WheelieQueer

Join our first board

We are recruiting two independent non-executive directors as WheelieQueer becomes a Community Interest Company

Role	Independent Non-Executive Director (NED)
Positions	Two — one finance, governance and risk; one people, safeguarding and organisational development
Organisation	WheelieQueer — disabled-led, Deaf-led, LGBTQ+ specialist welfare benefits, casework and training. Founded 2021
Based	Longbenton, North Tyneside. Meetings are remote by default
Remuneration	Unpaid. Access arrangements organised and paid for by us; travel and expenses covered
Time commitment	Four meetings a year, around a day a quarter including papers. More during the 2027 transition year
Term	Three years initially, renewable
Closing date	30 November 2026
Interviews	Early to mid December 2026, remote
Selection and appointment	Selected December 2026, then appointed as founding directors on incorporation, January–February 2027
How to express interest	A CV or short summary of your experience, a brief explanation of why you want to join WheelieQueer, and which of the two profiles you fit — to **jasper@wheeliequeer.net**. BSL video applications are welcome, on exactly the same terms as written ones
In BSL	A BSL summary of this opportunity is at **youtube.com/watch?v=MuWkxz0S1pE** — a summary, not a full translation of this pack

1. About WheelieQueer

WheelieQueer is a disabled-led, Deaf-led, LGBTQ+ specialist welfare benefits organisation, founded on 2 April 2021 and based in Longbenton, North Tyneside. We work with Deaf, disabled and LGBTQ+ people facing barriers the benefits system is not designed around: forms and assessments that are hard to access, processes that do not work in BSL, evidence requirements that assume a steady condition, and having to explain both identity and impairment before the claim itself can be made.

What we do

- **Specialist benefits casework and tribunal representation** — end to end, from application and assessment preparation through mandatory reconsideration to the First-tier Tribunal, including attending hearings.
- **Advice and assistance with Access to Work** — applications, reviews and disputes.
- **Deaf awareness and disability equality training**, delivered to employers, cultural organisations and public bodies.
- **LGBTQ+ inclusion training, workshops and consultancy**, for organisations that want to work well with LGBTQ+ people rather than simply say they do.
- **Accessibility consultancy**, including work with national institutions on paid participation by disabled people.

How we work

A Deaf BSL user coming to us chooses how their advice is delivered: directly in BSL by a Deaf or fluent BSL adviser, or by an adviser working with a registered BSL interpreter. Our benefits advisers include both Deaf and hearing disabled advisers, and the choice belongs to the client rather than to us. The organisation is led by its founder, who is Deaf, autistic, disabled and a wheelchair user, and who practises as its lead benefits adviser. Accessibility is not an add-on to the service; it is the reason the service exists.

WheelieQueer earns its income from consultancy, training and casework, including work paid for by third parties on clients' behalf. It is a member of AdviceUK and carries professional indemnity cover through AdviceUK Insurance Services.

2. The move to a Community Interest Company

WheelieQueer currently operates as a sole trader. It is incorporating as a **Community Interest Company limited by guarantee**, and these will be two of its three founding directors.

	What is planned
Why now	Professional indemnity terms were offered on the basis that WheelieQueer incorporates before the 28 August 2027 renewal. The structure decision was taken on its own merits; the deadline simply fixes the timetable

	What is planned
Which form	A CIC limited by guarantee with a small membership, using the CIC Regulator's model constitution. An ordinary company limited by guarantee was considered and rejected
Incorporation	Target January–February 2027
Business transfer	Target around 2 April 2027, the organisation's sixth anniversary
Founding date	2 April 2021 remains WheelieQueer's founding date and anniversary, whatever happens to the legal structure

What being a CIC means for directors

A statutory asset lock. Assets and surplus are locked to the community purpose, and on winding up residual assets pass to another asset-locked body. This is permanent and cannot be undone.

Two regulators. Companies House, and the Office of the Regulator of Community Interest Companies.

A public community interest report. The annual CIC34 is filed with the accounts and covers activities, the benefit delivered and **director remuneration**. It is a public document.

No dividends. A guarantee company has no shares. Money reaches people as salary, board-approved remuneration and reimbursed expenses.

3. The board you would be joining

Three directors: the founder, and the two people we are recruiting here. This is a small, working board, not a figurehead one.

Who	Role
Jasper Armitage-Williams	Founder, Chief Executive, practising lead benefits adviser and director
Non-executive director	Independent. Finance, governance and risk
Non-executive director	Independent. People, safeguarding and organisational development

Who decides what

These are the **proposed** arrangements for the first board. They will be given effect through the final Articles of Association and the CIC's conflicts of interest policy, both of which are being drafted now. The detail may be refined in that drafting; the principle will not.

