the criminal justice system through probation-approved accommodation, floating support, and prisoner reintegration programmes. These services aim to reduce reoffending, promote stability, and assist with housing and practical needs. By working closely with probation and statutory agencies, Extern helps clients transition successfully back into the community. In the Republic of Ireland, Extern's Youth Justice Services support young people in conflict with the law through Bail Supervision, Youth Diversion Projects, and the Janus Justice programme. These initiatives aim to reduce offending, promote rehabilitation, and encourage positive community engagement.



[Online? Click here for: Youth Diversion Services film](#)

Mentoring for Children Looked After

Extern's Mentoring for Children Looked After service provides one-to-one support for young people in care, helping them build confidence, resilience, and life skills. Through trusted relationships with mentors, the programme promotes emotional wellbeing, social inclusion, and positive engagement in education and community activities.



Addiction Support

Extern's Addiction Support services provide person-centred help for individuals affected by drug and alcohol misuse. Programmes include harm reduction initiatives, low-threshold services, and housing support for those with complex needs. They offer needle and syringe exchange, education and prevention through BDACT Connections, and specialist projects like Drugs Accommodation Support. These services aim to reduce harm, promote recovery, and improve wellbeing, working collaboratively with communities and statutory agencies across Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.



[Online? Click here for:
Harm Reduction Hub Video](#)

Mental Health Support

Extern's Mental Health Support services provide crisis intervention, suicide prevention, and family support to individuals facing mental health challenges. Programmes include the Belfast SAFE Group, Communities in Transition, Freedom Project, and Reach Out, all designed to promote resilience, recovery, and wellbeing. These services work collaboratively with communities and agencies to deliver compassionate, person-centred care across Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

Young People and Families

Extern's Young People and Families services provide tailored support to vulnerable children, young people, and families through a range of programmes. These include mentoring, fostering, short stay breaks, and youth engagement initiatives such as Linx, Janus, and Strength 2 Strength. Creative arts projects and residential services at Kinnahalla and Roscor Youth Villages promote resilience, wellbeing, and positive development, helping individuals overcome challenges and build brighter futures.



Homelessness and Housing Services

Extern's Homelessness and Housing Services provide safe, supported accommodation and practical help for individuals who are homeless or at risk. Services include Extern Homes for long-term tenancies, the MUST Hostel for single adults, and the Ormeau Centre. Specialist projects such as SAIL offer floating support to promote independent living. Multi-disciplinary teams deliver tailored assistance, addressing complex needs and helping people move towards stability and independence. These services work collaboratively with statutory agencies and community partners across Northern Ireland.



[Online? Click here for:
Extern Homes Video](#)

Disability Projects

Extern's Disability Projects provide outreach and respite support for individuals with disabilities and their families. Services aim to promote independence, inclusion, and wellbeing through tailored assistance, practical help, and community engagement across the Republic of Ireland.

Problem Gambling

Extern's Problem Gambling services provide confidential support for individuals affected by gambling harm. Programmes include counselling, practical assistance, and

specialist initiatives like the Women's Gambling Support Network, aiming to reduce harm, promote recovery, and improve wellbeing across Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

Travellers

Extern's Travellers services deliver the Traveller Primary Health & Social Care Project, providing culturally sensitive support to improve health, wellbeing, and access to essential services. The programme promotes inclusion, advocacy, and equality for Traveller communities, addressing health disparities and empowering individuals through tailored assistance and community engagement across Ireland.



Our Strategy

Our Five Year Strategy Vision 2030

If you're reading online, click [here](#) to access the online version of our Five Year Strategy.

Our Vision

A society where everyone who faces crisis, discrimination, difficult personal challenges or societal inequalities, receives understanding and support towards a better tomorrow. Extern will play its part and will work to achieve this as a Trauma Informed Organisation.

Our Mission

To deliver quality trauma informed services that tackle the biggest problems and challenges people face, and to support them to be safe, flourish, feel valued and hopeful. We will ensure that their voice is heard, always.

