



# South of England Advocacy Projects

Appointment of Company Secretary

Information for Candidates

May 2009



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**This document provides candidates with information on the appointment of the Company Secretary for South of England Advocacy Projects. For further information about this organisation please visit the website at <http://www.seap.org.uk>**

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# 1. The Organisation

## Background

South of England Advocacy Projects (SEAP) is a Registered Charity and a Company Limited by Guarantee. SEAP was formed in 2000, having taken over the management of three projects from a local Council for Voluntary Services.

SEAP now oversees the management of 6 projects across the South East and South West regions:

- *MY CHOICE* (Adults with Learning Disabilities) – East Sussex
- *Xpress* (Children & Young People) – East Sussex
- *ICAS* (Independent Complaints Advocacy Service) – South East & South West Regions – supporting those who wish to make a complaint about their NHS healthcare
- *Mental Health Advocacy Service* (Adults with Mental Health Issues) – East Sussex, East and West Berkshire & Slough
- *SEAP Portsmouth* (IMCA/Mental Health/Learning Disability/Physical Disability/Sensory Impairment Advocacy/Appropriate Adult) – Portsmouth
- *SEAP Cornwall* (IMCA/Mental Health Advocacy) – Cornwall and Isles of Scilly.

The purpose of the organisation is to ensure that the views, wishes and feelings of those using health and social care services are promoted to service providers; and to provide advocacy support to individuals or groups who wish to resolve specific issues. It achieves this primarily in two ways:

- Advocates provide information, support and representation to clients relating to specific difficulties, concerns, or complaints
- The organisation works directly with service providers at local and national level, aiming to ensure that client experiences are at the heart of service planning, implementation and monitoring.

The organisation also provides a number of related services, including training, consultation exercises, and client-group specific services such as buddy schemes, independent visitor services, peer advocacy projects, and supporting clients to be involved in local and national groups.

SEAP is committed to the central advocacy principles of independence, confidentiality, best interests, and empowerment. It believes that the views, wishes and feelings of clients should be central to both its own work, and the planning and delivery of health and social care services. SEAP staff are required to work to high standards of professionalism with both clients and service providers, building good working relationships with key stakeholders across all sectors whilst maintaining the core independence of the service.

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## Structure and Governance

SEAP is governed by a Trustee Board, currently comprising 9 members. The Chief Executive is Jill Miles, who leads an executive management team of 4. SEAP has over 130 staff plus sessional workers spread over 18 offices across the South of England. SEAP relies on the contribution of volunteers; its services would not always be possible without its 80 trained volunteers who carry out various roles.

The Trustee Board, led by the Chair, is the governing body for SEAP and the policy making and standard setting body for the organisation. It sets the policy of the charity, determines corporate strategy, including setting key strategic objectives, makes major decisions about the use of finances and sets a framework for human resources policy.

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## 2. The Role

SEAP is looking to recruit a Company Secretary to replace our previous Secretary, who stood down earlier this year.

SEAP is looking for a dynamic individual to meet this challenge and to lead this fast growing, nationally recognised Advocacy organisation.

### Role Description

The Company Secretary is an officer of the Charity responsible to the Board of Trustees collectively for impartial advice concerning the sound governance of the Charity and for the guidance of the Board on all matters relating thereto. The Secretary primarily reports to the Board through the Chair (as the person appointed to lead the Board).

1. To act as Company Secretary and ensure that company law, charity law and regulatory reporting requirements are complied with.
2. To ensure that all meetings and corporate decisions comply with the requirements of the Charity's governing documents, reflect the objects of the Charity and continue to provide public benefit.
3. To act as custodian of the Charity's governing documents, in liaison with the Board; reviewing their appropriateness and drafting any necessary amendments; and monitoring that the Charity's activities reflect the Objects set out in the governing documents.
4. To ensure compliance with all statutory filings, including the Annual Returns and the Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts, required to be made with Companies House and the Charity Commission.
5. To certify the maintenance of statutory registers and books, and other legal and important documents, such as insurance policies.
6. To prepare and present papers dealing with governance matters to the Board and its committees, as well Annual General Meetings; to advise on procedures for such meetings; and to ensure that those procedures are followed.
7. To advise the Board of any legal and regulatory implications of the Charity's strategic Business Plan.
8. To keep under close review all legislative, regulatory and corporate governance developments that might affect the Charity's operations, and ensure the Board is fully briefed on these and that it has regard to them when taking decisions.

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9. To act as an additional and impartial enquiring voice in relation to Board decisions which particularly affect the governance of the Charity, drawing on practical aspects thereof, including law, tax and business finance.
  10. To act as a confidential sounding board to the Chairman, the Trustees and the Charity's management on governance issues that may concern them.
  11. To help in the induction of new Board members into the Charity and their roles and responsibilities.

### **3. Person Specification**

The Company Secretary will be able to demonstrate the skills and track record to work with the Board in this important role. He or she must have a passion for the vision of SEAP, and provide the energy, enthusiasm and drive to bring about significant change.