Decision	Who decides
The CEO's remuneration and service contract, any transaction between the CEO and the CIC, and any performance matter concerning the CEO	**The two non-executive directors, with the CEO recused**
Strategy, budget, annual accounts, the CIC34, reserves, risk, safeguarding and data protection policies, and adviser recruitment and remuneration frameworks	The board, the CEO participating
Casework, individual adviser supervision, day-to-day operations and spending within budget	The CEO, reporting to the board
Amending the Articles, changing the name, winding up, removing a director	The members — the same three people, acting in a different capacity

What this means in practice

The founder is the organisation's lead practitioner and its chief executive. That concentration of role is normal in a small specialist organisation, and it is exactly why the two non-executive seats carry real weight: under the arrangements proposed, on anything touching his pay, his contract or his conduct, the two of you decide and he leaves the room.

Be aware of what a three-person board means in practice. Both of you must be present and unconflicted for a founder-conflicted decision, so if one of you is unavailable or has a conflict of your own, that decision waits. We would rather say that plainly than have you discover it in your first year.

We manage it by scheduling those decisions in advance rather than running them to urgent deadlines. The final Articles and the conflicts of interest policy will set out how interests are declared, what counts as a quorum, and how a decision is deferred when one cannot properly be taken. Nobody from outside the board will be brought in to vote in your place.

4. The two people we are looking for

We are not looking for benefits expertise. WheelieQueer already has a practising specialist benefits adviser on its board. We are looking for the things that are not already there.

Non-executive director 1 — finance, governance and risk

- Experience of organisational budgets and financial oversight, and comfort scrutinising management accounts and challenging financial decisions.
- Company governance experience — ideally in a CIC, charity or other social enterprise, though experience elsewhere that genuinely transfers is welcome.
- Confidence overseeing conflicts of interest and related-party transactions, including those involving the founder.
- An understanding of the risks a small advice organisation actually carries: professional indemnity, data protection, safeguarding, and dependence on one practitioner.

Non-executive director 2 — people, safeguarding and organisational development

- Experience of HR, employment or people management, including performance matters handled properly and fairly.
- Safeguarding experience, or governance experience in an organisation where safeguarding was a live board responsibility.
- Experience of helping a values-led organisation grow without losing what makes it work.
- The judgement to oversee chief executive performance in an organisation where the chief executive is also the founder and the lead practitioner.

Across both appointments

- **Meaningful understanding of Deaf, disabled and LGBTQ+ communities** — lived or professional, and running across both appointments rather than concentrated in one "diversity seat".
- At least one of you should be able to chair a difficult or founder-conflicted decision. That is a distinct skill from finance or HR expertise, and we will ask about it.
- The willingness to disagree with the founder, in the room, on the record.

> **What we are not recruiting for**
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> Benefits or welfare-rights expertise — that is already on the board.
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> Personal loyalty to the founder. It is not a criterion, and it would work against what these seats are for.

5. What independence means here

Independence here is about capability, not distance. Knowing WheelieQueer or its founder professionally is not a bar — this is a small sector, and good directors usually come out of it. What matters is whether you could put WheelieQueer's interests ahead of your relationship with its founder when the two come into conflict.

What we ask you to disclose

Tell us about any relevant personal, family, financial or professional relationship with WheelieQueer or its founder: work you have done together, campaigns or projects you have shared, social connections, any financial arrangement, and any role you hold in an organisation WheelieQueer works with. **Disclosure is not disqualification.** It lets us assess and record each relationship properly, and it is the same discipline every director is under once appointed.

Who these two seats are not open to

- Family members, and anyone living in the founder's household.
- His current personal assistants. His PAs provide him with personal support, and a PA supervising him as chief executive, setting his pay or handling an employment matter would compromise that relationship.
- Current paid WheelieQueer advisers and contractors. They reach the board through reporting and attendance for relevant items, not through board seats.
- Current WheelieQueer clients, because of confidentiality and the conflicts that would follow.

Assessed case by case

- A close personal friendship, particularly one where you and the founder confide in each other regularly. With only three directors, we cannot have both independent seats routinely conflicted.
- A role at AdviceUK, or at another organisation WheelieQueer works with — we would look at what the role is, what authority it carries and where conflicts could arise.
- A past working or financial relationship with WheelieQueer that has since ended.

