



Board of Directors: candidates' supporting statements

There are four candidates for election to the Board of Directors at the 2021 AGM. Gemma Crompton, Lucy Mulvagh and Maureen O'Neill OBE are existing VHS Directors whose initial three year term is ending but who wish to serve for a further (final) three year term. Christine Carlin is a new candidate and has not previously served as a VHS Director. All four candidates' organisations are Full Members of VHS.

Their supporting statements are published in full below.

1. Gemma Crompton Policy and Public Affairs Manager, Alcohol Focus Scotland

I am a highly qualified and experienced policy manager, with fourteen years' experience working in public and voluntary sector policy development, with a focus on public health policy and consumer advocacy. My work developing and delivering policy change in Scotland across range of fields has often taken account of the particular needs of those experiencing vulnerability, disadvantage or health inequalities. This knowledge and experience has enabled me to make a valuable contribution to the Voluntary Health Scotland board over the past three years, and I would welcome the opportunity to serve for a further three years. This would mean I could continue to contribute to the important work VHS is doing, especially in improving public health, mental health, and in tackling health inequalities.

I am currently Policy and Public Affairs Manager at Alcohol Focus Scotland (AFS). I lead AFS's policy and public affairs work, with a principal focus on alcohol marketing, licensing and supporting the effective implementation of national policy at local level. I have a particular interest in the use of evidence-based research as the foundation for sound and influential advocacy campaigns.

I am able to contribute particular expertise and experience to the Board in relation to media, communications, public affairs, public health, and policy development. I am currently serving as a member of the VHS staffing and employment policies sub-group.

2. Lucy Mulvagh Director of Policy and Communications, Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (the ALLIANCE)

I have been a member of VHS for several years and served one term as a member of the Board of Directors (2019-2021). I would greatly welcome the opportunity to continue this role for a second term, working with other members of the Board and the staff team to help the organization achieve its strategic aims and objectives. Particularly over the course of the past two, difficult, years, VHS has demonstrated the vital role it plays on behalf of its membership. The health inequalities faced by many people in Scotland are ongoing, and

there is a pressing need for VHS to continue its work with members, partners, and other stakeholders to address this issue. As a member of the VHS Board of Directors I believe I can play a role in supporting this, and bring a strong set of skills and experience, including charity governance, policy, communications, and human rights.

3. Maureen O'Neill OBE **Director, Faith in Older People**

It has been a privilege to be a VHS Board Member for the past three years and I would like to continue so that I can use what I have learned to enable me to contribute to the guidance of VHS and to support the staff team in their work as we develop strategic plans and partnerships.

I have been involved in the work of VHS over several years and believe that as a small organization it fulfils a big role with enormous competence and commitment which has added to the knowledge of expertise of the third sector. The particular emphasis on engagement is fundamental and for which I feel a particular commitment. To have been on the Board during the past three years during which the sector has been confronted with Covid and its impact and to see how the organization has responded to the pandemic bringing people together to find out the issues and to work with public organizations to emphasize the issues and potential action has been striking.

Before the pandemic I was pleased to be one of the organizations that VHS brought together to consider the impact of enduring mental health problems for older people. The research and the contacts VHS enabled has enhanced my work with faith communities but the input from a wide range of organizations has also been highlighted to government and others. See: [Falling Off a Cliff at 65 - serious mental health issues in later life](#)

I believe that the collaborative nature of the organization enables a wide reach in identifying current key issues and taking action but also creating awareness of issues that could be arising and plays a pivotal role in informing organizations and public bodies of work in the voluntary sector which impacts on Government policy as well as on each other.

I believe that I bring considerable experience and knowledge to the Board both in relation to the current issues affecting the sector as a whole and specific health and social care issues but to management and planning and would be pleased to continue on the Board.

Below is a snapshot of my experience in the sector in which I have undertaken considerable development activities including the introduction of advocacy to the State Hospital and a service in Fife; after-school clubs, campaigned for and succeeded in getting Free Personal Care in Scotland with the Age Concern Scotland Team and highlighted the impact of elder abuse.

Currently as the Director of FiOP we are emphasizing the importance of the spiritual dimension to the lives of older people and those who care for them. Our current work themes are on dementia, mental health challenges and end of life matters. We provide education, undertake research, organize engagement opportunities and during the pandemic we set up a listening service to support social care staff.

All activities involve a team to make things happen and I have appreciated working with great teams over the years.

I have been involved in the voluntary sector in Scotland since 1980 both as a staff member and a board member in a range of organizations which have given me a wide experience of health and social care issues.

