

Meet our board

Andy Couldrick - Chair and Non-Executive Director

Andy is a qualified social worker and has worked as a practitioner and manager in a number of authorities around the Thames Valley. Andy has a record of leading service improvement and of developing practice models that are family-focused and asset-based. He was appointed as Director of Children's Services in Wokingham in 2009 when the service was subject to Intervention. The 'turnaround' he led was rapid and sustained. In 2011 he was asked to take on the role of Chief Executive of the Council. Andy has led the Children's Trust, as Chief Executive, since its establishment in 2018. He retired in December 2023 to take up the role of Chair of the Trust Board.

Andy is married with three adult children. He is looking forward to exploring retirement!

Professor Jon Glasby - Non-Executive Director

Jon is Professor of Health and Social Care in the University of Birmingham's Department of Social Work and Social Care and UK Director of IMPACT (the UK centre for implementing evidence in adult social care). A qualified social worker by background, he is involved in regular research, teaching, consultancy and policy advice around implementing evidence-based practice, health and social care partnerships, community care and personalisation. He is a former Non-Executive Director of Birmingham Children's Hospital, and a current Non-Executive Director of University Hospitals Birmingham. He has provided policy advice to the Department of Health, the Cabinet Office and Downing Street on the future of health and social services, and from 2003 to 2009 was a Trustee of the Social Care Institute for Excellence (the national body responsible for identifying and disseminating what works in social care). He is currently a Senior Fellow of the UK School for Social Care Research and a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences. From 2008 to 2015, he was Director of the University of Birmingham's Health Services Management Centre (HSMC) and from 2015 to 2020 he was Head of the School of Social Policy. In 2022, he was a special adviser to the House of Lords Adult Social Care Committee.

Ruth Harker - Non-Executive Director

Ruth taught in Birmingham for just over forty years, twenty of these as Principal/Executive Headteacher, before retiring in August 2016. Working in a diverse range of schools, she saw the challenges faced by many children and was involved in innovative partnerships to help tackle these issues. After opening the new Shenley Academy, the consistent award of 'Outstanding' by OFSTED for safeguarding was an endorsement of the emphasis given to safeguarding and children's welfare. Having successfully led two of Birmingham's largest schools during periods of challenge, Ruth oversaw several other schools in difficulties. As Chair of the local network Behaviour Group, she led the project group to set up a new Alternative Provision Free School. Ruth is currently the Chair of Governors at this Alternative Provision School in Birmingham and the Chair of Governors for Birmingham Virtual School. She also chairs the Trust Board's Workforce Committee. For five years Ruth was a Governor at the University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust. She is married with one daughter, who is a teacher.

Colin Horwath - Non-Executive Director

Colin is a qualified accountant, who has spent his career working with the public sector. He was a partner with KPMG, based in Birmingham for 20 years, leading audit and advisory assignments. His internal responsibilities included heading the national public sector practice. He is a non-executive director at Worcestershire NHS Trust. He was also Governor at an Academy for 8 years. He is married with grown up children. His interests are classic cars and music, as well as learning to speak German badly. Colin currently chairs the Trust Board's Finance & Resources Committee and the Nominations & Remuneration Committee



Elizabeth Stafford - Non-Executive Director

Liz has many years of experience as a Chief Executive of Probation organisations, including Warwickshire Probation Trust and the Warwickshire and West Mercia Community Rehabilitation Company. Before becoming Chief Officer for Warwickshire Probation Area in 2001, she was a senior manager for West Midlands Probation. She is pleased to be able to bring her skills and experience to support Birmingham Children's Trust having lived in Birmingham since 1982 and having worked for Birmingham City Council Social Services Department and Education Departments from 1982 to 1990. Liz currently chairs the Trust Board's Performance and Quality Assurance Committee.

Amrick Singh Ubhi DL (Deputy Lieutenant) - Non-Executive Director

Amrick Singh was Centre Director of the Nishkam Centre for 13 years and now heads up Civic Engagement & Partnerships on behalf of the Nishkam Group. The Nishkam Centre is a faith inspired, voluntary sector civic organisation that merges spirituality and secularity creating a seamless fusion of values, ethics, and justice for the common good of all humanity. He brings extensive Non-Executive Director and Advisory Board experience to Birmingham Children's Trust, including Acorns Children's Hospice, Soho Road BID, and other voluntary, public sector and health organisations. These roles are particularly in the areas of addressing inequalities, social justice, interfaith facilitation, stakeholder engagement, and promoting collaboration to bring about positive outcomes. He is passionate about working with people to enable them to excel and to make change for the betterment of society. Driven by the value and impact of social change, he has experience in organisational development, business transformation, quality improvement and organisational capacity building with integrity, attention to detail and tangible results. His previous roles have included high profile, prestigious organisations like Shell (UK and Holland), British Gas, Bosal International, Thyssen Krupp Group, Jaguar, Rolls Royce, and Ford.

Amrick was honoured to be appointed a Deputy Lieutenant with the West Midlands Lieutenancy in 2023.