Our Values

Our values are an expression of what we believe in and they are the five main principles of trauma informed practice. These values guide everything we do and how we interact with everyone..

Safety

We will focus on ensuring the physical, mental and emotional safety of both our staff and the people we serve.

Choice

We believe in the importance of choice. This means giving people options and respecting their rights and responsibilities.

Collaboration

We will work together, openly and honestly. Every interaction will be respectful and inclusive so that we deliver our services effectively. By advocating with others, we will influence policies that create positive changes in society.

Trustworthiness

We will make sure our guidelines, policies and behaviours promote honesty and respect amongst our staff, service users and funding partners.

Empowerment

We will help people reach their personal goals by offering guidance and support. When people feel empowered, they grow in confidence and enjoy a more fulfilled life with a strengthened sense of purpose and worth.

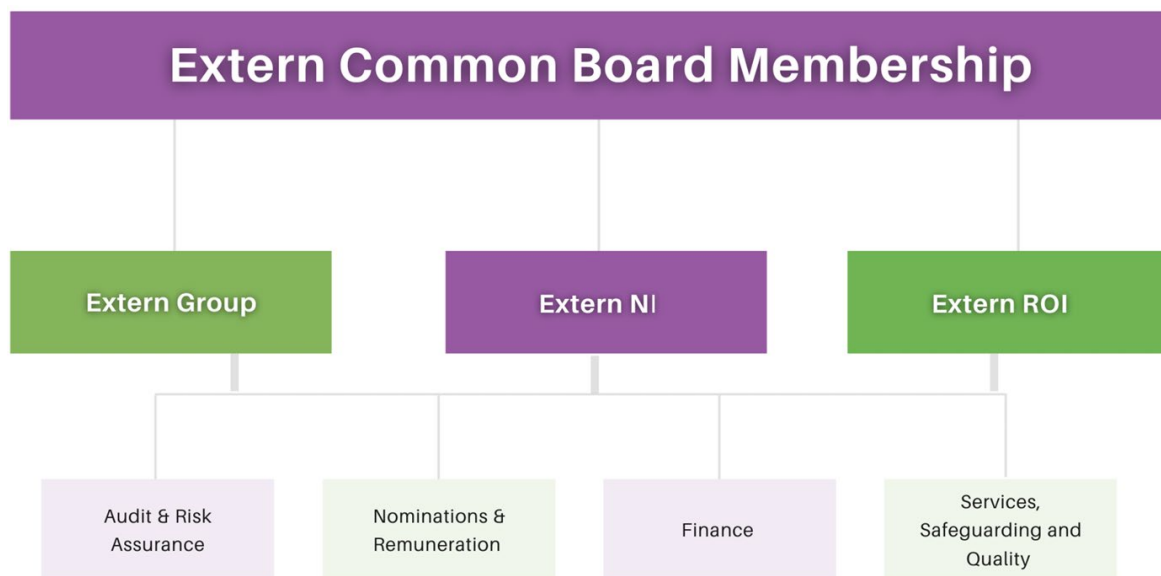
How we're organised

The Board

Extern has a common Board overseeing our three legal companies: **Extern Group**, **Extern Northern Ireland**, and **Extern Ireland**.

The Board is supported in its insight function by four Committees to ensure the necessary scrutiny and controls are in place across all corporate and services functions.

The four Committees - Nominations & Remuneration, Audit & Risk, Finance, and Services, Safeguarding & Quality, work with the Board, CEO and Strategic Leadership Team as critical partners, providing specialist insights, guidance, and where necessary identifying areas for improvement.



