SURVIVING ECONOMIC ABUSE

Chair Recruitment Pack

An invitation to lead a charity at the forefront of tackling economic abuse in the UK





Abi Goodwin
Chair of People, Remunerations and Nominations Committee



Sam Smethers
Chief Executive

Thank you for your interest in Surviving Economic Abuse.

SEA is the only UK charity dedicated to raising awareness of economic abuse and transforming responses to it. We have a strong track record of success, driving legal, policy and lasting systemic change for victim-survivors. This includes getting economic abuse and post-separation abuse recognised in law. As we approach our 10th anniversary, we are now looking to appoint a new Chair, who can be a strong champion of our mission.

You will lead and facilitate the Board, sharing collective responsibility for the governance of SEA. You will also set the tone, hold the relationships and create the conditions in which the whole board can do its best work.

You will work closely with the CEO and trustees to set and review the charity's strategic direction, holding the executive to account, overseeing risk and ensuring that we fulfil our mission.

We are looking for a woman with the governance grounding, the leadership experience and the human qualities to lead this board at an important stage in SEA's development as we grow the organisation and our impact. Please note this role is open to women only. It is an occupational requirement under schedule 9, Part 1 of the Equality Act 2010, reflecting the nature of SEA's work.

You will have experience of operating at a senior level and a solid understanding of governance. You will have developed this through a previous board role, through senior executive work or through other forms of organisational leadership. You do not need to have held a formal charity Chair role. What matters is that you can demonstrate experience of leading structured discussions, managing conflicting views and helping groups reach a collective decision.

You will need to be a strong communicator who can represent the charity and speak about our work with confidence in a persuasive and relatable way, with a wide range of stakeholders. And you will be an empathetic collaborator who brings a deep commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion and to SEA's feminist ethos.

Experience of either the financial services sector, the violence against women and girls sector or a related field would be helpful but not essential; as is an understanding of charity finance; or experience of corporate fundraising or cultivating relationships with major donors and philanthropic funders.

If you have lived experience of domestic abuse, including economic abuse, you are welcome here. Disclosure is entirely your choice, and support from trained professionals is available throughout the process and once you join the board.

The time commitment we ask of you is 2-2.5 days per month. The Chair role is a voluntary one, but reasonable expenses will be covered.

Alongside our Chair recruitment, we will also be growing our board and recruiting several new trustees. The newly-appointed Chair will be involved in that process.

If you are interested, please submit your CV and written responses to the application questions to **governance@inspiringwomenchangemakers.co.uk** by 12pm on 30 November 2026. Full details of how to apply are set out in the recruitment pack.

We look forward to hearing from you.

With best wishes

Abi Goodwin & Sam Smethers

The charity

Who we are

Surviving Economic Abuse is the only UK charity dedicated to raising awareness of economic abuse and transforming responses to it. We were founded in 2017 with a simple conviction: that economic abuse is serious, underrecognised and preventable, and that it requires a dedicated, expert response.

Economic abuse is domestic abuse. It is the control of money or the things that money can buy and perpetrators use it to cause harm, preventing a victim-survivor from fleeing or continuing the abuse long after they have fled.

We work to change the systems that make that possible: by influencing government, financial services and frontline services including domestic abuse services to put victim-survivors of economic abuse at the centre of how they operate.

Our vision is a world in which all women and girls achieve economic equality and can live their lives free of abuse and exploitation. Our mission is to make that happen by transforming policy, practice and public understanding.

We work alongside the Experts by Experience group to centre victim-survivors in all that we do. Their direct knowledge shapes our work, holds us accountable and ensures we remain grounded in the realities we are trying to change.

Find out more about our story on our website.

4.2m

UK women experienced economic abuse in the last year.



Our values

And the behaviours that bring them to life



We are purposeful: Everything we do is driven by our passion to make the world a safe and equal place for women.



We learn and share: Our team is curious, reflective, always learning and eager to share its expertise.



We work in partnership: We know that we can only achieve our goals if we work alongside others – our colleagues, the women who inspire our work and our partners.



We are agile: We are creative in meeting the challenges that must be overcome to create change.



We believe: Our work is centred on survivors of economic abuse: their experiences and knowledge shape how we respond.



We value equity: We believe in fairness and justice and we focus on removing barriers caused by systemic inequalities.

