

Chair

Information Pack

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Introduction

Dear Candidate

Thank you for your interest in the role of Chair at Nexus. I appreciate you taking the time to learn more about our organisation and this important leadership opportunity.

Nexus is the leading organisation in Northern Ireland supporting individuals impacted by sexual abuse and abusive relationships, with a history rooted in community response and a continued commitment to compassionate, person-centred support.

Over four decades, we have grown into a multi-faceted organisation delivering therapeutic support, education and training, aftercare, and a regional 24-hour helpline. Our work is focused not only on supporting recovery, but also on prevention, influencing societal attitudes, and driving long-term change.

The Chair will provide leadership to the board, direction and support to ensure we effectively deliver against our new strategic plan, shape the future of our organisation and magnify our impact.

Bring your expertise, compassion, and vision to Nexus and together, we can help create a safer, more supportive future for those affected by sexual abuse and abusive relationships.

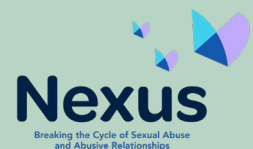
This is a voluntary role, but the rewards are significant- influencing change, supporting survivors, and helping to ensure that Nexus continues to be a trusted voice and source of hope in our community.

I hope this information pack provides you with a clear sense of our purpose, our services and our strategic ambitions. We have much more information available on our website at nexusni.org.

Our recruitment partners at Engage will also be happy to answer any questions about the role you might have in the first instance. If you feel inspired to join us, we would be delighted to hear from you.

David Cairns

Vice Chair

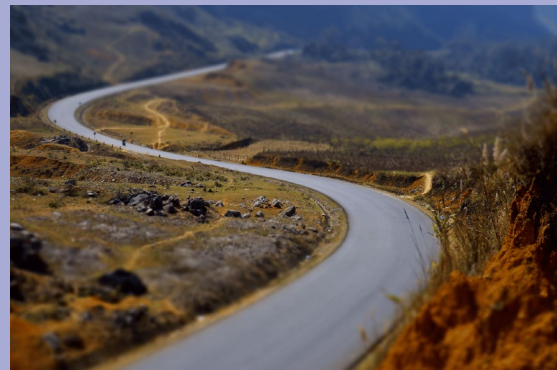


Who we are

We are the leading organisation within Northern Ireland supporting individuals impacted by sexual abuse and abusive relationships.

The organisation began in 1984 as a grassroots response to a series of rapes in south Belfast, when volunteers established the Rape and Incest Line (RAIL) as part of NI Rape Crisis Association. At this time services and support were focused on supporting women impacted by sexual violence. Over its earliest years, the organisation expanded beyond Belfast, opening a Derry/Londonderry location in 1986 and beginning to support male survivors as well, marking an early shift toward inclusivity in its services. Alongside counselling support, Nexus began delivering educational workshops by the late 1980s, signalling a growing recognition of the importance of prevention and awareness.

In 1993, NI Rape Crisis Association was rebranded as The Nexus Institute, reflecting a broader mission to connect different aspects of support, education, and advocacy around sexual abuse. Over the following decades, the organisation evolved significantly, expanding its reach and deepening its services while remaining anchored in its core purpose of supporting those affected by sexual abuse and abusive relationships.



By the 2000s and 2010s, Nexus had developed into a more structured regional organisation, offering specialist therapeutic counselling and responding to increasing demand across Northern Ireland. Its work extended beyond crisis response to include training for professionals and educational programmes in schools and communities, embedding prevention and early intervention into its model.

A major milestone came in 2019 when the organisation was awarded the contract to manage the 24/7 Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline for Northern Ireland, further cementing its role as a central support service for those impacted by domestic and sexual abuse. In 2020 the organisation was re-branded to Nexus NI alongside launch of its 3-year strategic plan and with a new strapline 'Changing lives affected by sexual trauma'.

By 2026, Nexus had grown from a small volunteer initiative into a multi-faceted organisation supporting adults, children, and young people aged eight and above. Despite this transformation, its founding mission – to provide compassionate support and drive societal change around sexual abuse – remains the “golden thread” running through its forty-two-year history.

