



Andy Couldrick - Chair and Non-Executive Director

Andy is a qualified social worker and has worked as a practitioner and manager in a number of authorities around the Thames Valley. Andy has a record of leading service improvement and of developing practice models that are family-focused and asset-based. He was appointed as Director of Children's Services in Wokingham in 2009 when the service was subject to Intervention. The 'turnaround' he led was rapid and sustained. In 2011 he was asked to take on the role of Chief Executive of the Council. Andy has led the Children's Trust, as Chief Executive, since its establishment in 2018. He retired in December 2023 to take up the role of Chair of the Trust Board. Andy is married with three adult children. He is looking forward to exploring retirement!

Ama Agbeze MBE - Non-Executive Director

The bulk of Ama's career has been spent as a professional athlete culminating in captaining Team England to netball gold at the 2018 Commonwealth Games. Alongside sport, Ama has worked as a solicitor in a variety of disciplines including family, commercial, charity and banking. As an ambassador and trustee for a number of charities Ama has a focus on the benefits of physical activity on health outcomes, using sport to help realise potential in children and young people. Ama regularly speaks and advocates for diversity and inclusion, improving life opportunities in areas of deprivation, cultural development and organisational change, leadership and mental health. Recently an independent Board Member of the Organising Committee for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, Ama splits her time between Birmingham and Broad Oak.

Amanda Lowe - Non-Executive Director

Amanda is the founder, owner and managing director of STORY, a UK award-winning PR and communications agency specialising in helping organisations tell stories that matter. With more than 20 years' experience in PR and reputation management, she has worked across corporate, consumer and public sector clients including the British Business Bank, National Highways, Birmingham City Council and the Rigby Group. In 2025 she was named PR Professional of the Year by the PRCA Midlands, and in 2026 as the BusinessDesk's Company Leader of the Year. Her agency's work has a strong focus on social impact, mobility and regional growth, including supporting the recent launch of the Coronation Food Hub in Birmingham - a project delivered in partnership with the Rigby Foundation and FareShare to tackle food insecurity across the city. Amanda brings significant lived experience to the Board as a parent navigating complex multi-agency provision first-hand. She is committed to representing the voice of foster, adoptive and wider caregivers at Board level. Amanda is based in Birmingham.

Amrick Singh Ubhi DL (Deputy Lieutenant) - Non-Executive Director

Amrick Singh was Centre Director of the Nishkam Centre for 13 years and now heads up Civic Engagement & Partnerships on behalf of the Nishkam Group. The Nishkam Centre is a faith inspired, voluntary sector civic organisation that merges spirituality and secularity creating a seamless fusion of values, ethics, and justice for the common good of all humanity. He brings extensive Non-Executive Director and Advisory Board experience to Birmingham Children's Trust, including Acorns Children's Hospice, Soho Road BID, and other voluntary, public sector and health organisations. These roles are particularly in the areas of addressing inequalities, social justice, interfaith facilitation, stakeholder engagement, and promoting collaboration to bring about positive outcomes. He is passionate about working with people to enable them to excel and to make change for the betterment of society. Driven by the value and impact of social change, he has experience in organisational development, business transformation, quality improvement and organisational capacity building with integrity, attention to detail and tangible results. His previous roles have included high profile, prestigious organisations like Shell (UK and Holland), British Gas, Bosal International, Thyssen Krupp Group, Jaguar, Rolls Royce, and Ford. Amrick was honoured to be appointed a Deputy Lieutenant with the West Midlands Lieutenancy in 2023.

Andrew Cardoza - Non-Executive Director

Andy is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (FCA). He spent the last 35 years working as a chartered accountant and auditor, firstly with PwC and for the last 28 years with KPMG. His work involved auditing public sector organisations, such as local authorities, police forces, fire authorities (incl Solihull MBC, Sandwell MBC, Wolverhampton City Council, West Mids Police, West Mids Fire, West Mids Probation, West Mids Ambulance), plus a number of NHS trusts, ICBs, government departments and government bodies (incl the National Lottery, The Gambling Commission, ACAS and the Met Office). He was a non-executive director (NED) on the Board and Chair of the Finance, Risk & Audit Committee at Accord Housing. He was also a Board member on the Midlands arm of LandAid a national homelessness charity. He is married to Annie (an acupuncturist) with two grown up children (both accountants!). His interests are cricket, formula one, going to local music gigs and travelling. In addition to his role as a NED on the Trust's Board he chairs the Trust Board's Finance & Resources Committee and the Nominations & Remuneration Committee.