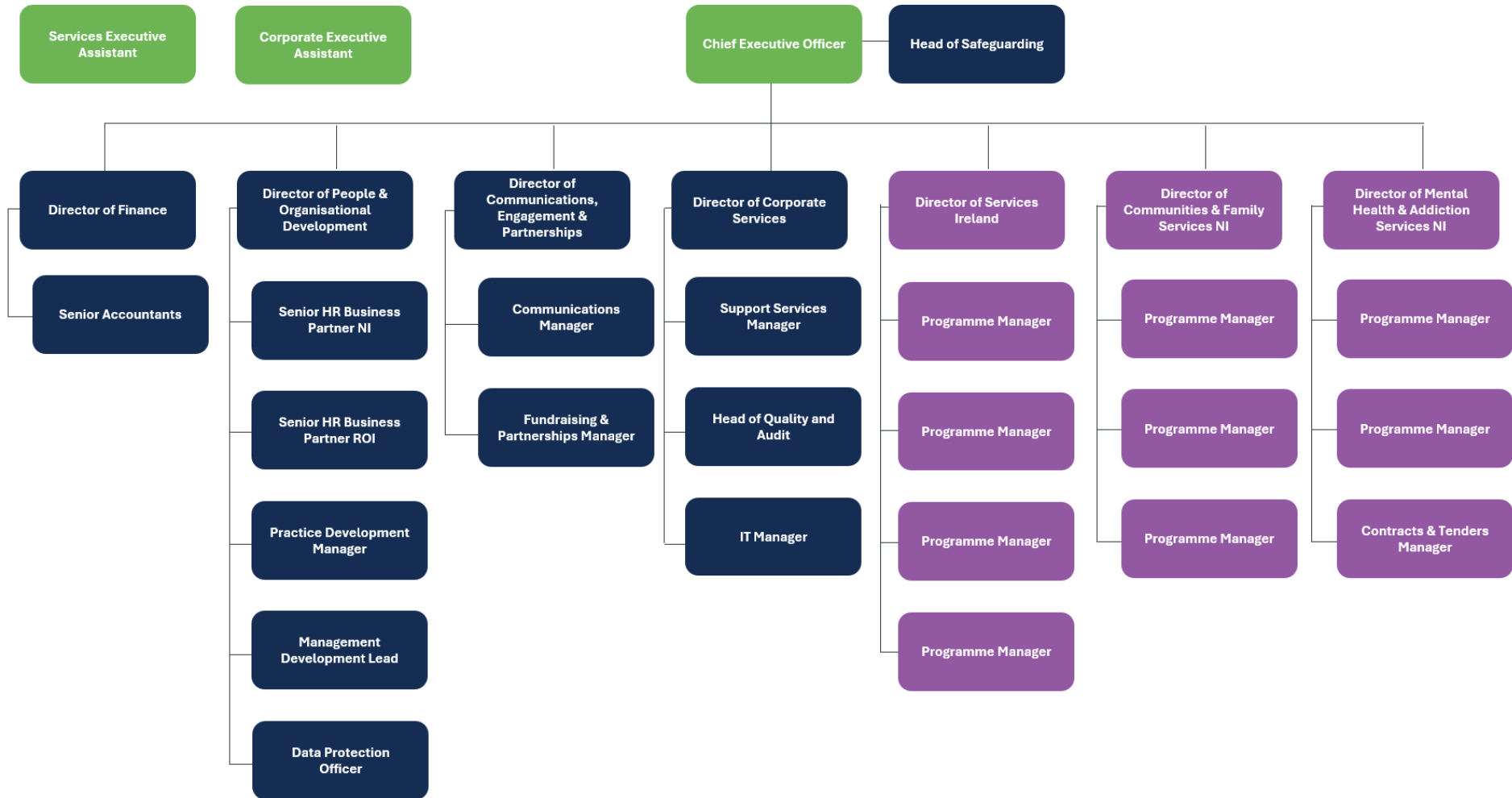
Governance responsibilities

- Charity reports to:
 - Charity Commission for NI (CCNI) and Companies House for EG and ENI
 - Charities Regulatory Authority (CRA)
 - Companies Registration Office (CRO) for EI