What we do

Therapeutic Support

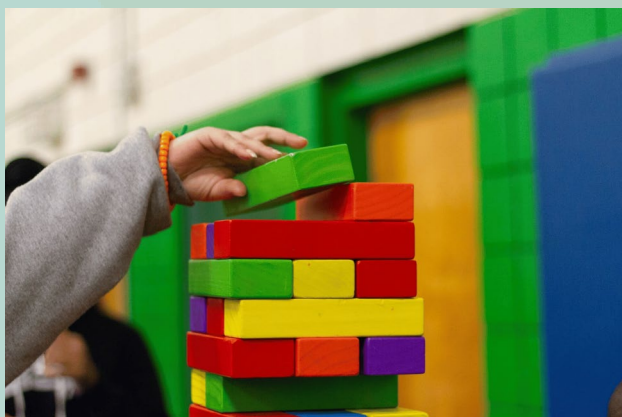
Adult Support Services

Nexus provides a range of support services across Northern Ireland for people impacted by sexual abuse and abusive relationships. These include individual counselling, EMDR therapy for adults, and psycho-educational group support and personal development through the RESET aftercare programme (see below). Support is tailored following an initial triage assessment to identify individual needs and the most appropriate pathway. EMDR therapy is available for adults but is not publicly funded. Access begins with a self-referral process, after which clients are guided through next steps. Counselling offers a safe, confidential space delivered in person, by phone or online, with additional self-help resources available.



Children Support Services

Nexus provides counselling support for children and young people aged eight and over who have been impacted by sexual abuse. Services are accredited by professional counselling bodies and offer a safe, confidential space to explore feelings and experiences. Up to 12 sessions of specialist counselling are available, tailored to each child's age and individual needs, and may include play therapy, art therapy and talking therapies. Counselling is delivered by specialist practitioners who adapt their approach to support emotional wellbeing and build self-confidence. The service is committed to empowering young people to recognise their strengths and make positive choices, with strict confidentiality in place to protect client information.



Aftercare

Nexus provides aftercare services through its RESET programme funded by The National Lottery Community Fund and designed to support adults who have recently completed counselling. The programme is positioned as a next step in recovery, helping individuals continue their progress beyond therapeutic intervention.

RESET focuses on five core elements: **r**ecovery, **e**ngagement, **s**upport, **e**mpowerment and **t**hriving. It helps participants build confidence, develop skills and reconnect with their communities through activities such as personal development, group work, volunteering, education and advocacy.

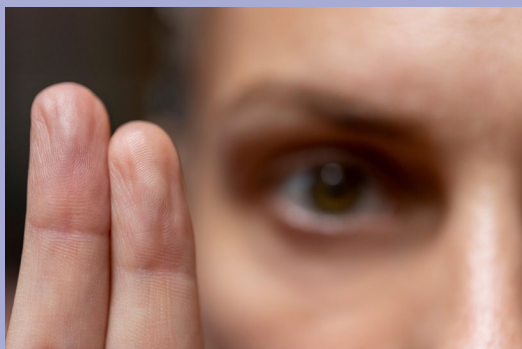
Participants work with a dedicated project worker to create a personalised action plan based on their goals and interests. The programme also supports individuals to develop advocacy skills, strengthen relationships and pursue opportunities that enhance wellbeing and independence. Ultimately, RESET aims to enable individuals to sustain recovery and actively build fulfilling, self-directed lives.



Early Intervention and Prevention

Nexus delivers a comprehensive programme of specialist education and training as part of its early intervention and prevention work, drawing on its frontline experience supporting people impacted by sexual abuse and abusive relationships. The offer includes a wide range of courses, workshops and resources aimed at professionals, organisations, parents, carers and young people across Northern Ireland.

The training is designed to increase understanding of the nature and impact of abuse, while building the confidence and practical skills needed to respond effectively. Sessions are available online and in person and are particularly targeted at adults and professionals seeking to deepen their knowledge.



Topics covered include bystander intervention, child sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation, handling disclosures, challenging misogyny and rape culture, promoting healthy relationships and consent. Nexus also provides tailored organisational training to help employers create safer environments and better support those impacted by abuse.

Ending Violence Against Women and Girls

As a regional delivery partner for The Executive Office's Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy (EVAWG) Nexus delivers bespoke workshops to young people aged 11-25 aimed at exploring the root causes of VAWG, developing understanding of healthy relationships and building confidence in safely challenging inappropriate behaviours and attitudes. Alongside, supporting employers to that the EVAWG Pledge and helping them to create safer spaces for women and girls in our society.

Corporate Training

Nexus also offers tailored corporate training packages to help organisations understand and prevent sexual abuse and abusive relationships in the workplace. It supports compliance with legislation, develops policies, and builds awareness, enabling employers to create safe, inclusive environments and effectively support staff affected by abuse.