Helen Ellis - Non-Executive Director (Council appointed)

Helen Ellis is an experienced Children's Services Strategic Leader and has worked within the sector for over 20 years. Born and raised locally, Helen has a passion and dedication to the children, young people and families of Birmingham. Helen has an impressive track record of delivering successful, large scale modernisation programmes across Local Authority Children's Services teams which have been proven to produce sustainable and effective results. Helen's leadership experience spans all levels of management, including operational, middle and senior strategic leadership within both the public and private sector. During her time at Dudley Council, Helen was the driving force behind the Dudley Early Help offer and strategy and oversaw the implementation and delivery of the Early Help offer across the borough. Helen went on to oversee an intensive improvement programme for SEND and launched a new SEND strategy for the council in early 2022. Among other areas of success, Helen was instrumental in bringing schools together to ensure Dudley had a co-ordinated, whole system approach to improving outcomes for children, young people, and their families. Throughout her long service to the public sector Helen has worked tirelessly to promote and champion the work of the voluntary sector, establishing and nurturing relationships with local organisations, such as health, the Parent Carer Forum and numerous voluntary organisations. Helen joined Birmingham City Council in November 2022 as Director for SEND and Inclusion. Helen is at the forefront of driving forward the SEND Improvement agenda and is making a valuable contribution to the local area partnership. In her time with Birmingham Helen has already made substantial improvements in this area against a backdrop of challenging circumstances. Helen remains committed and passionate about delivering the best possible services for children and families in Birmingham.

Lisa Field - Non-Executive Director

Lisa has worked in Higher Education management for most of her career, in roles spanning welfare, advocacy, compliance, governance, and programme management. She currently works in the Social Inclusion Team at the University of Warwick, where she centres anti-discriminatory approaches in relation to staff diversity, inclusion, and belonging. Lisa is committed, both personally and professionally, to advocating for equitable policies and practices across sectors. She has served as a mentor on the Sprint women's development program, a facilitator on the Tackling Racial Inequality at Warwick Staff Development Program and is a Rainbow Ally. Lisa also established Warwick's Part-Time Staff Network and the Parent's SEND Community Network at her children's primary school.

Professor Jon Glasby - Non-Executive Director

Jon is Professor of Health and Social Care in the University of Birmingham's Department of Social Work and Social Care and UK Director of IMPACT (the UK centre for implementing evidence in adult social care). A qualified social worker by background, he is involved in regular research, teaching, consultancy and policy advice around implementing evidence-based practice, health and social care partnerships, community care and personalisation. He is a former Non-Executive Director of Birmingham Children's Hospital, and a current Non-Executive Director of University Hospitals Birmingham. He has provided policy advice to the Department of Health, the Cabinet Office and Downing Street on the future of health and social services, and from 2003 to 2009 was a Trustee of the Social Care Institute for Excellence (the national body responsible for identifying and disseminating what works in social care). He is currently a Senior Fellow of the UK School for Social Care Research and a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences. From 2008 to 2015, he was Director of the University of Birmingham's Health Services Management Centre (HSMC) and from 2015 to 2020 he was Head of the School of Social Policy. In 2022, he was a special adviser to the House of Lords Adult Social Care Committee.

Ruth Harker - Non-Executive Director

Ruth taught in Birmingham for just over forty years, twenty of these as Principal/Executive Headteacher, before retiring in August 2016. Working in a diverse range of schools, she saw the challenges faced by many children and was involved in innovative partnerships to help tackle these issues. After opening the new Shenley Academy, the consistent award of 'Outstanding' by OFSTED for safeguarding was an endorsement of the emphasis given to safeguarding and children's welfare. Having successfully led two of Birmingham's largest schools during periods of challenge, Ruth oversaw several other schools in difficulties. As Chair of the local network Behaviour Group, she led the project group to set up a new Alternative Provision Free School. Ruth is currently the Chair of Governors at this Alternative Provision School in Birmingham and the Chair of Governors for Birmingham Virtual School. She also chairs the Trust Board's Workforce Committee. For five years Ruth was a Governor at the University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust. She is married with one daughter, who is a teacher.

Executive Directors

James Thomas - Chief Executive

James Thomas was the Corporate Director for Children and Culture at the London Borough of Tower Hamlets between 2020 and 2023, where he was also appointed to be Deputy Chief Executive. Prior to that the substantive leadership roles that James held were as Interim Chief Executive of the Northamptonshire Children's Trust; Director of Children's Services for the London Borough of Richmond; Director of Children's Services for the Greater Manchester Borough of Tameside; Director of Children's Services for the London Borough of Newham; and Director of Family Services for Westminster City Council. James has for some years provided leadership for ADCS on multi-agency safeguarding. He is a Non-Executive Director of the Innovation Unit. James has maintained his status as a registered Social Worker. James's core values are rooted in a commitment to public service, conviction of the need for social justice and to combat inequality and discrimination, and integrity in all he does. He is a Londoner with family roots that encompass Wales, India, Cheshire, Ireland and Russia.