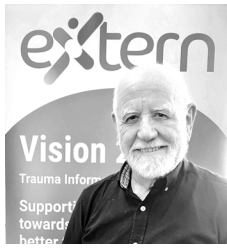
Our Auditors are:

- External – Moore NI
- Internal - Deloitte

The Executive



Meet the Extern Group Board



Brendan Johnston

Brendan brings a wealth of experience across social care and youth justice in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland and is not new to Extern or our mission. His relationship with the organisation began many years ago during his time in the Western Health & Social Care Trust, where he worked closely alongside Extern teams, including on the development of Roscor, one of our longest-established services. Through this early partnership, and throughout his career, Brendan has consistently shown a strong understanding of the realities faced by the people we support, and of the skill, resilience and care required of staff working in complex and often challenging environments. A qualified social worker, Brendan went on to hold senior leadership roles within the Health Trusts before serving for over a decade as Chief Executive of the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC). In that role, he developed significant experience in governance, regulation, public accountability and system leadership, working closely with partners across health, social care and justice.



Lynne McMordie

Dr Lynne McMordie is a Research Fellow at Heriot-Watt University's Institute for Social Policy, Housing, and Equalities Research (I-SPHERE). With a background in Northern Ireland's voluntary and community sectors, she has been involved in developing and overseeing services to address multiple exclusion homelessness, including emergency accommodation, drop-in centre, and street outreach services. Her academic work seeks to integrate her experience in service development and oversight with her background in social policy and housing studies. She contributes to studies providing longitudinal insights into UK homelessness and destitution trends and policy responses and has also led projects on the relationship between violence against women and homelessness and a UK-wide comparative study of the role of legal remedies in preventing homelessness for survivors of domestic abuse.



Dr Joan Broder

Joan has over 40 years' experience of developing, delivering and managing a range of services for adults, children and parents / carers across the island of Ireland. Upon leaving school, Joan took up a post with the Civil Service in Dublin before completing a degree in Social Administration. Joan subsequently held several positions including residential Social Worker, Director of Supporting Families and interim CEO of a charity. As a self-employed consultant Joan has experience of undertaking reviews, evaluations, tendering expertise, project management as well as acting as chair of the NI Degree in Social Work Partnership for a 5 year period.



Shane McLaughlin

Shane is a UK diplomat with extensive experience advancing security, humanitarian, and development objectives across some of the world's most complex environments, including Ukraine, Palestine, Afghanistan, the DRC, and Nigeria. He brings a proven blend of project management, strategic planning, financial oversight, and leadership, refined through delivering programmes in fragile contexts with both strategic clarity and operational precision. Before joining the diplomatic service, Shane taught geography in Northern Ireland and England, and later began his international career with the British Council, leading European education and cooperation initiatives. Shane's commitment to peacebuilding and community engagement began in Northern Ireland. After completing his bachelor's degree at Queen's University Belfast, he worked with young people from diverse communities through the Spirit of Enniskillen Trust, a youth-led organisation promoting dialogue, shared understanding, and reconciliation across divided groups. He then worked as an administrative assistant in one of Extern's probation hostels, where he developed a deep admiration for the charity's work, an admiration that has only strengthened since becoming a trustee.



Tony O'Donovan

Tony brings a wealth of experience to the Board, having served in various capacities within Youth Justice in Ireland and Canada. He was Director of Trinity House School before holding advisory roles in the Departments of Education, Justice and Children. As well as developing and implementing the regulatory framework for inspection and compliance with standards for Children's Detention Schools. As Principal Officer within the Department of Children, Tony was closely involved in the design, construction, and oversight of the Oberstown Children Detention Campus. He researched and implemented the innovative Bail Supervision Scheme in Dublin, Cork, and Limerick, as well as securing funding to establish the Youth Justice Research Unit at the University of Limerick (REPPP), and for the implementation of the Greentown Programme—a unique project between the Department of Justice and the University of Limerick—aimed at reducing the influence of criminal networks over children and families. Tony is a graduate of UCC and NUI Maynooth. Since retiring in July 2024, he has maintained links with DCEDIY and Oberstown in an advisory capacity.



