



A B I A N D A

# Trustee Recruitment Pack

2025



Working with young women and girls affected by  
criminal exploitation and violence



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# A Welcome from Abianda's Chair of Trustees

Thank you for your interest in the role of Trustee of Abianda.

Abianda works with young women and girls affected by criminal exploitation and violence, associated with 'gangs' and county lines.

Abianda's vision is that young women and girls are free from oppression and harm caused by criminal exploitation and violence.

Our mission is to support young women to develop independence and agency. We do this through:

- The provision of specialist one-to-one, group and contextual safeguarding services, which increase safety, skills, self-advocacy and agency;
- Working with national and local services to challenge and change their approaches, through the delivery of our training and systems change programmes;
- Building a network of young women and girls who can disrupt and re-design policy and practice to create lasting impact.

**"I feel like I am living now, I can breathe."**

**- Young woman's feedback**

In being a part of Abianda for the past 5 years, I have seen both the dedication and skill that the team practices as a part of their services and training. The work in the past year in particular has enabled Abianda to move into a new era as a Charitable company and with a clear and embedded strategic plan for the next three years.

I look forward to meeting you through this recruitment process, and welcoming new Trustees to be a part of this stage for the organisation. Myself and fellow Trustees are excited to be working with an expanded and diverse group of people, with the expertise and vision that will support Abianda in its growth and provision of its essential and specialist services.

*Clare Walkeden, Chair of Trustees*

# About Abianda

Abi Billingham founded Abianda in 2011, and incorporated the not-for-profit company in 2014. Her vision was to create an organisation that would bring about social impact through direct services and training for professionals that had young women's voices at their core.

These services and training would, in turn, bring about a culture shift in provision for young women who traditionally neither felt safe accessing, nor trusted, that services could keep them safe. Young women would therefore deal with adversity, risk and harm alone and navigate systems and services that were not designed for them, and that would render them and their unique experiences invisible.

Abi wanted to create something that met the reality and needs of young women's lives, by ensuring young women and girls were embedded in the fabric of the organisation and all its activities. She was keen to develop, and continues today, an organisation that is values-driven and loyal to its principles and integrity. She and the team have fostered a culture of belonging, collaboration, transparency, and a commitment to quality services and justice for young women and girls. Abianda successfully works with young women who have unique safeguarding and risk issues due to their experiences of criminal exploitation, who have multiple and complex needs and a history of being let down by services.

Over the past ten years, Abi and the Board have led the organisation through significant growth and successes, as well as the global traumas and movements that have deeply affected individuals, communities and organisations.

As a small organisation that works at close proximity to trauma, Abianda has faced significant challenges in the context of these external events. The strain on infrastructure and our people has, at times, been significant. It has been essential then for the current strategic period to be one of reflection, rebuilding and actively disrupting the tendency to be in 'fire flight' mode.

Abi and the team have made brave and bold decisions that have allowed us to maintain a focus on building an independent and resilient organisation that delivers high quality services and that can evidence the impact of its work. In doing so we create a canopy of protection for our brilliant people, and continue to grow an organisational culture that fosters equity and belonging.


We are incredibly proud of our efforts to ensure that young women's voices are embedded in the infrastructure of the organisation. Ethical participatory practice is hard and time consuming work, and we haven't always got it right! But, we have a growing Young Women's Advisory Group, a group of bright and entrepreneurial young women who lend their expertise in the design and delivery of Abianda's system and services, and who are embedded members of the team. The group is starting to embark on external campaigns to bring about change for young women and girls more broadly. Their ambition is not just to be 'around the table, but rather to be 'in command of rooms', when spearheading change for girls and young women.

# About Abianda

We are in a constant feedback loop with young women across all of our activities, especially so with our Interns, who are young women with lived experience who take on a year long contract of employment with us in an Operations and Admin role.

You can [hear directly from a member of our Young Women's Advisory Group](#) about her experiences of being part of the team.

As a Trustee coming on board with the Abianda team, it is imperative that you are willing to enter into collaborative spaces with young women, learn from them, implement their ideas and support a culture where their expertise is celebrated and prioritised.



"I really love that there's such an emphasis on the group being led by young women for young women. It really feels like a space that we can bring our lived experiences or opinions to and genuinely be listened to.."



# Abianda's Strategic Plan 2024 – 2027

After 10 years of pioneering work in the sector, this is an incredibly exciting time for the organisation.

In April 2024, we launched our three-year strategy. This strategy is about consolidation – seeing us deliberately slowing our activity and reducing direct delivery at scale for a period of time, in order to focus on a process of much needed review and rebuilding to become the strong, resilient and robust organisation needed for young women into the future.