Candidates will be able to demonstrate the following skills and personal qualities:

1. A strong commitment to the vision and values of SEAP
2. Knowledge and understanding of Advocacy within the health and social care field.
3. High level of interpersonal skills and ability to communicate with service users, staff and stakeholders
4. Commitment to the organisation
5. Willingness to devote the necessary time and effort
6. Strategic vision
7. Good, objective judgment.
8. Ability to think creatively
9. Willingness to speak their mind
10. Understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship
11. Ability to work effectively as a member of a team
12. Organisational ability
13. Knowledge or experience of business and committee procedures
14. Minute-taking experience, if this is not being delegated to staff
15. Ability to maintain confidentiality in respect of those matters which are commercially sensitive or secret and only share them with colleagues and

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others on a need to know basis who are themselves bound by an obligation of confidentiality

16. Comply with office routines and company administrative procedures.

17. Excellent IT skills, in particular word processing

18. Ability to manage own work according to changing priorities with a flexible working attitude

19. Ability to liaise with tact and diplomacy at all levels throughout the company

20. Good communication skills, good memory, enthusiasm and sense of humour

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## **4. Terms of Appointment**

Trusteeship is a voluntary role and SEAP's Chair and Trustees are not paid. Reasonable out of pocket expenses will be met.

The role requires a time commitment of between one to two days a month or eighteen to twenty four days a year. This includes 6 formal Trustee Board meetings a year and a Strategic Planning Day.

Trustee Board and Committee meetings are currently held in East Sussex. Some travel throughout England will be required.

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## 5. How to Apply

Applications should be sent to:

**Human Resources Department  
SEAP  
42 Robertson Street  
Hastings  
East Sussex  
TN34 1HL**

or by fax: 01424 429163

or email: [hr@seap.org.uk](mailto:hr@seap.org.uk)

The closing date for applications is **29 May 2009**

Please enclose with your application:

- a full CV, including educational and professional qualifications, a full employment history showing the more significant positions, responsibilities held, relevant achievements and budgets and staff managed;
- a covering statement of not more than two pages summarising your proven ability related to this role and including the name and contact details of two referees (who will not be contacted unless you are shortlisted for final interview);
- the completed detachable candidate summary form and equal opportunities monitoring sheet, which are attached. Applications from all groups are warmly welcomed;
- daytime, evening and/or mobile telephone numbers (to be used with discretion).

### **The process**

The selection panel will select a shortlist of candidates. Interviews are expected to take place in Hastings week commencing 8 June 2009.



**STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**

**SUMMARY DETAILS**

Please complete this form and send with your application to SEAP			
<b>SEAP Company Secretary</b>			
Surname	First name	Initials	Title
Address for correspondence			
Phone	Email		
Mobile			
Latest employer (organisation name)	Latest job title		
How did you learn of this vacancy?			

**Please return this form with your application.**



**STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**

### **Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form**

South of England Advocacy Projects values diversity and promotes equality. We encourage and welcome applications from suitably skilled candidates from all backgrounds. Monitoring recruitment and selection procedures is one way of helping us to ensure that there is no discrimination in the way that we recruit and select people for jobs.

To do this we need to know about the diversity profile of people who apply for posts at SEAP. Please help us by providing the following information. The information you give is confidential and will be separated from the application form prior to shortlisting. It will not be accessed by any person involved in making selection decisions. If you prefer not to answer any of the questions, please leave them blank.

#### **Data Protection Act 1998**

SEAP will record the information given for the purposes of recruitment and selection monitoring. If you become an employee of SEAP the information will be processed for the purposes of personnel administration only. The information will be retained for monitoring purposes only.

Thank you for your co-operation.

#### **Gender**

Male  Female

#### **Age**

Date of birth:                      Age:                      years

#### **Nationality (please state):**

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#### **Religion/Belief**

Do you follow a particular religion or hold a religious or similar philosophical belief?

Yes  No

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**Ethnic Origin (please check the relevant box)**

**Asian or Asian British**

Bangladeshi

Indian

Pakistani

Any other Asian background (please specify):

**Black or Black British**

African

Caribbean

Any other black background (please specify):

**Chinese**

Chinese

Any other Chinese background (please specify):

**Mixed**

White & Black Caribbean

White & Black African

White & Asian

Any other mixed background (please specify):

**White**

British

Irish

Any other white background (please specify):

**Any other ethnic background (please specify):** .....

**Sexual Orientation**

How would you describe your sexual orientation?

Bisexual

Gay man

Gay woman/lesbian

Heterosexual/straight

Other  please specify .....

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## **Disability**

A disability has been defined under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) as a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term (i.e. more than 12 months) adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities. You may still be considered to have a disability if you are currently not adversely affected but the impairment is likely to recur. People with HIV, cancer and multiple sclerosis are deemed to be covered by the DDA from the point of diagnosis, rather than from the point when the condition has some adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Do you consider yourself to be disabled within the definition of the DDA?

Yes  No

If yes, please give details of your disability or condition:

## **Volunteering**

Are you, or have you been, a SEAP volunteer?

Yes  No

**Please return this form with your application form.**