Our approach to equity, diversity and inclusion

Economic abuse can happen to anyone, but the risk is not evenly distributed. SEA's data shows that Black and minoritised women, disabled women, young women and mothers are disproportionately affected. Many survivors also navigate compounded barriers, including institutional racism, digital exclusion, insecure immigration status, that shape both their experience of abuse and their route to support.

We take a feminist approach because women and girls are disproportionately at risk of domestic abuse, including economic abuse. We also recognise that economic abuse occurs in same-sex relationships and that men and trans people can be victim-survivors.

The voices of survivors sit at the centre of how we work. The Experts by Experience group shapes our decisions, our priorities and our practice. Equity, diversity and inclusion are the lenses through which we make our decisions.

Our board and staff

SEA has a collaborative and supportive board of trustees who are committed to our shared values. We are recruiting because a number of our current trustees are approaching the end of their term of office or are standing down. The board brings expertise from financial services, safeguarding, charity finance, risk management, public affairs, communications and people management.

Our Chief Executive, Sam Smethers, leads a talented and growing team of 27 staff, bringing fifteen years of experience as a charity CEO and twenty years of experience in charity trustee roles.

Find out more about our current staff and trustees on our website.

Our Impact

In under a decade, SEA has secured the recognition of economic abuse and the criminalisation of post-separation abuse in law, shifted public understanding so that half the UK population now knows what economic abuse is, and ensured that it is placed at the heart of both the Government's Violence Against Women and Girls strategy and its Financial Inclusion agenda.

In the past year alone, we have worked in-depth with a number of leading financial services firms and trained over 800 professionals to improve the response victim-survivors receive from banks, insurance companies, public sector and frontline service providers. Every strand of this work has been shaped by the Experts by Experience group, and the voices of victim-survivors of economic abuse will remain at the centre of everything we do.

The role – Chair

This is a significant moment to join SEA's leadership. We are looking for a Chair who is genuinely committed to our mission. We're seeking someone who understands what economic abuse does to people's lives and who wants to use their skills, relationships and judgment to help us change that.

Whether you have chaired a board before or are stepping into a Chair role for the first time, we want to hear from you. We are not looking for a particular job title, sector background or public profile. We are looking for someone with the leadership experience, the interpersonal depth and the governance grounding to lead this board well, and the character to do it in a way that reflects who we are.

What the Chair does

The Chair leads and facilitates the Board. Like all trustees, you share collective responsibility for the governance of SEA. The Chair also sets the tone, holds the relationships and creates the conditions in which the whole board can do its best work.

Day-to-day, that means working closely with the CEO and trustees to set and review the charity's strategic direction, holding the executive to account and ensuring the financial health of the charity and ensuring that the board has the risk oversight, information and culture it needs. You will chair the board meetings: making space for honest discussion, navigating conflicting views, and bringing the group to a collective position even when not everyone starts in the same place.

You will also provide direct line management support to our CEO, Sam Smethers, including her annual appraisal and ongoing feedback. This is one of the most important relationships in the charity and requires trust, consistency and the kind of honest, supportive presence that makes a CEO feel genuinely held.

Beyond the formal structures, the Chair is a strong champion for SEA and plays a significant ambassadorial role. You will build and sustain relationships with funders, government, sector partners and other stakeholders, and use your networks and profile where it is helpful to the charity. Networks are an asset, not a requirement. The right person for this role is defined by how they lead, not how widely they are known.

Nearly 1m UK women couldn't leave a dangerous partner due to economic abuse.

Who we are looking for

We are looking for a woman with the governance grounding, the leadership experience and the human qualities to lead this board at an important stage in SEA's development.

You will have experience of operating at a senior level and a solid understanding of governance. You will have developed this through a previous board role, through senior executive work or through other forms of organisational leadership. You do not need to have held a formal charity Chair role.

What matters is that you can demonstrate experience of leading structured discussions, managing conflicting views and helping groups reach a collective decision.

You will need to be a strong communicator who can represent the charity and speak about our work with confidence, engaging very different stakeholders: with government and parliamentarians, financial services stakeholders and VAWG sector partners, and with the victim-survivors in the Experts by Experience group, whose direct experience of economic abuse shapes everything the charity does.