This brave strategic decision was informed by a rigorous strategy development process and an accompanying needs analysis of the young women we serve, Abianda and the sector. Almost one year into the strategic period, we are making great strides across all of our six strategic objectives, the team is aligned in values and direction and we have the capacity to lean into large transformation projects that have been long needed.

We are now seeking a number of Trustees to help support the delivery of this strategy and its objectives and ensure we are as robust as possible for the next strategic period beyond 2027.

## 2024 – 2027 Strategic Objectives

1. To increase the quality of Abianda's focused support to girls and young women, and develop a model of practice that is rooted in a robust evidence base of what works for them.
2. To reinstate our participatory principles in practice – ensuring that young women are embedded in the organisation and influencing policy and service design.
3. To produce evidence of the impact of our model of practice, in order to support the future roll out of services and growth.
4. To strengthen Abianda's structure and systems to allow for safe services and sustainable growth.
5. To devise and secure sustainable routes to independent income enabling short- and longer-term quality and impact, and so that we have sufficient unrestricted funds to support a resourced and resilient infrastructure.
6. To plan for future growth beyond 2027, from an organisation that is fit for purpose and can deliver transformational opportunities for girls and young women and institutions.

# Board Structure

Abianda's Board of Trustees is a group of highly experienced and skilled women. Due to the work we do, Abianda's roles are subject to an Occupational Requirement on the grounds of the protected characteristic of sex. We are a women's-only employer, and as such, this position is exempt under Schedule 9 of the Equality Act 2010. For the avoidance of doubt, all women including trans women are welcome to apply for and hold such roles, as are non-binary people if the applicant believes that their lived experience aligns with that of women and girls.

We work hard to ensure that the organisational culture is echoed in the behaviour and functions of the Board. Our Trustee group is high functioning, collaborative, and rigorous. They hold the CEO and organisation to account and provide essential scrutiny, with warmth, humour and compassion, and with an expectation of very high standards - always with a focus on the needs of girls and young women.

Abianda's Board is currently composed of four Trustees who provide essential strategic oversight to the Charity. Having recently converted the organisation to have charitable status, it was required that our Founder and CEO would step down from her role as a voting board member. Abi continues to work alongside, and very closely with the Board.

Following this, and in the context of our exciting strategic plans for the future, we need to grow the Trustee team. We are looking for two candidates who can be Link Trustees across specific specialisms. Link Trustees will have an operational link with the organisation via the CEO and, on occasion, be called on to advise on specific regulatory and risk issues relating to their area of expertise. These are:

- **People and HR:** Link Trustee for People and HR. Significant experience (at Director level preferable) of managing high risk people issues and governance, and developing organisational diversity rooted in a culture of belonging and equity.
- **Safeguarding:** Link Trustees for safeguarding. High level safeguarding experience in the charitable/public sector - preferably someone who has held positions at Deputy Director level in Children's Services.
- **Board Secretariat:** Responsible for supporting the smooth operation of the Board of Trustees, minute taking and supporting CEO to provide relevant papers and manage the administration of Board meetings.

Issues advised on by Link Trustees are still the entire responsibility of the collective board, and does not equal personal liability.

# Board Structure

In addition, we are looking for a number of individuals who have expertise across the following areas:

**Sector Specialism:** Relevant policy and legislative knowledge in the sectors Abianda operates in: including criminal exploitation, policing and crime, VAWG, health and social care, education, local and national policy.

**Policy and Public Affairs:** Experience and ability to leverage and influence policy in relation to the issues Abianda addresses at a regional and national level.

**Organisational Development:** Including culture and design expertise, specifically organisational change and transformational projects at scale.

**Income Generation:** Experienced in diversifying income streams, business scaling and development, and contract management in the charitable sector.

**Marketing and Communications:** Expertise in marketing, advertising and communications in support of Abianda's commercial and revenue growth plans and expanding reach to young women and girls.

**Governance:** Experience of charity governance and Trusteeship to enable a high performing board.

**Digital Transformation:** Experience of organisational digital transformation and ability to support the Charity in harnessing digital to improve efficiency, reach and outcomes for young women and girls.

We are particularly keen to attract Trustees with lived experience of the issues we address and the challenges facing young women and girls, either directly or through communities and relationships.

We have a specific focus on ensuring diversity of voice on our Board and representation across all intersections of identity. As such, we are particularly keen to hear from Disabled people, Black and people of the Global Majority, people from the LGBTQ+ community and people from different socio-economic and educational backgrounds.



