

A woman wearing a black Mencap Community Cafe cap and a bright green apron over a black shirt is smiling and leaning over a table. She is setting a white napkin on a table with a black and white striped tablecloth. On the table, there is a small potted plant with pink flowers, a silver pepper grinder, and a white ceramic container with cutlery. A white card with the number "1" is on a stand. The background is a blurred indoor setting.

Appointment of
**Chair of
the Board**
Royal Mencap Society



Introduction

Thank you for your interest in learning more about the Chair position at Royal Mencap Society (“Mencap”). Derek Lewis will complete his second and final term as Chair in 2022, having served Mencap for 8 years. Derek has done an excellent job of strengthening the governance of Mencap and making a huge contribution to the organisation Mencap is today.

Mencap’s vision is for the UK to be the best place in the world for people with a learning disability to live happy and healthy lives. This vision informs our new strategy which was launched in April 2020 and is called the [Big Plan](#).

The Big Plan places Mencap at the start of a very exciting and innovative period. This is a critical moment to recruit a Chair to lead a diverse board. The Chair will work with trustees to oversee the Executive Team’s delivery of the Big Plan and radical organisational change to devolved, empowered and accountable self-managed teams.

Mencap’s mission is still as vital as ever. Despite the progress that has been made, people with a learning disability continue to face inequalities in many aspects of life. The Covid-19 pandemic not only highlighted but worsened these inequalities. Funding for social care continues to be under enormous strain; successive governments have promised much-needed reform, but none has delivered concrete plans.

Mencap works to ensure safe, independent, and secure living in the community for people with a learning disability and to eliminate the remaining appalling and unsuitable institutional living in long stay assessment and treatment units, while improving opportunities and quality of life. Our mission is to ensure that people with a learning disability are fully included within their communities and have opportunities to work and make independent choices to enjoy a happy, healthy, and independent life according to their aspirations.

Mencap is considered a key stakeholder by the government in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and a policy and thought leader on learning disability. Also, as one of the largest providers of personal support services to people with a learning disability we are able to speak with authority and are held in high regard by commissioners and regulatory bodies.

There are three key value-based questions we will ask of the new Chair, before looking at the specific qualities and skillsets needed.

1. Do you believe in and share Mencap's determination to support people with a learning disability to shape their own happy and healthy lives?
2. Does our Big Plan resonate with you and excite you?
3. Are you committed to leading an inclusive and diverse Board as we seek to oversee complex risks, significant innovation and transformation, adopting agile approaches as we learn?

Mencap is seeking a Chair who shares our determination to turn our vision of people with a learning disability living happy and healthy lives into reality. If this vision inspires you then we do hope you will consider engaging in a dialogue with us as described at the back of this information pack.



Our Mission

In 1946, Judy Fryd, angered and frustrated by the lack of support and provision available to her daughter Felicity, who had a learning disability, wrote to Nursery World magazine asking that other parents of children with a learning disability reach out to her. More than 1,000 parents responded, and Judy went on to suggest they should all band together to plead their cause with the various health and education authorities. Here, Mencap was born.

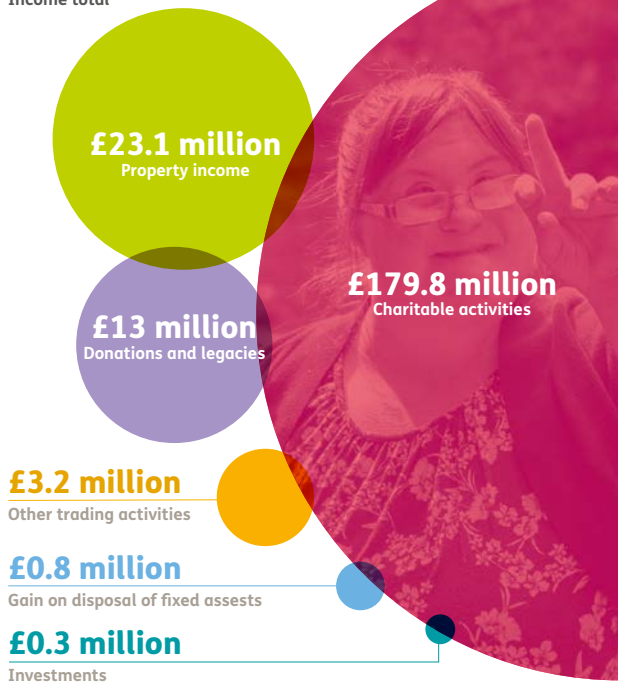
Mencap's vision remains clear: for the UK to be the best place in the world for people with a learning disability to live happy and healthy lives.

To achieve this vision, we place people with a learning disability at the centre of all we are and do.

