



**Safer
Places**

Chief Executive Officer

Recruitment Pack • November 2025

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chief executive & director
recruitment practice

HarrisHill
charity recruitment specialists

Welcome

Dear Candidate,

Safer Places has been led by our current CEO for many years. She is stepping down to enjoy a well-earned retirement and we will miss her energy, drive and positivity. During her tenure, the organisation has successfully delivered and developed domestic abuse support services to an increasingly diverse client base via her leadership and development of a skilled and passionate team.

The demand for our domestic abuse services is growing and we know that those services will need to continue to develop and change to enable us to continue to support our clients successfully in a challenging external environment. We are also increasingly supporting local authorities by expanding our role as a registered social housing provider.

The Board is seeking an experienced, dynamic and passionate individual who has experience in leading organisations to thrive in an ever-changing world via proven strategic, people and stakeholder management skills. If you feel that this a role you would thrive in, we'd love to hear from you.

Whilst we are sad to say goodbye to our current CEO, I strongly believe that this is a great opportunity for the right person to take the organisation forward. From personal experience, I know the positive impact Safer Places has on the lives of thousands of people every year. It is a privilege to work with such a professional, positive and passionate team.

Claire Arnold, Chair of Trustees

Who we are and what we do

Safer Places is a specialist support service for individuals at risk of, fleeing from, or recovering from domestic abuse, sexual violence, and stalking. We provide a wide range of trauma-informed services to adults, children, and young people across Hertfordshire and Essex, with safe accommodation available to those in need from across the UK. We also offer temporary housing for vulnerable women and children, including those transitioning from safe accommodation.

Established over 50 years ago, Safer Places is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. We are also a Registered Social Landlord and the sole owner of a Community Interest Company (CIC) that delivers training and accredited qualifications across the UK and beyond. Each year, we support approximately 3,870 adults and their children, and deliver training to 4,392 professionals.

From our frontline experience, we know that many victims do not initially recognise their experiences as abuse, nor are they aware of the support available. At Safer Places, we are deeply committed to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion, and we strive to reach and respond to all victims based on risk, need, and choice.

Our work is grounded in four core principles:

- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion
- Client-Centred Services
- Safeguarding
- Trauma-Responsive Service Design and Delivery

Who we are and what we do

We believe in a coordinated community response—the most effective way to address domestic and sexual abuse and stalking, and to drive the societal change needed for both prevention and recovery. We are guided by a growing body of evidence that shows how childhood trauma, including exposure to domestic abuse, can severely impact life outcomes. These insights, alongside national statistics, highlight the urgency of our mission: to reach those who are hidden, intervene early, and remove barriers to support.

We recognise that traditional service models often fall short of meeting the complex needs of those we support. That's why we are driven by evidence-based practice and continuous learning—from our clients, our staff, and those we have yet to reach. We conduct a comprehensive Annual Needs Assessment to ensure our services remain relevant, accessible, and effective.

Our Community Interest Company was formed in 2021 and was created to share our expertise more widely through training and accredited qualifications that are “for the frontline, by the frontline.” These programmes are shaped by our staff's lived experience of service delivery and quality assured by our clients. The income generated helps us enhance the support we provide to those who need it most through unrestricted funds.

Where we are now

Safer Places stands at a pivotal moment in its journey. We have recently launched a bold five-year strategy designed to expand our reach, strengthen our services, and deepen our impact. Over the past two years, our Board and Senior Management Team have worked diligently to prepare the organisation for the future—developing our strategic direction, implementing succession plans, and laying the groundwork for leadership transitions following the retirement of key individuals who have shaped our culture and success over many years.