# Role Description

## Duties and Responsibilities

- Support and provide advice on Abianda's purpose, vision, goals and activities.
- Ensure that Abianda's activities and assets are distributed to support its charitable objects.
- Make sure that the charity complies with its governing document and with charity law requirements and other laws that apply.
- Contribute to a positive board culture, which aligns with the culture of charity (e.g., high performing, trusting, vulnerable, comfortable with conflict and constructive challenge).
- Approve operational strategies and policies, and monitor and evaluate their implementation.
- Approve Abianda's financial plans, budgets and monitor and evaluate progress.
- Ensure the effective and efficient administration of the organisation.
- Ensure that key risks are being identified, monitored and managed effectively
- Review and approve Abianda's financial statements.
- Provide support and challenge to the executive team in the exercise of their delegated authority and affairs.
- Recruit key members of staff and monitor their performance.
- Keep abreast of changes in Abianda's operating environment.
- Contribute to regular reviews of Abianda's own governance.
- Attend Board meetings adequately prepared to contribute to discussions.
- Use independent judgement, acting legally and in good faith to promote and protect Abianda's interests, to the exclusion of your own personal and/or any third party interests.
- Respond to serious incidents as and when they occur and according to the required line of reporting.
- Contribute to the broader promotion of Abianda's objects, aims and reputation by applying your skills, expertise, knowledge and networks.



# Role Description

- Collaborate in conducting a bi-annual listening exercise - meeting with all team members to understand their experience of the organisation, successes and challenges.
- Jointly with other Trustees, to hold the charity 'in trust' for current and future beneficiaries.

We invite all candidates to familiarise themselves with the expectations of Trustees as set out by the Charity Commission in support of your decision making to take on this opportunity. Guidance can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/charity-trustee-whats-involved>

## Personal Skills and Qualities

- Willingness and ability to understand and accept their responsibilities and liabilities as trustees and to act in the best interests of the organisation.
- Ability to think creatively and strategically, exercise good independent judgement and work effectively as a board member.
- Effective communication skills and willingness to participate actively in discussion.
- A strong personal commitment to equity, diversity and belonging.
- Enthusiasm for our vision and mission, and aligned with the organisational culture and policy positions.
- Willingness to lead according to our values.
- Commitment to Nolan's seven principles of public life:
  - selflessness
  - integrity
  - objectivity
  - accountability
  - openness
  - honesty
  - leadership



# Role Description

## Conflicts of Interest

- Trustees should avoid putting themselves in a position where their duty to the charity conflicts with their interests or loyalty to another person or body, and to receive no benefits from the charity unless it is properly authorised and is clearly in the charity's interests. This includes anyone who is financially connected to you such as a partner, child or business partner.
- Where a Trustee is also working for the charity, either in a paid or a voluntary role, particular care must be taken to avoid and, where necessary declare, any conflicts of interest whether these are financial, professional or personal.

## Time Commitment

Trustees are volunteers. Abianda will always endeavour to be flexible with scheduling in order to accommodate our Trustees' external constraints and commitments.

You should be able to commit to up to one day a month to support the work of the charity. This time may be dispersed over a number of days. Time will include:

- Keeping abreast of the work of the charity through reading staff policies and reports, etc.
- Attending in-person one Trustee Board meeting at least four times a year, and reading all preparatory reports for the meetings.
- Dialling into four one-hour 'mid-way' calls per year - ensuring Trustees are abreast of emerging issues in a timely manner (non-essential).
- Responding to emails and providing advice and support to the CEO as necessary.
- In addition, you should be able to attend at least one full Board Development Day per year.
- There is an expectation that Trustees are willing to represent Abianda at at least one external event per year.

## Term of Office

Trustees are appointed for a three-year term of office.

Board meeting dates for the coming year are as follows:

**29th July 2025**  
3 - 6pm

**28th October 2025**  
3 - 6pm

**27th January 2026**  
3 - 6pm

**28th April 2026**  
3 - 6pm



# Details for Applying

If you are interested in applying for the role of Trustee with Abianda and want to find out more, our our CEO and Founder Abi is hosting two online information sessions. These will include an overview of the role and time for any questions you have to be answered.

- Tuesday 15 April, 6pm - 7pm - [sign up via Zoom here](#).
- Wednesday 16 April, 12.30pm - 1.30pm - [sign up via Zoom here](#).

**To apply** please send your CV and a supporting statement (max. 1,000 words) detailing what you would bring to the role and how you meet the skills and experiences listed in the person specification to [tallulah@abianda.com](mailto:tallulah@abianda.com). If you would prefer, you can also submit your application via video or voice recording (no longer than 5 minutes) or PowerPoint presentation (no more than 10 slides). Please also download and complete our [equal opportunities form](#) (this is optional).

