

Further information

<i>Volunteer activity</i>	<p>I chair the Management Committee of Islington Carers Centre which is a member of the Princess Royal Trust for Carers (PRTC) network. ICC is a charity that provides a wide range of advice and support, including health and benefits advice, to people of all ages and backgrounds who care unpaid for a family member or friend who lives in Islington. ICC seeks to extend its services to more, often “hidden”, carers in the borough. It also administers a respite breaks for carers programme that is funded with government funding routed via the local council.</p> <p>We seek (ideally, Islington-connected) committee members, and volunteers, with relevant expertise - see final box.</p>
<i>What I do</i>	<p>Committee members attend the regular management committee meetings and keep up to date with the Centre’s work, protocols and aims, and support the management team’s work in preparing strategies to meet these goals, including eg fundraising planning. For the Chair, this can also mean attending some external meetings, on behalf of the Centre, with other local organisations, plus speaking at the agm and writing the Chair’s report for the annual accounts.</p>
<i>Time commitment</i>	<p>Committee meetings are held every six weeks, for two-hours (max) usually in the early afternoon. There may be subcommittee sessions. I also participate in some strategic planning sessions with ICC’s manager and relevant others, sometimes including key people from other local organisations, and attend the PRTC’s London Chairs group every few weeks. I found it useful to attend seminars on trustees’ responsibilities provided by bodies like the NCVO; and serve on a London-based committee responding to the government Green Paper on the future of care.</p>
<i>Why I do it</i>	<p>I was thrown unexpectedly into becoming a carer when my husband suffered serious head injuries in spring 2003, and so learned at first-hand the many and varied challenges faced by those caring for family members while also still tackling the ‘normal’ activities of running a family home.</p> <p>When our care arrangements eventually allowed me some spare time, I wanted to put to good use for others in the same boat, all the experience I have gained as a carer combined with whatever in my past careers - first in financial journalism and latterly in (arts) fundraising - that is useful to the ICC’s management committee.</p>
<i>Downsides</i>	<p>Being on the committee makes you a Trustee, and we have to be aware of the legal duties of trusteeship and how to follow these sensibly; and should stay abreast of legislative changes and proposed changes affecting the Centre’s work. This is actually very interesting and there is plenty of support and guidance to be had for eg from the PRTC, and the NCVO, and relevant training opportunities.</p>
<i>What to do next</i>	<p>We seek two or three additional committee members. Expertise in any of these areas would be of particular interest: Tendering, financial skills, business leases, fundraising, human resources, and experience gained within parts of the national health service. We also seek volunteers with PA/admin, and reception skills who could offer any days, or a few hours, a week.</p> <p>Our website is www.islingtoncarers.org. Email is islingtoncarers@btconnect.com (mark for the attention of the manager, Paulo Mata)</p>