> **The test we actually apply**
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> Could you vote against something the founder strongly supported? Could you review his remuneration, his performance or his conduct, and reach a decision he might dislike? Would you be comfortable declaring a conflict and withdrawing from a decision?
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> We will ask these questions at interview. We would rather hear a candid answer than a reassuring one.

Eligibility and checks

- You must be at least 16, not disqualified from acting as a company director, and not an undischarged bankrupt.
- Companies House requires **identity verification** for every director. We will take you through it.
- We will ask about conflicts of interest and take up references.

6. What you would be taking on legally

A company director has seven general duties under the Companies Act 2006. They apply to unpaid non-executive directors exactly as they apply to anyone else, which is why we set them out plainly rather than in the small print.

Duty	In practice
Act within your powers	Stay inside the Articles and the purposes the company was formed for
Promote the success of the company	For a CIC, that means the community purpose, not a return to members
Exercise independent judgement	Form your own view. Do not simply follow the founder or each other
Exercise reasonable care, skill and diligence	Read the papers. Ask the question you are not sure you should ask
Avoid conflicts of interest	Declare them, and step out of decisions where you have one
Do not accept benefits from third parties	Self-explanatory, and rarely an issue here
Declare an interest in a proposed transaction	Before the decision, not afterwards

On top of those, a CIC board is responsible for satisfying the community interest test on a continuing basis, respecting the asset lock, and filing the annual CIC34 — which, as above, makes director remuneration public.

Directors' and officers' insurance

Candidates reasonably ask about this. Directors' and officers' cover is separate from professional indemnity, and **may provide protection against certain claims arising from directors' duties** — what is actually covered depends on the policy terms, exclusions and limits, and no such policy protects a director against everything. It is **being considered as part of the CIC's insurance arrangements**, alongside the professional indemnity, public liability and cyber cover currently being settled. We will confirm the position, and what any policy does and does not cover, before anyone is asked to accept appointment.

7. How the board works, and accessibility

Accessibility here is structural. It is how the board functions, not an adjustment bolted on when someone asks.

- **BSL interpretation at every meeting**, booked with the board calendar rather than arranged meeting by meeting.
- **Papers and agendas circulated in advance**, so nobody is reading a document for the first time in the room.
- **Written minutes and action logs** for every meeting.
- **Remote participation as the default**, not the exception.
- **Access arrangements organised and paid for by WheelieQueer** — interpretation, travel, care, support worker time, assistive technology. We book and pay for these directly wherever we can, so that nobody has to fund their own access and wait to be repaid. Where something can only be arranged by you, we will pay it in advance or settle it promptly. These are an operating cost of running an accessible board, not remuneration, and they do not affect your independence.
- Adjustments at every stage of recruitment, including at interview. Tell us what you need.

> ### Time and money, plainly
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> **Four board meetings a year**, roughly a day a quarter once you count reading the papers. **Expect more during the 2027 transition year**, when the CIC is being set up and the business transferred — some extra meetings, some decisions by email.
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> **The positions are unpaid.** Access arrangements are organised and paid for by WheelieQueer directly rather than claimed back, and any out-of-pocket expense you do incur is settled promptly.
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> Term: three years initially, renewable.

8. How to express interest

This is an expression of interest, not a formal application. We are not asking for a long written submission.

- A CV, or a short summary of your relevant experience — whichever suits you.

- A few paragraphs on why you want to join WheelieQueer, and which of the two profiles you think you fit. If you think you fit both, say so.
- Anything you need us to adjust, at any stage.

A BSL summary of this opportunity is at **youtube.com/watch?v=MuWkxz0S1pE** — a summary, not a full translation of this pack.

Send it to **jasper@wheeliequeer.net**. **BSL video is welcome** and is considered on exactly the same terms as a written submission — record it however is easiest for you and send a link or a file.

When	What happens
30 November 2026	Closing date for expressions of interest
Early to mid December 2026	Conversations with shortlisted candidates — remote, with BSL interpretation, around 45 minutes. We will ask about your governance experience, your independence, your availability, your understanding of our communities, and how you would handle disagreeing with the founder
Mid to late December 2026	Checks and references, and **successful candidates selected**
January–February 2027	**Formal appointment as a founding director takes effect on incorporation**, including Companies House identity verification
Around 2 April 2027	The business transfers to the CIC and the board takes up full responsibility

If you are not sure whether this is for you

If you have most of one profile but not all of it, or you have never sat on a board before and are weighing it up, get in touch anyway. We would rather have the conversation than lose someone to a checklist.

And if this is not for you but you know someone it might suit, please pass it on.