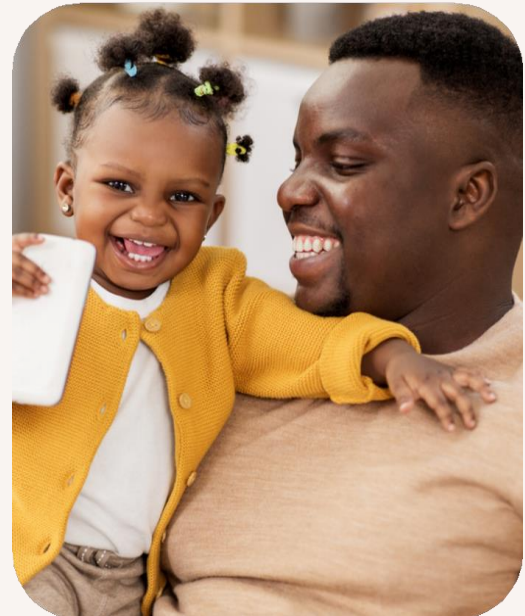
This work is now nearing completion. A newly appointed and highly effective Senior Management Team and refreshed Trustee Board are in place to support our new CEO in leading Safer Places into its next chapter. This includes enhancing our service delivery, forging new partnerships, and expanding our role as a Registered Social Landlord to better meet the evolving needs of our communities.

Our overarching strategy is well-defined, and the initial phases of implementation are underway. The challenge ahead lies in embedding this vision across the organisation—ensuring it is understood, embraced, and translated into action at every level. We are entering a period of significant opportunity for growth, but this comes against a backdrop of constrained local authority funding and widespread structural changes across public sector services—many of which are vital partners in our work.

This presents a unique opportunity for an experienced and visionary leader to make a lasting impact. Safer Places is recognised for the quality of its services, its commitment to inclusivity, and its highly trained, compassionate staff. We are agile, innovative, and continuously learning from those we support—finding new and better ways to help them build futures they may never have imagined possible.

The role of CEO is both demanding and deeply rewarding. It requires a careful balance of strategic foresight and empathetic, hands-on leadership. The successful candidate will be tasked with maintaining and enhancing our reputation, guiding the organisation through change, and empowering an exceptional team to deliver life-changing support to thousands of individuals and families.

Together, we have the opportunity to break cycles of harm, prevent trauma from being passed down through generations, and create safer, brighter futures for those who need us most.



Our strategic objectives

Gold Standard Service

We will implement and embed robust processes to ensure our gold-standard service is consistently sustained and continuously improved. This will be driven by an annual cycle of needs assessments and service reviews, incorporating insights from both service users and non-users. A rolling programme of service audits and evaluations will focus on service-specific standards and our four core principles:

- **Client-Centred Service Delivery**
- **Safeguarding**
- **Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion**
- **Trauma-Informed Practice**

These principles will guide our commitment to delivering services that are inclusive, responsive, and of the highest quality.

I feel so much stronger, braver and that I am starting to re-find myself again. I feel like I am gaining control over my life a little at a time... Thanks to the team at Safer Places I feel like I am starting to get back to who I used to be before my abusive relationship

The support has been amazing, life changing and provided me and my son a safe place. I have made a lot of unforgettable memories here with staff and other women. Thank you

Employer of choice

Our ambition is to become the employer of choice for professionals working in, or aspiring to join, our sector. We will achieve this by attracting, retaining, and developing highly skilled and dedicated staff who are essential to delivering and evolving our gold-standard service.

This strategic priority is being advanced through a comprehensive programme that includes:

- A whole-organisation activity analysis and skill mix review
- A process reengineering initiative to reduce bureaucracy and free up time through automation and AI
- Revised competency frameworks and terms and conditions
- Enhanced staff development and well-being offerings

Together, these initiatives will foster a supportive, inclusive, and high-performing workplace culture.