Marian Quinn

Marian has a long career in child and family services, having held roles as a community youth worker, Youthreach Coordinator and Director of Services in the HSE. In the Reception and Integration Agency, (DoJ), Marian was responsible for developing and implementing a child protection policy for Direct provision centres as well as a range of initiatives aimed at supporting families in the asylum process. She took on the CEO role with the childhood Development Initiative in 2007, from which time she has taken it from a start up to one which is recognised for its high quality, evidence-based interventions, its innovative approaches and ability to translate research into learning for practice and policy. Holding an MA in Adult Education, a BSC in Youth and Community Work and a qualified General Nurse, Marian has significant governance expertise, has been a member of several State and NGO boards and holds a Diploma in Corporate Governance.



**Noreen Ann
Wright**

Ms. Wright, a barrister, joined Northern Ireland Electricity's (NIE) in-house legal team in September 1976 and remained with NIE/Viridian until 2001. She held a number of senior management posts in the company, including that of Company Secretary and Head of Legal Services. Ms. Wright holds a number of public appointments in Northern Ireland including Member of the Industrial and Fair Employment Tribunals, Lay Magistrate and Member of the Northern Ireland Valuation Tribunal. She is currently a Director of Camerata Ireland and was previously a Director of Springvale Training Ltd and Co-operation Ireland Ltd and a Trustee of Garfield Weston Trust, University of Ulster.



Financials

Here is a summary of Extern Group's latest published income and expenditure statements. If you're reading online, you can click on the links below to access the Group's more detailed annual reports.

	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total Funds 2025	Total Funds 2024
	£	£	£	£
Income and endowments from:				
Donations and legacies	137,684	296,059	433,743	418,338
Charitable activities	6,361,309	17,558,645	23,919,954	23,216,894
Other trading activities	75,033	-	75,033	125,002
Investments	2,662	-	2,662	1,030
Total income and endowments	6,576,688	17,854,704	24,431,392	23,761,264
Expenditure on:				
Raising funds	(60,991)	-	(60,991)	(142,697)
Charitable activities	(6,817,109)	(17,370,855)	(24,187,964)	(22,884,885)
Total expenditure	(6,878,100)	(17,370,855)	(24,248,955)	(23,027,582)
Net expenditure before exceptional item	(301,412)	483,849	182,437	733,682
Exceptional item		(646,145)	(646,145)	
Net expenditure	(301,412)	(162,296)	(463,708)	733,682
Transfers between funds	(771,328)	771,328	-	-
Other recognised gains/(losses):				
Unrealised gain/(loss) on exchange	(3,281)		(3,281)	(11,926)
Exchange rate gains/(losses) on consolidation	(60,233)	(39,535)	(99,768)	(110,329)
Net movement in funds	(1,136,254)	569,497	(566,757)	611,427
Reconciliation of funds:				
Funds Brought Forward	7,890,346	2,058,239	9,948,585	9,337,158
Total funds carried forward	6,754,092	2,627,736	9,381,828	9,948,585

[Extern Group Annual Report to March 2024](#)

[Extern Group Annual Report to March 2023](#)

[Extern Group Annual Report to March 2022](#)

Role Description

Board Members are unpaid voluntary roles and are non-executive, meaning that they are collectively responsible for setting strategy and ensuring governance and ensuring Extern holds to its vision, mission and values. They do not carry out the day-to-day work of the charity. The Board currently meets four times a year.

Duties and accountabilities of a Board Member

Collectively, Board Members are legally responsible for the overall governance and strategic direction of the charity including developing the organisations aims, objectives, and goals in accordance with the governing document, legal and regulatory guidelines. The Board are also collectively responsible for ensuring the sound legal, financial and people management of the organisation.

