

Speaker Biographies - Charity Leadership Conference

Morning parallel workshops (Lower Ground Floor)

(i) Legal updates (Room CR2)



Andrew Studd, Partner, Russell-Cooke

Andrew leads Russell-Cooke's specialist Charity and Social Business team. He advises charities and not-for-profit organisations on a wide range of constitutional and governance matters, commercial contracts, mergers and reorganisations.

He continues to advise a number of charities on governance issues linked to charities' fundraising practices and the use of personal data, in particular in relation to the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation next year.

Andrew sat on the Finance and Audit Committee of Care International UK for 9 years. He is currently a trustee of Desta Consortium, a social enterprise established by a number of voluntary organisations based in Hammersmith & Fulham to act as a vehicle to enable the local voluntary sector to compete for public sector contracts, and Seebeyondborders UK, a charity which supports the development of teachers in Cambodia.

(ii) Civil society support (Room CR3)



Sharon Long, Hub Lead, Greater London Volunteering

Sharon has recently taken up the Hub Lead role at Greater London Volunteering (GLV), working to bring the vision of The Way Ahead into reality and in particular the creation of the new London Hub for civil society. Sharon has worked extensively in the voluntary and community sector in local, regional and national capacities. Sharon splits her time between GLV, Partnership for Young London and a major national membership organisation working with children, young people and families.



Cameron Fitzwilliam-Grey, Chair, Greater London Volunteering

Cam is Chair of the Board of Trustees for Greater London Volunteering, a post he has held since 2012. He's the Manager of Volunteer Centre Haringey, Co-Chair of a community music & arts festival and a productivity consultant. With a background in Social Enterprise and the strategic development of Voluntary Sector Infrastructure services, Cam's expertise lies in translating blue sky thinking into practical solutions.

(iii) Charity finance (Room CR5)

Denise Fellows, Chief Executive, The Honorary Treasurers Forum



Denise is part-time chief executive of The Honorary Treasurers Forum. She has worked in the nonprofit sector for over 15 years after an earlier career in high tech companies. In 2005, she helped found the Centre for Charity Effectiveness at Cass Business School, heading up the Consultancy and Talent Development practice for over ten years and remains a Senior Visiting Fellow at Cass. She has authored and edited several books including 'Bridging the Gap: moving onto nonprofit boards' Amongst many voluntary roles, Denise is a founder liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Management Consultants and Treasurer of their charitable fund.

Afternoon Plenary (Main Chamber on Floor 2)

Civil Society Governance



Patrick Vernon OBE, Director, Black Thrive (Session Chair)

Patrick has been appointed as Black Thrive's first Director. He will be responsible for ensuring that Black Thrive excels at delivering a vision that black communities thrive and improve their mental health and wellbeing by being supported by relevant and accessible services.

Patrick brings a wealth of experience, he is an associate member for the Department of History of Medicine at Warwick University, Non-Executive Director of Camden and Islington Foundation Trust, a Clore Fellow, film maker and cultural historian and founder of Every Generation and the 100 Great Black Britons campaign. He is also a patron of two charities, Santé, a charity which aims to improve asylum seekers' rights and health access particularly mental health access and ACCI, a black mental health charity in Wolverhampton.

Patrick's former roles include Chief Executive of Afiya Trust, Health Partnership Coordinator for National Housing Federation, Committee member of Healthwatch England, advisory board member for Time to Change, ministerial advisory group member for mental health and member of the independent Metropolitan Police inquiry on Mental Health and Policing.



Ruth Lesirge, Chair of the Association of Chairs

Ruth is an experienced voluntary sector leader, previously chief executive of a national welfare services organisation (Eldercare) and a policy and action research foundation (mental health and learning disability).

A Trustee of London Film School and Bishopsgate Institute, Ruth has 35 years' experience of work within the public and third sectors, including a previous career as Principal of an adult and community education service.

Ruth has been an independent consultant since 2002 and co-Principal of HBRL Consultancy, as well as founder (2012) and Chair (2015) of the Association of Chairs. These experiences as well as previous leadership roles as a chief executive in the charity and education sectors inform her practice and her ability to support senior executives to enable them to build the capacity and skills of their organisations.



Rosie Chapman, Chair of the Charity Governance Code Steering Group

Rosie has a governance and regulatory background, including Director of Policy & Effectiveness at the Charity Commission for ten years, senior roles in housing regulation, and as company secretary for a range of housing associations and charities. Rosie now works as an adviser to charities on governance, regulatory, policy and planning issues.

She acted as specialist adviser to the House of Lords Select Committee on charities, which reported its findings in spring 2017. Rosie is also the independent chair of the Charity Governance Code Steering Group which oversees and promotes the Code. In 2014 Rosie acted as Secretary to NCVO's influential Inquiry into charity senior executive pay.

Rosie is currently a trustee of the London Marathon Charitable Trust and Amnesty International Charity Limited and is a former trustee of the Charity Finance Group. Rosie is a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators.