Mencap now has over 8,500 employees and 2,000 volunteers, in addition to the very large number of people who work with Network Partners, including Mencap Local Groups, which are independent charities.

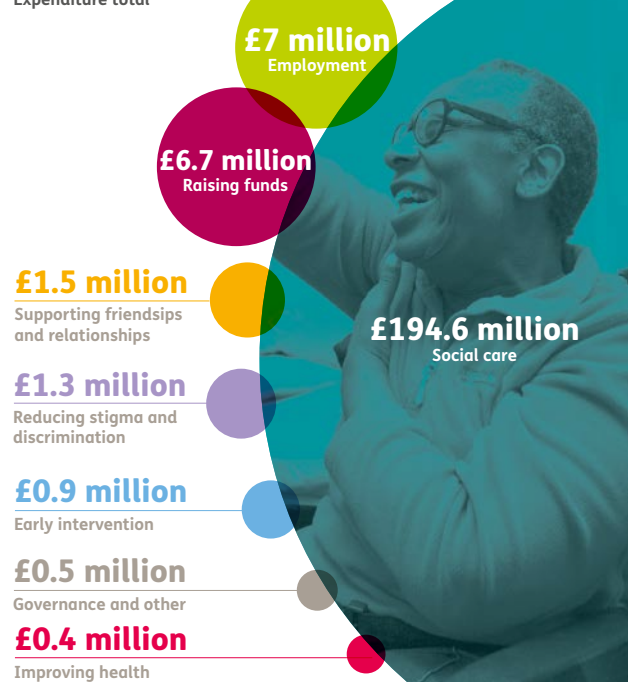
£220.2m

Income total



£212.8m

Expenditure total



Mencap's Values

- We are passionate about making the world a better place.
- We are inclusive of everyone.
- We are brave, we challenge and try new things.
- We are positive in our work and with each other.
- We are kind to everyone.

Mencap's values determine our culture and inform our approach to what we are and how we want to be seen. We asked to be judged on our values and expect everyone associated with Mencap to demonstrate these values in everything we do.

Our Approach

Mencap is dedicated to supporting people with a learning disability to speak out and be heard, make their own choices, and realise their own ambitions.

This guiding priority is evident throughout Mencap from the central strategic role of the [Voices Council](#) working in partnership with the Board of Trustees to the Learning Disability Panels' role in our interview processes, from the vital contribution of Mencap colleagues with a learning disability to our ambassadors, media spokespeople and parliamentary engagement teams who add their own voices to champion the rights of people with a learning disability.

Keeping people with a learning disability at the heart of all we do shapes our organisational structure and approach, and integrates the work of a vast grassroots community network, extensive personal support services, and a bold influencing agenda.

Local Community Engagement: Mencap works with a diverse network of hundreds of local groups and partner organisations, from large-scale service providers to small social groups who organise leisure and sport activities. These organisations share our values and many also share the Mencap brand. Our Network Partners contribute countless volunteer hours to enrich the community life of people with a learning disability, increasing the opportunities available to them in their local area.

Providing Personal Support Services: Mencap delivers personal support services to more than 5,000 people. Our services range from round-the-clock support to employment programmes and other day services. We also provide information and advice. Last year 94.5% of our services in England were rated Good or Outstanding by the Care Quality Commission. We are also commissioned to provide services in Wales and Northern Ireland providing a similar standard of support and care. Like all of us, the lives of people with a learning disability are individually complex, so our service offering needs to be relational and tailored to people's needs, desires, and expectations. Read more about our services [here](#).

Influencing Systemic Change: Our relationships with people with a learning disability inform our influencing agenda, and research and advocacy in turn shapes best practice. By funding research, launching campaigns, tireless advocacy, and an increasingly active media presence, we aim to amplify the voices of people with a learning disability. We won't stop until people with a learning disability are included and valued equally in society.

With these three expressions of our mission working together, centred on the experience and voice of people with a learning disability, Mencap is a powerful and effective force for change.

For more information about our work, please read our full annual report [here](#).



Current context of the Mencap Chair Appointment

As we celebrate our 75th anniversary, Mencap is in a period of exciting and dynamic evolution, as envisioned by our [strategy](#).

We are ambitious to see people with a learning disability be integral contributors to and creators of diverse, inclusive, and healthy communities across the UK.

Though we have seen significant breaking down of stigmas and developed a suite of excellent support services, we acknowledge our vision is far from being achieved. Mencap has the strength and scale to operate nationally and the person-centred culture to ensure everyone we work with has tailored support.