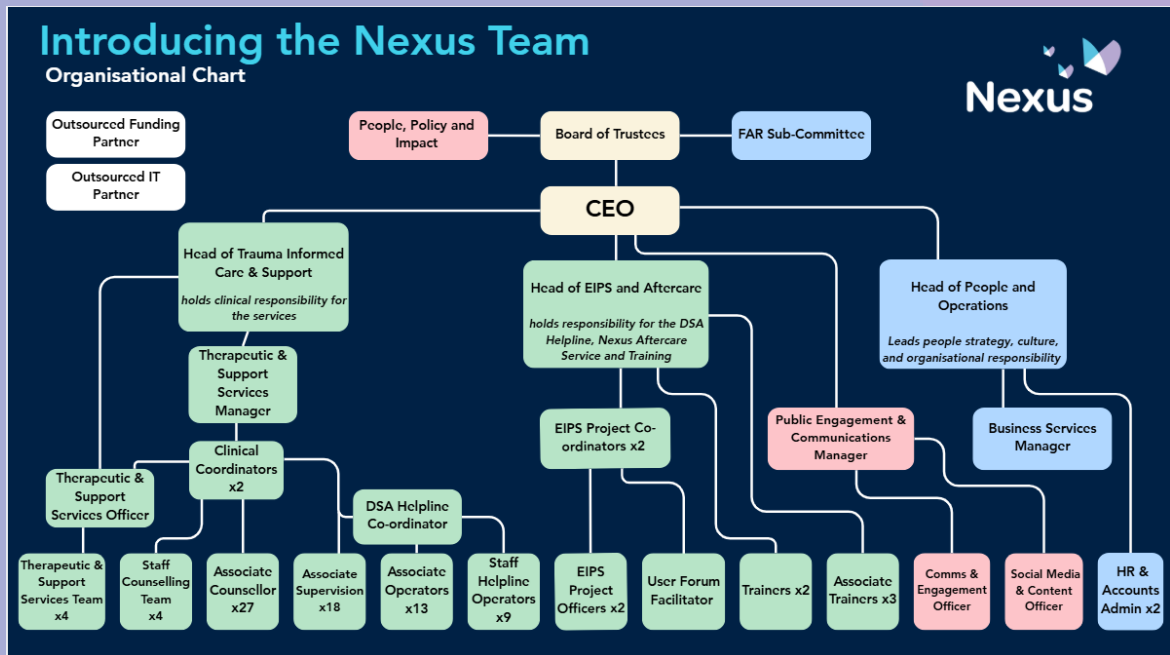
Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline

Nexus manages the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline on behalf of the Department of Health, Department for Justice and Department for Communities. The Helpline is a free, confidential service available 24 hours a day across Northern Ireland. It provides information, guidance and support to individuals affected by domestic and/or sexual abuse, as well as concerned family, friends and professionals.

The helpline is staffed by trained, experienced practitioners who can be contacted by phone, email or webchat, ensuring accessible support in a range of formats. It supports both emergency and non-emergency situations by offering guidance and signposting to appropriate services. It provides a safe, supportive and non-judgemental space where people are heard, believed and helped to access the assistance they need.



How we're organised



Our Strategy

If you're reading online, you can access our full 2026-29 Strategy here:

Nexus Strategy
2026-29



Our Vision

A society free from sexual abuse and abusive relationships.



Our Mission

To enable positive change for those impacted by sexual abuse and abusive relationships by supporting, informing, influencing, and engaging society.

Empower Recovery

Nexus will deliver trauma-informed, person-centred interventions through a stepped care model, strengthening clinical governance, improving service responsiveness, and addressing intersectional barriers to ensure individuals recover, improve wellbeing, and achieve sustainable, long-term positive outcomes.

Influence Society

Nexus will challenge harmful attitudes through education, partnerships, campaigns and collaboration, amplifying lived experience voices, increasing societal understanding, preventing abusive behaviours, and promoting cultural change that supports healthy relationships and reduces tolerance of abuse across communities.

Inform Policy & Practice

Nexus will influence policy and practice through consultation, advocacy and research, embedding lived experience in decision-making, strengthening engagement with stakeholders, and ensuring legislation, commissioning and services effectively reflect emerging needs and improve outcomes for those affected.

Engage Support

Nexus will strengthen communication, partnerships and fundraising to build support for its mission, using public affairs, data-driven engagement and strategic messaging to increase awareness, secure resources, and enable innovation and delivery of services responding to evolving needs.

Advance Standards of Excellence

Nexus will maintain high-quality performance by embedding governance, strengthening staff capability, fostering innovation, and developing systems and training that support sustainable growth, ensuring the organisation remains effective, resilient, and able to deliver long-term impact.

Our Values



Empowerment

We support you to recognise your strength and ability to make informed choices and create positive change.



Inclusion

We recognise our society is diverse. We are committed to being inclusive and accessible to all.



Dignity

We believe everyone has equal worth and must be treated respectfully.