Lisa Harris – Director of Help and Protection

Lisa joined Birmingham Children's Trust in December 2021 as the Assistant Director responsible for Safeguarding. Her social work career spans 29 years, having initially qualified with a Masters in Social Work at Warwick University in 1995. Lisa has worked in several local authorities within the Midlands occupying a range of leadership positions in front-line roles and the position of Principal Social Worker in both Solihull and Walsall. Lisa would describe herself as a restorative practitioner who adopts a strengths-based and solution-focused approach to achieving positive change for children and families.

Lisa Jamieson – Director of Corporate Parenting

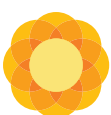
Lisa began working at the Trust in 2018 taking up a permanent position as Assistant Director for Corporate Parenting and Commissioning in 2019, following 25 years working in the North West of England. A graduate of Liverpool University, Lisa is committed to supporting the workforce across the Trust and has a keen interest in equality and diversity. Lisa spent many years as a member of the Coram BAAF (British Association for Adoption and Fostering) equalities diversity policy development group. Lisa has mentored a number of managers into leadership roles. Lisa has a proven track record of transforming services particularly in fostering, adoption and the multi-agency safeguarding hub, leading the Trust fostering and adoption services to be judged 'Good' with 'Outstanding' features.

David Stringfellow - Director of Commissioning & Specialist Services

David started his career in Birmingham as a social work assistant and then as a qualified social worker in the East of the city. He has extensive experience of children's social care having worked across a range of departments at all levels. Notably he led the implementation of the first Multiagency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in the country. David has specialised in supporting the transformation of failing authorities and has a proven track record of improving Ofsted ratings. Prior to joining the Trust in April 2019 David was a Director of Children's Social Care in the North of the country.

Marshelene Williams - Director of Quality Assurance

Marshelene graduated from Plymouth University and has over 25 years of social work experience. She has been part of the Birmingham team for many years, starting as a team manager in the south of the city in 2001. Marshelene has been part of the creation of services and implementation of new ways of working, leading her team or service through change and improvements. Marshelene has extensive experience in frontline social work, leadership, change management, quality assurance, system reviews, policy, and practice, supporting services to improve and ensuring better outcomes for children and families through partnerships and collaboration. Marshelene has worked across a range of services at differing levels, always championing improvements and successes. Throughout her career, Marshelene has been committed to the development of her teams and undertakes mentoring within and outside of the Trust. A passionate social worker, Marshelene is committed to advocacy for our children and families, rooted in social justice and the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion.



Executive Directors

Lee Yale-Helms - Director of Finance and Resources

Lee joined the Trust in September 2018. He is a qualified public service accountant whose career spans 14 years in local government, including work in education and supporting children with special needs. His career spans a further 18 years in public services financial advisory roles, including Director of Finance at Doncaster Children's Services Trust. Lee provides financial expertise and input to the Trust's strategic and business planning processes and leads the delivery of a range of corporate and support services. He is an associate member of the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) and was President of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA) in the Midlands 2021-2023, representing Birmingham at a national level with both CIPFA and ADCS and promoting better funding for children's social care.

Our senior leadership team welcome you

Birmingham Children's Trust Board

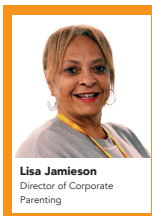
Executive Management Team



James Thomas
Chief Executive



Lisa Harris
Director of Help and Protection



Lisa Jamieson
Director of Corporate Parenting



David Stringfellow
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Marshelene Williams
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Lee Yale-Helms
Director of Finance and Resources

Chair and Non-Executive Directors



Andy Couldrick
Chair



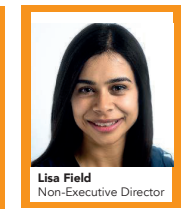
Ama Agbeze MBE
Non-Executive Director



Andrew Cardoza
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Helen Ellis
Non-Executive Director
(Council appointed)



Lisa Field
Non-Executive Director



Prof Jon Glasby
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Ruth Harker
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Amanda Lowe
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Amrick Singh Ubhi DL
Non-Executive Director



**BIRMINGHAM
CHILDREN'S TRUST**

This information is available on our website

https://www.birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk/info/1/about_the_trust/116/birmingham_childrens_trusts_board