Maresa Ness, Chief Executive, Mosaic Clubhouse

Maresa worked in the NHS for 32 years as a general nurse, mental health nurse and for fifteen years worked at director level in two London mental health trusts. She was part of a team that established a clubhouse in one room in an ex-day hospital in 1994 subsequently becoming a trustee and chair of trustees. In 2012 Maresa was asked to "hold the fort" as acting CEO during a period of protracted negotiation with commissioners for a new service contract and extensive refurbishment to new premises. This was a make or break period for the organisation and its board of trustees were critical to its survival.

The move to Brixton in April 2013 heralded a new period of growth as Mosaic remained faithful to its clubhouse values & ethos whilst actively seeking out and embracing partnership opportunities within the local community and statutory and voluntary sectors. Looking back, the challenge to its survival forced the organisation to re-invent itself and it is stronger than ever before.



Robin Simpson, Chief Executive, Voluntary Arts

Since September 2005 Robin has been Chief Executive of Voluntary Arts, which provides a universal voice for approximately 63,000 voluntary arts groups, across the UK and Ireland, involving more than 10 million participants in creative cultural activities.

Voluntary Arts provides information and advice services, undertakes lobbying and advocacy work and delivers, and supports the delivery of, projects to develop participation in creative cultural activities. Voluntary Arts' support is particularly focused on those creative citizens who – beyond their own participation and beyond any remuneration – give their time to make such activity more available within their communities (of locality and interest) and to improve the quality and range of those opportunities and activities.

Robin is the Chair of the Steering Group for the national Get Creative campaign – a partnership between the BBC and more than 500 arts organisations across the UK. He is also the Chair of Peterborough Presents, the Peterborough Creative People & Places Consortium, and a Trustee of the Luminare Festival (Scotland's Creative Ageing Festival).

Funding Landscape



Rachael MacLeod, Chief Executive, Sutton Carers Centre (Session Chair)

Flying the flag for the smaller, local charity, Rachael is pleased to be joining the conference from the London Borough of Sutton. Having just celebrated her 10-year anniversary as SCC's Chief Executive, Rachael brings first-hand experience securing and managing funding streams from a variety of sources; these include support from Lloyds Bank Foundation (with us today), BBC Children in Need and Big Lottery Fund, amongst others.

Despite the challenges posed by austerity and the new health and social care commissioning environment, Sutton Carers Centre has expanded its services and diversified its funding base. Much of this has been achieved in partnership, as part of local and regional consortia, and always alongside carers and volunteers. As a lover of 'numbers', Rachael enjoys nothing more than balancing a budget and measuring the outcomes effected for local families by an incredibly talented team of staff and volunteers, under the leadership of her dynamic, carer-led Board.

Rachael is from Prince Edward Island in Canada and after a few years study, plus a bit of backpacking, she settled in the UK. She later completed her undergraduate at the London School of Economics (social psychology) followed by post-graduate studies at City University, London (medical counselling psychology, social and behavioural studies, and charity leadership).

Although she has worked in primary and secondary health care as both a clinician and in Public Health, Rachael's head and heart is in the Voluntary and Community Sector. Having worked for a handful of MIND organisations, developing award-winning local services as well as influencing national policy, she also volunteered her time as an alcohol and drug counsellor and later became a School Governor.

Much of Rachael's professional work is informed by her personal experiences as a Young and Adult Carer and she has a particular interest in gender, health and social inequalities, and community development. She is a regular guest speaker and lecturer regarding unpaid carers' issues and whole-family approaches to mental wellbeing.

Gilly Green OBE, Head of UK Grants, Comic Relief



Gilly is Head of UK Grants at Comic Relief where she is responsible for the development and delivery of the UK Grants strategy and a member of the organisation's senior management team. She originally trained as a social worker, and prior to Comic Relief Gilly has worked in the statutory, voluntary and community sectors with families, young women, and homeless people. Her combined experience stretches 35 years. In a voluntary capacity, Gilly is a director of a newly formed CIC, Tonic Housing – looking at innovation in housing and care services for older LGBT people. She was awarded an OBE for services to domestic violence in 2007.



Sara Cooney, Grant Manager – London and South Central England, Lloyds Bank Foundation for England and Wales

Sara joined the Lloyds Bank Foundation in 2008 and is the regional Grant Manager for parts of London and the South East. During her time at the Foundation, she has contributed to the development of its current Enable and Invest grant programmes and Enhance, its Funder+ support programme. The Lloyds Bank Foundation is a relationship funder, seeking to build strong, lasting partnerships with the charities it supports through its grant programmes and the additional development support it provides through the Enhance programme.

Sara has over 15 years' experience working in the UK community and voluntary sector in grant making, community development and urban regeneration. Prior to joining the Foundation, previous roles including working as a senior grant manager at the Heritage Lottery Fund and a Projects and Programmes Coordinator at Leaside Regeneration, a social enterprise administering local grant programmes and coordinating social and economic regeneration initiatives in East London.



Jenny Field, Deputy Director, City Bridge Trust

Jenny has been the deputy chief grants officer of the City Bridge Trust since February 2010. She has worked at the City Bridge Trust since 1996, initially leading the Trust's monitoring and evaluation team.

She has extensive experience of the third sector and, prior to joining the Trust, was the grants officer at the Walcot Foundation. Before that she had worked in a variety of community development projects and legal advice services. She became a trustee of the Charities Evaluation Services in October 2009 and became its vice chair in March 2013.