Integrity

We are open, honest and ethical in the delivery of our work.



Advocacy

We amplify the voices of those affected by sexual abuse and abusive relationships to inform and influence positive societal change.



Collaboration

We work with you, our team and our partners to develop our services, grow our expertise and support change.

Financials

Below is a snapshot of our latest published annual income and expenditure report for March 2025. If you are reading online, you can click on the links below to access the last three years' annual accounts for more detailed information.

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £
<u>Income from:</u>							
Donations and legacies	3	33,886	28,143	62,029	38,626	28,143	66,769
Charitable activities	6	10,688	1,930,605	1,941,293	27,696	1,664,135	1,691,831
Other trading activities	4	35,868	-	35,868	54,227	-	54,227
Investments	5	7	-	7	-	-	-
Total income		80,449	1,958,748	2,039,197	120,549	1,692,278	1,812,827
<u>Expenditure on:</u>							
Charitable activities	7	3,396	1,891,027	1,894,423	295,367	1,812,422	2,107,789
Net income/(expenditure) for the year/							
Net movement in funds		77,053	67,721	144,774	(174,818)	(120,144)	(294,962)
Fund balances at 1 April 2024		817,024	-	817,024	991,842	120,144	1,111,986
Fund balances at 31 March 2025		894,077	67,721	961,798	817,024	-	817,024

[Annual Report March 2025](#)

[Annual Report March 2024](#)

[Annual Report March 2023](#)

Meet the Board



David Cairns Vice Chair

David has 15 years' experience in the Criminal Justice Sector and currently works in the Department of Justice. Prior to this he worked for 10 years in the commercial sector, mainly focusing on the FMCG market



Roisin O'Connor

Róisín has over 14 years' experience as a Counsellor, primarily working with Victims and Survivors of the NI conflict. She has managed therapeutic services teams within the Community and Voluntary Sector, and charities supporting people impacted by cancer and stroke. She is also a Trauma Resilience Model teacher certified by the Trauma Resource Institute and is currently training in delivering Therapeutic Photography groups.



Maurice Brogan

Maurice is an accountant and member of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants with over 20 years' experience in Banking and Finance.



Olga Pollock

Olga has 20+ years experience of working in Human Resources, mainly across the private sector. She is passionate about her profession and sees its purpose as serving the needs of both the organisation and its people to create diverse and inclusive workplaces. Olga is also a voluntary content writer for Legal Island.



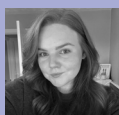
Hannah Boyd

Hannah is a Northern Irish qualified Solicitor currently working as Senior Legal Counsel within Translink. She has advised Executive and Programme Boards, gaining valuable insight into how effective governance drives organisational culture and outcomes.



Paula Matthews

Paula Matthews is a social worker who works as an Assistant Service Manager in Older People's Services in Belfast Trust. Her specialism is Adult Safeguarding and she previously worked with Looked After Children. Paula completed the Strictly Boardroom Boardroom Apprenticeship in 2022 and is keen to give back to the charitable sector because of her lived experience.



Leigh Collins

Leigh brings over six years' experience working within the EAWG sector, across both frontline and strategic roles focused on prevention, education and long-term cultural change. She also has a background in law and experience working alongside statutory partners, including the PSNI, a strong understanding of safeguarding, justice processes and inter-agency collaboration.

Chair Description

Commitment

Attendance at quarterly meetings in line with Board Cycle* and other events as required (*most Board activity is carried out on weekday evenings).

Remuneration

Voluntary

Purpose

Provide leadership to the Board of Trustees, support the organisation to effectively and transparently deliver against its strategic plan and act as an ambassador for the organisation.

Key accountabilities

To personify the leadership and manage the strategic direction of a values-led organisation

To direct effective decision-making by the trustee board

Fulfil the legal requirements of being a Chair of Trustees

Key elements and tasks

- Support the Board in setting, monitoring and delivering the organisation's strategic vision and objectives.
 - Uphold the aims, principles and values of the organisation
 - Communicate, explain and support the decisions of the trustee board.
 - Support the development of a diverse, skilled and effective Board
 - Support trustee learning and development
 - Conduct annual appraisals of board members.
 - Support trustee succession planning/review
 - Prepare for, lead and contribute to the board, committee and Annual General Meetings;
 - Prepare for, lead and participate in trustee strategic/planning days;
 - Participate in trustee board committees and working groups;
 - Apply independent judgement to all issues under discussion at board meetings.
- Ensure the organisation:
- Fulfils its charitable purposes;
 - Is financially viable;
 - Complies with all legal requirements;
 - Fulfils its responsibilities as an employer;
 - Understands the importance of good practice in human resources management and staff development;

Understand and promote the goals of the organisation

- Is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity in service provision and employment;
- Has a process for appointing and monitoring the performance of any executive team members.
- Work alongside a diverse and passionate team committed to safeguarding and empowering those we serve.
- Represent the organisation at occasional meetings and events;
- Advise on generating income and controlling expenditure so that the annual surplus target is reached;
- Review the organisation's corporate identity, and delivery of an associated communications plan;
- To liaise with existing and potential stakeholders in the organisation's network where there may be mutual benefit;
- To add real value to the community and beneficiaries served by the organisation so that it realises the benefits it intends.