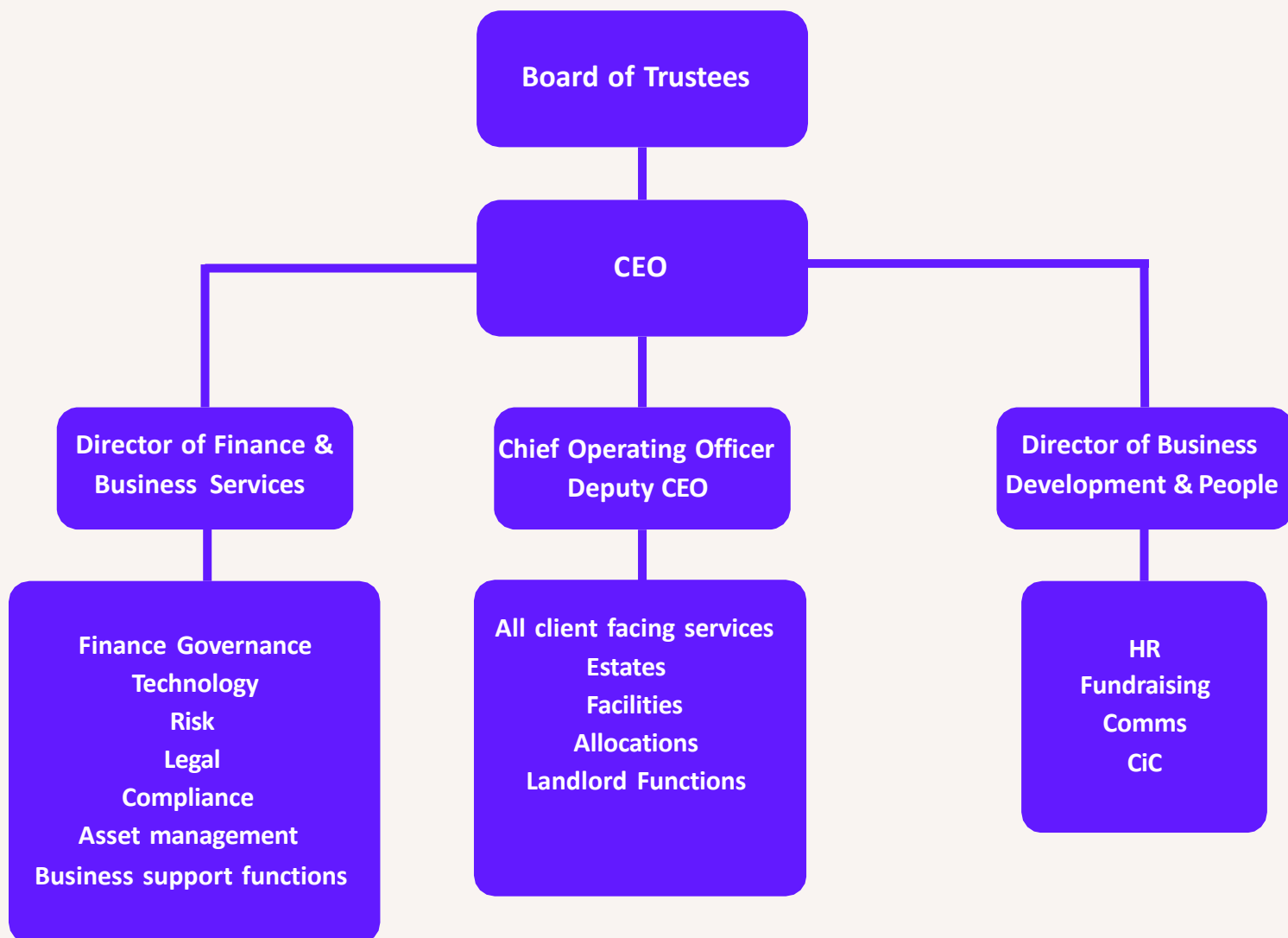
Efficiency, economy, and effectiveness

We are committed to maximising productivity and eliminating waste across all areas of our operations. This strategic objective focuses on:

- Leveraging growth opportunities
- Implementing automation and AI-driven solutions
- Conducting regular reviews of internal processes to identify inefficiencies and streamline workloads

By refining workflows and ensuring optimal staff utilisation, we will enhance operational performance, reduce unnecessary expenditure, and maintain agility and competitiveness in a dynamic market.

Organisational chart



Business continuity

To ensure long-term sustainability and reduce reliance on contract-based income, we are actively diversifying our revenue streams and strengthening our unrestricted funding base. This enables continued investment in improving client services.

Key initiatives include:

- Implementing innovative and sustainable financial strategies
- Advancing our role as a provider of social housing, as outlined in our agreed strategic direction
- Optimising our property portfolio to enhance financial resilience

Significant progress has already been made in the first year of this strategy, laying a strong foundation for future growth in scope, scale, and long-term sustainability.



Job description

Purpose of the Role

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will provide visionary and strategic leadership to Safer Places, guiding the organisation through its next phase of growth and transformation. The CEO will work closely with the Board of Trustees, staff, and external partners to ensure the delivery of high-quality, impactful services.