Ama Agbeze MBE – Non-Executive Director

The bulk of Ama's career has been spent as a professional athlete culminating in captaining Team England to netball gold at the 2018 Commonwealth Games. Alongside sport, Ama has worked as a solicitor in a variety of disciplines including family, commercial, charity and banking. As an ambassador and trustee for a number of charities Ama has a focus on the benefits of physical activity on health outcomes, using sport to help realise potential in children and young people. Ama regularly speaks and advocates for diversity and inclusion, improving life opportunities in areas of deprivation, cultural development and organisational change, leadership and mental health. Recently an independent Board Member of the Organising Committee for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, Ama splits her time between Birmingham and Broad Oak.

Lisa Field – Non-Executive Director

Lisa has worked in Higher Education management for most of her career, in roles spanning welfare, advocacy, compliance, governance, and programme management. She currently works in the Social Inclusion Team at the University of Warwick, where she centres anti-discriminatory approaches in relation to staff diversity, inclusion, and belonging. Lisa is committed, both personally and professionally, to advocating for equitable policies and practices across sectors. She has served as a mentor on the Sprint women's development program, a facilitator on the Tackling Racial Inequality at Warwick Staff Development Program and is a Rainbow Ally. Lisa also established Warwick's Part-Time Staff Network and the Parent's SEND Community Network at her children's primary school. With a law background, Lisa previously worked in the charity sector in advocacy for refugees and asylum seekers before transitioning to higher education. She was born in Stourbridge, has lived in Birmingham for nearly 20 years, and has two school-aged children.



Executive Directors

James Thomas - Chief Executive

James Thomas was the Corporate Director for Children and Culture at the London Borough of Tower Hamlets between 2020 and 2023, where he was also appointed to be Deputy Chief Executive. Prior to that the substantive leadership roles that James held were as Interim Chief Executive of the Northamptonshire Children's Trust; Director of Children's Services for the London Borough of Richmond; Director of Children's Services for the Greater Manchester Borough of Tameside; Director of Children's Services for the London Borough of Newham; and Director of Family Services for Westminster City Council. James has for some years provided leadership for ADCS on multi-agency safeguarding. He is a Non-Executive Director of the Innovation Unit. James has maintained his status as a registered Social Worker. James's core values are rooted in a commitment to public service, conviction of the need for social justice and to combat inequality and discrimination, and integrity in all he does. He is a Londoner with family roots that encompass Wales, India, Cheshire, Ireland and Russia.

Lee Yale-Helms - Director of Finance and Resources

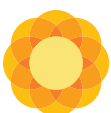
Lee joined the Trust in September 2018. He is a qualified public service accountant whose career spans 14 years in local government, including work in education and supporting children with special needs. His career spans a further 18 years in public services financial advisory roles, including Director of Finance at Doncaster Children's Services Trust. Lee provides financial expertise and input to the Trust's strategic and business planning processes and leads the delivery of a range of corporate and support services. He is an associate member of the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADSC) and was President of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA) in the Midlands 2021-2023, representing Birmingham at a national level with both CIPFA and ADCS and promoting better funding for children's social care.

David Stringfellow - Interim Director of Practice

David started his career in Birmingham as a social work assistant and then as a qualified social worker in the East of the city. He has extensive experience of children's social care having worked across a range of departments at all levels. Notably he led the implementation of the first Multiagency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in the country. David has specialised in supporting the transformation of failing authorities and has a proven track record of improving Ofsted ratings. Prior to joining the Trust in April 2019 David was a Director of Children's Social Care in the North of the country.

Lisa Jamieson – Acting Director of Commissioning and Corporate Parenting

Lisa began working at the Trust in 2018 taking up a permanent position as Assistant Director for Corporate Parenting and Commissioning in 2019, following 25 years working in the North West of England. A graduate of Liverpool University, Lisa is committed to supporting the workforce across the Trust and has a keen interest in equality and diversity. Lisa spent many years as a member of the Coram BAAF (British Association for Adoption and Fostering) equalities diversity policy development group. Lisa has mentored a number of managers into leadership roles. Lisa has a proven track record of transforming services particularly in fostering, adoption and the multi-agency safeguarding hub, leading the Trust fostering and adoption services to be judged Good with Outstanding features.



Our senior leadership team welcome you

Birmingham Children's Trust Board

Executive management team



James Thomas
Chief Executive



Lee Yale-Helms
Director of Finance and Resources



David Stringfellow
Interim Director of Practice



Lisa Jamieson
Interim Director of Commissioning and Corporate Parenting

Chair and non-executive directors



Andy Couldrick
Chair



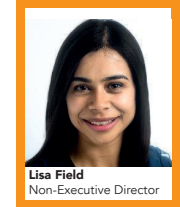
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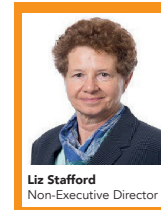
Ruth Harker
Non-Executive Director



Lisa Field
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Amrick Singh Ubhi DL
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BIRMINGHAM
CHILDREN'S TRUST

Info correct as of:
14 May 2024

This information is available on our website

https://www.birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk/info/1/about_the_trust/116/birmingham_childrens_trusts_board

BIRMINGHAM CHILDREN'S TRUST