- Scottish Council for Single Homeless – Administrator
- West Lothian Local Health Council – Coordinator
- YWCA – Director
- Scottish Association for Mental Health – Head of Policy and Information
- Age Concern Scotland – Director
- Faith in Older People – Director

I have gained considerable knowledge of health and social care policy and practice during this time and seen many changes over the years. All the posts have involved interaction with Government, local authorities, and collaboration with other third sector organizations, academics, faith communities and the private sector.

In addition, I have been fortunate to have served on several Third Sector Boards including:

Edinburgh Voluntary Organizations Council – Chair
SCVO – Council member
Handicabs (HCL)– founder member
Edinburgh Council on Alcohol – Board Member – developed the West Lothian Council
Braeburn Care Home – Chair
Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh Lay Advisory Committee – Chair
European Economic and Social Committee – SG nominee - President of Social Affairs Section

Scottish Partnership on Palliative Care – current Board Member
Royal Society for the Support of Women of Scotland – current Council Member
Voluntary Health Scotland – current Board Member
Primrose Day Centre – current Board Member

NHS Quality Improvement – Board member
Scottish Council for Social Services – Board Member

4. Christine Carlin **Director Scotland, Home-Start**

My VHS journey

It came as quite a shock when I realised that I had been engaging with VHS for almost a decade now. During that time, it has been wonderful to watch how this organisation has grown in stature; and to see the impact of its incredible work in keeping health inequalities very much on the public agenda. Sometimes it is hard to remember that this is a very small team.

It has also been a privilege to have been involved on the margins of some of the amazing work VHS has driven forward - from helping to finalise the Living in the Gap report; attending

cross-party meetings, AGMs and other events; and finally, engaging with community groups last year to record the impact of the pandemic on communities.

Claire and her team bring such a strong sense of purpose, a commitment to delivering high quality research and information, together with a fabulous flair for excellent communication, that it is always a pleasure to be involved.

Little bit more about me

I spent a lot of my career in the Scottish Government (SG) leading on a number of policy areas, including Schools Qualifications and the Third Sector. I also spent many years in HR. Actually, it was my involvement in Third Sector policy that led me to leave the civil service, having seen some of the incredible work the sector was doing to change lives.

Prior to that decision, however, I spent 8 years in the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) holding two Board positions as Director of Estates and Director of HR. I have led a number of successful £multi-million projects, both in SG and SPS, including delivery of the first PFI prison in Scotland. I was a Gateway reviewer for major investment projects across Scotland. Since leaving SG in 2013, I have worked in the Third Sector, both in UK-wide and Scotland-only organisations. For nearly 6 years, I was CEO of a charity supporting families whose children have learning difficulties. During this time, we were fortunate to enjoy a period of strong organisational growth with the charity team numbers increasing from 4 to 25 and our income multiplying several times over. In addition to supporting many more families and their children, we gained recognition as a trusted adviser to a number of key organisations across Education, Health and Social Work sectors. For example, the General Teaching Council for Scotland sent several of our advisory booklets to each of its 85,000 teachers as recommended reading.

As Director Scotland, Home-Start, I work alongside our federated network of 30 Home-Starts located across Scotland. Each year, the network's staff and volunteers support thousands of families with babies and young children. Families come to Home-Start for a variety of reasons but, sadly, too many experience the challenges of poverty, trauma, loneliness and isolation, and stigma. Too often, these issues sit alongside health inequalities - often visible through generations of families and communities. For many years, I have been interested in demonstrating the impact of early intervention on positive outcomes for families and their children across many different policy areas including education, justice and health. My role in Home-Start has allowed me to bring the experiences of our thousands of families to a variety of SG policy fora, including Connected Scotland (loneliness and isolation), Perinatal and Infant Mental Health, Trauma and Poverty. Another key area of involvement for Home-Start in Scotland is the Promise (Care Review) where we are playing a leading role in exploring why families so often find it difficult to engage with statutory services.

Why apply to join and what might I bring to VHS?

I have had the opportunity to spend time working **in** Boards as a Trustee, but also **with** Boards in an Executive capacity, so I appreciate the importance of getting that dynamic right. I am a member of Changing the Chemistry (CtC) – a charity focused on improving diversity of thought in the boardroom. CtC is a peer-led organisation, and I have been volunteering with the charity for 6 years where I am a member of the Strategic Communications team. CtC has given me an amazing opportunity to learn more about how different boards operate across the public, private and third sectors.

I hope that I have gained a range of skills along the way that allow me to undertake the role of a Trustee in a positive and constructive way. But, most of all, I bring a desire to work with

others on the VHS Board to ensure this wonderful organisation continues to thrive. I bring my passion about shining a light on health inequalities; and my commitment to use the knowledge and experience of the voluntary health sector to make a positive difference for the future of individuals, families and communities.