The deadline for applications is midnight, **Monday 28 April 2025**.

Abianda is a Disability Confident employer. We endeavour to offer an interview to all disabled candidates who demonstrate that they meet essential criteria via their application.

All applications will be shortlisted using a scoring system.

If you are invited to an interview, we will share a package of essential documents with you prior to the interview. You will also be asked to complete a criminal record self-disclosure form, and if successful, you will need to undergo a basic DBS check. On the day of the interview, you will be asked to respond to a task that will test the skills, experience and values we are looking for.

There will be a two-stage interview process:

- The first interview panel will consist of a Lived Experience Consultant, Abi Billinghurst (CEO and Founder), and Vanessa Johnson-Burgess (HR Consultant).
- Successful stage one candidates will be put forward to a second stage interview. This panel will consist of Clare Walkeden (Chair of Trustees) and Krystle McGilvery (Abianda Trustee).



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## Key Dates

**Deadline for applications:** Midnight, 28 April 2025

**1st stage interviews,** held online via Zoom: 19, 20, 22, 23 May

**2nd stage interviews,** held in-person at our office, Screenworks, 22 Highbury Grove, London, N5 2EF: 17, 18 June

**3rd stage,** in-person at our office: 10 July

- 9.30am to 10.30am: Meeting with CEO and Chair for organisation overview and introduction to Trustee role
- 11am to 2pm: Full board and team meeting & lunch

**1st Board meeting:** 29 July, 3 to 6pm

**July – August:** Onboarding and induction



## Appendix 1:

# Abianda's Approach & Activities

The central pillars of our practice are:

- Ecological in our understanding of the issues and in designing of a response;
- Contextual safeguarding applied in practice and with partners, and to understand the extent of, and solution to, extra-familial harm;
- Participatory in design and delivery, rooted in young women's expertise;
- Solution-focused to build alternative narratives, develop skills, resources, independence and agency.

Our activities are delivered across the different spaces which we think are essential to bring about system wide change for girls and young women. From individual focused one to one work, community spaces and places, systems, services and policy.

Our activities include:

The Star Project: Abianda's flagship one-to-one service. A structured programme for young women and girls aged 13–25. Supporting critical thinking, knowledge and skills development around issues associated with criminal exploitation, developing young women's independence and agency so they can better navigate systems and services to have their needs met. The Star Project is currently delivered in Islington.

Group work: For girls and young women aged 13–25, in schools and community settings, who are at risk of, or have, experienced criminal exploitation. Young women develop critical thinking alongside their peers and improve their knowledge and understanding of criminal exploitation. Young women benefit from understanding experiences not just from a personal/local perspective, but expanding understanding into an ecological and societal context. Our group work is currently delivered pan-London.

Community contextual safeguarding projects: Delivered in young women's community spaces, this 6-week programme draws upon the lived experiences and knowledge of young women. We actively engage them in identifying and understanding the risks young women and girls face in specific locations, particularly around criminal exploitation and violence. Through their insights, young women will make recommendations for context-specific, location-based changes aimed at enhancing safety. This new programme will soon be piloted in Islington.

Training and speaking events: A comprehensive package of training programmes, aimed at equipping professionals with the skills, tools, and knowledge necessary to effectively identify and support young women affected by criminal exploitation and violence associated with 'gangs' and county lines.

## Appendix 1 continued...

Young Women's Advisory Group (YWAG): YWAG is at the heart of Abianda. A group of young women aged 18 - 25 with lived experience, who work alongside the Abianda's team, board and stakeholders in a paid capacity. As well as a growing portfolio of external systems change work, the YWAG ensures that the voices and lived experiences of the young women we work with inform, direct and validate our content, the strategic priorities of the organisation and the services we deliver to achieve our priorities.

A network of young women and girls: Any young woman or girl who works with through our services or other activities, automatically becomes a member of our Young Women's Network. The Network is a growing group of young women and girls who are interested in making a difference for other girls and young women. Currently in its infancy, the network will become a force for convening young women interested in these issues, directing our efforts for systems change, and in creating spaces for knowledge and skills-share to elevate all young women and girls.

Intern Programme: Abianda's Intern programme is focused on creating legitimate and step change employment opportunities for young women who have been affected by criminal exploitation and violence associated with gangs and county lines. The young women we work with are often the furthest away from the jobs market and face significant barriers in accessing and sustaining opportunities. We currently employ one young woman per year on a fixed term contract to take on Office and Administrative duties. We hope this area of opportunity will grow!