Key Responsibilities:

Strategic Leadership

- Lead Safer Places through its next strategic phase, ensuring effective management of organisational change and the successful embedding of new service models.
- Collaborate with the Board of Trustees to implement a dynamic strategy and business plan aligned with our vision, mission, and values, with clear, measurable objectives.
- Foster a culture of innovation, agility, and excellence, ensuring the organisation has the people, systems, and processes needed for long-term success.
- Act as a visible and influential leader within the organisation and across the multi-agency landscape, identifying emerging trends and building strategic partnerships.
- Cultivate a collaborative and transparent relationship with the Board, ensuring clarity of roles and responsibilities and providing the support needed for effective governance.

Financial and Resource Management

- Ensure Safer Places remains financially sound, compliant with contracts and grants, and delivers high-quality services as a responsible employer.
- Lead the annual budgeting process in consultation with the Board and maintain oversight of financial health and sustainability.
- Diversify income streams and maintain appropriate reserves in alignment with strategic goals.

- Provide the Board with timely and accurate financial information to support decision-making and risk management.
- Identify and pursue funding opportunities, develop compelling proposals, and negotiate agreements to secure necessary resources.
- Promote financial literacy across the organisation and ensure budget holders have access to accurate financial data.
- Drive efficient and effective use of resources across all operations.

Staffing and Service Delivery

- Demonstrate authentic and empathetic leadership to inspire staff, maintain morale, and foster a culture of inclusion, respect, and psychological safety.
- Build and support a high-performing executive and senior leadership team committed to Safer Places' values and strategic goals.
- Promote a culture of safeguarding and empowerment, recognising staff contributions and encouraging innovation to meet diverse client needs.
- Ensure services are evidence-based, co-created with clients and those with lived experience, and delivered equitably based on risk, need, and choice.
- Maintain safe and supportive environments for staff and clients across all settings.
- Implement robust quality management systems to meet contractual, regulatory, and practice standards, with early identification of risks and remediation needs.

Profile, Community Engagement & Public Relations

- Serve as the primary spokesperson for Safer Places, advocating for our mission and engaging effectively with external stakeholders.
- Enhance the organisation's public profile through strategic PR and media engagement, raising awareness of domestic abuse, sexual violence, and stalking.

- Strengthen Safer Places' reputation as a leading provider with local expertise and national reach.
- Promote best practice responses to domestic and sexual violence through research, policy influence, and collaboration.
- Build and maintain strategic relationships with government, funders, and regional agencies to support service delivery and policy change.
- Lead media and communications efforts, ensuring consistent messaging and stakeholder engagement.
- Champion equality, diversity, and inclusion in all aspects of the role.

Governance, Compliance & Continuous Improvement

- Ensure compliance with safeguarding, health and safety, data protection, and confidentiality policies.
- Promote sustainable working practices and reduce environmental impact.
- Uphold and implement all organisational policies, procedures, and codes of conduct.
- Take a proactive approach to personal development, regularly reviewing performance and seeking opportunities for growth.

Additional Information

- This job description is indicative and not exhaustive. The CEO may be required to undertake additional duties reasonably commensurate with the role.

Person specification – Essential Experience and Skills

Strategic Leadership

- Deep understanding of the strategic landscape and its implications for Safer Places.
- Proven track record in developing, delivering, and executing organisation-wide strategies, particularly in complex or challenging environments.
- Ability to unite teams around a shared vision and values, fostering alignment and commitment.

Partnership Leadership

- Demonstrated ability to influence senior leaders across partnership boards and forums, shaping agendas to benefit service users.
- Recognised by statutory and partner agencies as a leader who drives action and delivers results.

Change Management

- Skilled in leading organisational change while maintaining high levels of staff morale, engagement, and performance.

Growth and Innovation

- Proven experience in driving organisational growth and fostering innovation, while maintaining service quality and integrity.

Business and Operational Acumen

- Strong capabilities in business management, including critical thinking, problem-solving, risk management, and project delivery.
- Extensive experience in managing large, multidisciplinary teams from diverse backgrounds.

Executive Leadership

- Experience as a CEO, Director, or equivalent senior leadership role within a client- or customer- focused organisation.