This will be an initial three-year term.



Chair Specification

Essential Criteria

1. Significant experience serving on a Board or governance body, with a sound understanding of the responsibilities of charity trustees.
2. Demonstrable leadership experience, with the ability to build consensus, provide constructive challenge, mentor and support Trustees, support succession planning, and lead effective decision-making.
3. Ability to work in partnership with the Chief Executive, providing support, guidance and appropriate challenge.
4. Visionary, creative and passionate about the organisation's service, and prepared to invest energy in its success by learning and understanding its work and its stakeholders.
5. Understanding of good governance and the responsibilities of charity trustees and company directors, with the ability to apply sound judgement and oversee the charity's financial sustainability.
6. Able and willing to act impartially and apolitically, working in accordance with agreed governance standards and codes of conduct.
7. Experience of engaging with senior stakeholders and acting as an ambassador for an organisation.
8. Commitment to the aims, values and mission of Nexus and able to meet the time commitment required for the role.

In addition, candidates should be able to demonstrate expertise in one or more of the following areas:

- Public affairs, policy or government relations.
- Communications, media or public engagement.
- Income generation, fundraising or business development.

Desirable

- Safeguarding / trauma-informed governance awareness
- Commitment to EDI and lived experience voice
- Experience of serving as a Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, Secretary or other officer bearer role in a complex funding environment

Candidates must disclose any information about their personal or professional life which in the Board's perception could bring the organisation into disrepute, including removals from previous governance roles, current or previous membership of organisations which may conflict with the aims, principles and values of the organisation, or behaviour which might be seen to undermine public confidence and trust.

Candidates must also disclose if they have been convicted of a crime which debars them from acting as a company director, or they are an undischarged bankrupt or disqualified to act as a company director.

Candidates must disclose any information which could give rise to a perception of conflict of interest with their role as an organisational board member. This will not necessarily result in an inability to serve on the board.

It should be noted that individual trustees do not have any authority in relation to Nexus outside the collective authority of the Board of Trustees, unless specific authority is delegated by the Board.

Candidates must be over the age of 16.

Note that appointees will be required to provide their Companies House personal code to allow registration with Companies House. This is obtained by [verifying your identity](#) with Companies House.

The application process

For a confidential discussion about the position in the first instance, please contact Engage Director Patrick Minne, patrick@co3.org.uk, 07792 509003.

1. Candidates are asked to provide a full CV by email to Engage by **noon on Friday 23 October 2026** to apply@engageexec.co.uk.
2. Engage will submit your application to the Nexus Board panel who will shortlist candidates.
3. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to meet the panel for a two-way discussion about their candidacy.
4. The full Board will vote to ratify the selection of the successful candidate.

Please address any enquiries relating to the advertised position, and your submission, to Nexus's recruitment partners:

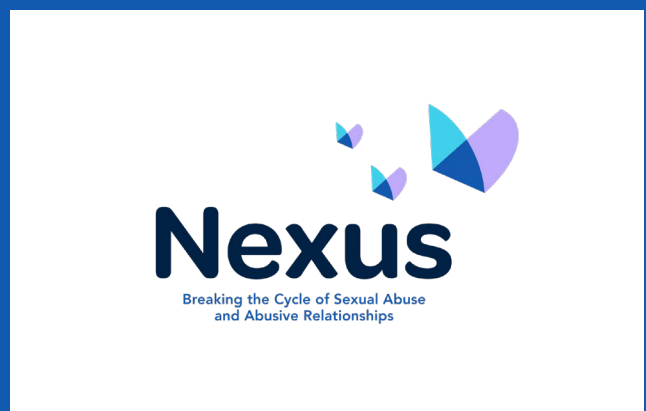
Patrick Minne



Tel: 07792 509003

Email: patrick@co3.org.uk

www.engageexec.co.uk



Enquiries unrelated to this recruitment can be addressed to:

Nexus NI

59 Malone Road
Belfast BT9 6SA

Tel: 028 90326803

Email: info@nexusni.org

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