Persuasiveness and relatability matter equally here. The range is wide, and the ability to move across it authentically is as important as any formal credential.

You will be an empathetic collaborator, someone who can draw out contributions from across the board, foster trust and create a culture where every trustee can contribute fully. A deep commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion and to SEA's feminist ethos is essential, as are discretion, tact and sound judgment.

It would also be helpful, though not essential, if you brought experience of the financial services sector, the violence against women and girls sector or a related field; an understanding of charity finance; or experience of corporate fundraising or cultivating relationships with major donors and philanthropic funders.

If you have lived experience of domestic abuse, including economic abuse, you are welcome here. Disclosure is entirely your choice, and support from trained professionals is available throughout the process and once you join the board.

Time commitment

The Chair role requires an estimated two to two-and-a-half days per month, covering preparation for and attendance at board and committee meetings, regular one-to-one time with the CEO, and engagement with key stakeholders.

How to apply

This role is open to women only

SEA is applying the single-sex exception provided under Schedule 9, Part 1 of the Equality Act 2010. The exception applies because the nature of SEA's work, supporting victim-survivors of economic abuse, the majority of whom are women, and working closely with the Experts by Experience group means it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim for the Chair to be a woman.

Accessibility and adjustments

We are committed to an accessible and inclusive recruitment process. If you need adjustments at any stage, including to the format of this pack, the application questions, or the interview, please contact us and we will do everything we can to accommodate them.

We offer a guaranteed interview to disabled candidates who meet the essential criteria for this role. If you are eligible and would like to be considered under the guaranteed interview scheme, please indicate this on your application.

1 in 3

Black, Asian and racially minoritised women experienced economic abuse last year.

Meetings and expenses

Board meetings take place in person in London. As Chair, you will also attend external meetings and events on SEA's behalf, some of which will involve travel beyond London. The role is unremunerated. We reimburse travel costs and care costs, including childcare, elder care and disability-related support to remove financial barriers to board participation. An agenda and papers are provided at least five working days before every meeting.

Process and timeline

Please send us an up-to-date CV (two pages maximum) and your responses to the application questions. You are welcome to submit your responses as a short video instead of in writing. Details of how to submit a video are in the application form. Total written responses should be no more than 800 words.

If you do not have a formal CV, please share your relevant experience in whatever format works for you, such as by skills area, most recent experience first, or by key projects. There is no single 'right' format.

How to apply

In the application process, we will ask you to tell us why you want to join SEA's board as Chair and what draws you to the cause, what in your background and experience makes you a good fit for the role, and how you think about the strategic and governance challenges facing a charity like SEA right now.

We plan to confirm the Chair in post before completing the recruitment process for other trustees so that the incoming Chair can participate in that recruitment process. Candidates who are not appointed to the Chair role may also be considered for a trustee position, with your permission.

We will be in contact with all applicants at each stage of the process to let them know the outcome and what happens next.

Application form: **Complete your application**

Application deadline: 12pm, Monday 30 November 2026

Shortlisting decisions communicated to all applicants: w/c 14 December 2026

Interviews: From w/c 18 January 2027

You are invited to complete an optional **equality monitoring form**. Your answers will be held separately and not seen by anyone involved in selection.

Questions?

If you have questions about the role, the time commitment, or whether your experience might be a good fit, we are happy to have an informal conversation before you apply. Please contact Anj Handa of Inspiring Women Changemakers at governance@inspiringwomenchangemakers.co.uk to arrange a conversation.

What happens next

Checks before appointment. The successful candidate will be asked to complete a basic DBS check, which shows only unspent convictions, and to confirm they are not disqualified from being a charity trustee. A criminal record will not automatically bar you from appointment, and we will always discuss any disclosure with you first. Our policy on recruiting people with criminal records is available upon request. Email governance@inspiringwomenchangemakers.co.uk

Your personal data. We will use your data for board recruitment purposes only, as set out in our Candidate Privacy Notice.

Surviving Economic Abuse (SEA) is the only UK charity dedicated to raising awareness of economic abuse and transforming responses to it. The charity works day in, day out to ensure that women are supported not only to survive, but also to thrive.

Charity Number: 1173256 (England and Wales), SC051495 (Scotland)

SURVIVING ECONOMIC ABUSE