The partnership between the Board and the Chief Executive Officer and the strategic leadership team is essential to the delivery of good governance, with the Board taking the lead on strategic matters and the CEO and staff responsible for the operational delivery.

Board Members will have a variety of skills and collectively the Board provides:

Strategy:

Collectively the Board will:

- Ensure that the organisation pursues its stated objects (purposes) as defined in its governing document by developing and agreeing a long term strategy.
- Ensure that the organisation is focused on achieving the strategy.
- Ensure that all strategic plans, policies and activities of the organisation take account of an active commitment to equality and diversity

Governance:

Collectively the Board will:

- Ensure the organisation complies with legislative and regulatory requirements, and act within the confines of its governance manual and in furtherance of organisational objectives.
- Ensure that investment activities meet accepted standards and policies.
- Ensure the proper investment of the charity's funds.
- Safeguard the good name, reputation and values of the organisation.

Leadership:

Collectively the Board will:

- Support and challenge the CEO and Strategic Leadership Team, being a critical and constructive friend.
- Oversee the recruitment, and duction, supervision, and appraisal of the chief executive officer.
- Participate in delegated activities on behalf of the charity, as agreed within the Board, including, working groups, promotional activities, and fund raising.

- Maintain absolute confidentiality about all sensitive/confidential information received.
- Attend and contribute to quarterly board meetings and any other such meetings of the Board as may be required.
- Comply with the Code of Conduct for Board Members and the Code of Good Governance for Boards.

Person Specification

To maintain a successful and progressive board, Board Members must most importantly have a desire to make a difference and an affinity with the organisation purpose, and desire to contribute to making a difference in the communities in which we operate. They must have a willingness and capacity to donate the necessary time and effort to the role which includes undertaking mandatory training.

We are looking for candidates who have:

- A working background, skillset and experience in one or more of the following areas: Finance/Treasury Management; IT/CyberSecurity; Fundraising; HR; CSR; Legal.
- A willingness to appropriately speak their mind, to support, challenge and be a critical and constructive friend.
- An ability to stand back and see the bigger picture and to think about what is best for the organisation as a whole.
- A new ability to work effectively with others as part of a team.
- A commitment to promoting equality and diversity.
- An understanding and acceptance of legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of being a Board Member of a charity. Full training will be provided to assist with this.

Previous Board Member experience is not required. Reasonable travel expenses will be reimbursed.

Time Commitment

- **Quarterly** Board and Committee meetings
- Representing Extern at key events and stakeholder engagements as required

Early in the role, the successful candidate should anticipate dedicating additional time to gaining a thorough understanding of the organisation's structure, governance, people, and operations.

Length of Term

It is expected that the appointment of a Board Member is for a minimum three-year period.

A Board Member can be re-elected twice in succession. The exception is Board Members who have been in office for over nine consecutive years. They will not be eligible for re-election.



How to apply

For a confidential discussion about the position in the first instance, please contact Engage Director Patrick Minne, patrick@co3.org.uk +44 (0)7792 509003.

1. Candidates are asked to provide a full CV and one-page cover letter by email to Engage by **noon on Friday 29th May 2026** to apply@engageexec.co.uk. In your letter please outline how you believe you meet the requirements of the role description and person specification.
2. Engage will submit your application to the Engage Board selection panel who will shortlist candidates.
3. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to meet the panel for a two-way discussion about their candidacy in June 2026.
4. The Board will ratify the selection of the candidate deemed successful subject to completion of references and due diligence.

Contact Patrick if you have any queries about the role or the application process.





Tel: +44 (0)7792 509003
Email: patrick@co3.org.uk

www.engageexec.co.uk



Enquiries unrelated to this recruitment can be addressed to:

Extern

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3 McKinney Road,
Newtownabbey, BT36 4PE

Tel: +44 (0)28 9084 0555

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