Financial Management

- Robust financial management skills, including budget planning, income generation, and performance monitoring.

Stakeholder and Relationship Management

- Ability to build and sustain positive relationships with a wide range of stakeholders, including Trustees, staff, volunteers, donors, commissioners, media, and external partners.
- Skilled spokesperson with the ability to influence and advocate effectively on behalf of the organisation.

Essential Personal Qualities

- **Commitment to Mission:** Genuine alignment with Safer Places' mission, vision, and values, and a strong advocate for clients experiences.
- **Resilience and Adaptability:** Capable of navigating organisational complexities and leading through both immediate and long-term challenges.
- **Innovative and Visionary:** Forward-thinking with the ability to identify opportunities for growth and innovation while preserving core values.
- **Collaborative and Inclusive:** Empathetic leadership style that promotes collaboration, inclusivity, and a supportive workplace culture.

Desirable Experience and Skills

While not essential, the following experiences would be advantageous:

- **Local Government Contract Management:** Experience in managing local government contracts, including tenders and negotiations.
- **Media and Public Relations:** Proven ability to manage public relations and maintain a positive media profile.
- **Sector Expertise:** Background in the charity sector, women's services, or trauma-informed care for individuals with complex needs.
- **Fundraising and Commercial Acumen:** Experience in major donor fundraising, corporate partnerships, or commercial trading.
- **Multiagency Collaboration:** Active participation in multiagency partnership boards.

Terms of appointment

Job title:	Chief Executive Officer
Reports to:	Board of Trustees
Contract:	Permanent / Full time
Salary:	£85,000 – £90,000 p.a.
Location:	Hertfordshire/Essex We anticipate most working hours will be spent collaborating with colleagues and partners at our offices and service sites, with flexibility for some remote work.
Annual leave:	28 days plus Bank Holidays
Pension:	5% Employer Contribution
Other:	The successful candidate will be required to undergo a basic DBS check.

How to apply

If you would like to apply, please send the following:

- An up-to-date CV
- A completed data capture form (which Harris Hill can share with you)
- A Supporting Statement (no more than 2 x A4 pages) outlining why you are interested in becoming Chief Executive of Safer Places demonstrating relevant experience for the role.

Please submit your completed application to nick.shanks@harrishill.co.uk by 9am, Friday 5th December 2025.

Dates for your diary:

Closing date for applications:	9am, Friday 5th December 2025
First interviews:	w/c 5th January 2026
Second interviews:	w/c 12th January 2026

Please could you also let us know if you will require any special provision should you be called forward for interview.

Please state in your application if you have any commitments during the interview period that may coincide with these dates.

Advertisement

Harris Hill is delighted to be working with Safer Places to recruit its new Chief Executive Officer.

Safer Places is a specialist support service for individuals at risk of, fleeing from, or recovering from domestic abuse, sexual violence, and stalking. We provide a wide range of trauma-informed services to adults, children, and young people across Hertfordshire and Essex, with safe accommodation available to those in need from across the UK.

As Chief Executive, you will:

- Lead Safer Places into its next chapter. This includes enhancing the charity's service delivery, forging new partnerships, and expanding its role as a Registered Social Landlord to better meet the evolving needs of our communities.
- Embed Safer Places's vision across the organisation – ensuring it is understood, embraced, and translated into action at every level.
- Have an entrepreneurial mindset to leverage opportunities for the charity to grow.
- Continue to ensure that Safer Places is recognised for the quality of its services, its commitment to inclusivity, and its highly trained, compassionate staff.

If you are inspired and excited by what Safer Places does, we'd love to hear from you.

Job title: Chief Executive Officer

Salary: £85,000 - £90,000 p.a.

Location: Hertfordshire/Essex – most working hours will be spent collaborating with colleagues and partners at our offices and service sites, with flexibility for some remote work.

Employment term: Permanent / full time.

How to apply:

Please review the recruitment pack for further information about Safer Places, the CEO position and for details on how to apply.

Closing date for applications: 9am, Friday 5th December 2025

Both Safer Places and Harris Hill operate an equal opportunity policy and commit to treating all of our candidates and jobseekers fairly. We welcome and encourage applications from everyone regardless of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and marriage and civil partnerships.