To deliver the Big Plan, the Mencap Board works closely with the Executive Team and the Voices Council to measure our impact. The Chair will play a key role in the ongoing conversation which asks some key questions about our own development as an organisation, such as:

- How can Mencap become even more responsive to the insights and experiences of people with a learning disability?
- With an agile, outside-in, listening and learning culture, how do we need to keep changing to be a good partner for those with a learning disability?
- As new approaches and initiatives emerge, how can we manage the risks of change processes and quickly and effectively align our energies and resources to achieve greatest impact?
- What organisational size, structure, and defined scope of services will deliver the most difference to the lives of people with a learning disability? What are the boundaries of our operations, and where should we focus?
- What systems and new technology adaptations are needed for us to give our dispersed teams the freedom they need to best respond to the needs and expectations of people with a learning disability?
- What approach to governance, operating at the right strategic level, is needed by a modern, focussed, and impactful Mencap?
- How can we continue to develop our collaborations and partnerships, including with our Network Partners, in order to together be a catalyst for innovation in local communities and deliver more holistic support for people with a learning disability?
- Are there new ways of financing our mission?

The Trustees of Mencap are excited about the ambitions of the Big Plan.





Role Description

The Trustees of Mencap are passionate about inclusion, and our Board culture ensures every voice is valued. Our guiding principles are – mutual respect, focussing on our purpose and the big issues, open mindedness, individual responsibility for collective performance, and a learning culture.

The qualities and abilities we are looking for in the next Chair of Mencap include:

- A motivating conviction to increase the visibility and power of people with a learning disability and to working alongside them to create a more inclusive and diverse society;
- Demonstration of living our values;
- Excellent group facilitation skills; chair meetings well to focus on key themes, engage everyone at the table, summarise discussions to name a decision or to suggest a clear route forward, balancing professionalism with relational sensitivity and making the time spent together meaningful as well as enjoyable;
- Commitment to leading a diverse and inclusive board, with an active listening style and the ability to draw out and build on the strong contributions from others;
- Wisdom gained from leading organisational change, particularly pioneering and agile transformation journeys;
- Skill at helping a Board challenge and debate with respect and an ability to accept constructive challenge in return;
- Calm and sound judgement in order to govern change, innovation, and growth successfully and effectively identify and negotiate the risks, criticisms, and failures that will arise along the way; with either experience of or commitment to exemplary charity governance;
- Ability to provide oversight, support, and guidance to the Chief Executive and to work collaboratively in developing and implementing the strategy and monitoring performance of the organisation;
- A coaching style to encourage the professional growth of the CEO and Executive Team and the maturing of fellow Board members;
- A natural communicator and ‘people person’. Able to inspire audiences with clear and compelling messages about Mencap;
- Willingness to travel around the UK to visit Mencap services and partners;
- Time and enthusiasm to dedicate to the role of Chair.



Time Commitment and Tenure

The trustee board is made up of the Chair of Royal Mencap Society and up to 12 trustees.

The term of appointment is four years with the possibility of renewal for a period of up to four more years. This is a voluntary role. The Chair is asked to give 3-4 days a month to Mencap.

Each year, Mencap has four regular board meetings, which occupy most of a day and are normally held in our central London office, and a two-day meeting outside London that incorporates a review of strategy and more time to consider bigger issues. The Chair will also attend the Voices Council meetings, which are typically held the day before Mencap Board Meetings.

Our Committee structure is under review, and we interested to hear the incoming Chair's perspective on their involvement in Committees. Current Committees include the Nominations Committee; the Audit and Risk Committee the Finance, Planning, and Remuneration Committee; and the Quality and Compliance Committee.

The time commitment also includes presence at the Annual Supporters Meeting; internal visits to meet staff team, see some of our Personal Services' sites, and strengthen relationship with Network Partners; occasional external representation; and regular meetings with the Chief Executive including planning of Board meetings. The Chair also conducts the annual performance review of the Board members and the Chief Executive.

The appointed Chair Designate will be invited to attend the Mencap Board meetings as soon as possible as Chair Designate.



How to Apply

Mencap is being supported by Macaulay Search.

Applications should be sent by email to ewen.mcalpine@macaulaysearch.com and must be received by the end of the day on Monday, January 10th, 2022.

Your application should comprise:

- A motivation letter of not more than two pages;
- A full CV, including any prior governance positions held.

The Trustee Working Group overseeing the Trustee appointment process will review all applications and invite longlisted candidates to first interview at Mencap's offices on Wednesday, February 2nd, 2022.

Recognising this is a two-way discernment process, shortlisted candidates will be offered one-to-one time with the retiring Chair Derek Lewis and also the CEO Edel Harris. The interview process will also include meeting with members of the Voices Council and staff team.

Following the first interviews, finalist candidates can further their knowledge of Mencap through discussions with other Board members and Executive Team members, as well as a site visit to experience our work directly. A final interview will be held on Wednesday, March 3rd, 2022.

Thank you for considering serving the work of Mencap. Please do be in touch with Ewen McAlpine at Macaulay Search if you have any questions about this exciting governance opportunity.