

MORE ABOUT THE VOICE BOARD ROLE



What does the role involve?

Being on the Voice Board involves attending 4 online Voice Board meetings and 2-in-person events each year. During these meetings, members discuss issues of strategic importance to the organisation and share honest feedback and insight to bring lived experience to Trustees and Directors, influencing decisions that impact young people and their loved ones affected by cancer.

Alongside the Voice Board meetings, there are optional online monthly meetings to discuss key projects and areas of work and a range of ad hoc opportunities to get more involved if you'd like to. These can range from attending workshops and focus groups, sharing your story, sitting on interview panels, and going to conferences. You can get involved in a way that fits your time, interests, and energy.

"Attending the Voice Board meeting and feeding back to the Board was really interesting. I felt truly valued and appreciated the forum to share my and Harry's perspective with key decision makers. It gave me an appreciation of the scale of the charity and the variety of projects they are working on."

"When I told the Voice Team about having a little one with me, they were so accommodating and have done all they can to make sure I can be involved. From organising hotels for my baby and husband to come along with me, to separate meeting rooms for feeding or naps (baby's not mine!), and even being super flexible for virtual meeting times with me to align with the never end nap schedule!"

"I didn't know what to expect before I attended the Voice Board Induction but felt support was on offer every step of the way. Whilst I was nervous before going, I quickly felt relaxed once the sessions started. It was inspiring and valuable to meet others with various lived experiences of cancer."

"Attending a Voice Board meeting provides raw & honest experiences from people that have been impacted by cancer. At times, these topics and conversations can be difficult to listen to, but they allow the group to get a deep understanding of the challenges posed & how the Voice Board can best support the direction of Young Lives vs Cancer."

How do I know if now is the right time for me to apply?

This is very individual and only you will know what's right for you. Being on the Voice Board involves sharing your experience and insight to help improve things for other children and young people with cancer and their loved ones. It also involves hearing about other members' cancer experiences, so it is important to consider how you may feel about both these aspects. The wellbeing of all our volunteers is hugely important, and support is also available through both our Voice Team and our Employee Assistance Programme.

Some questions to support you in exploring whether now is the right time to volunteer in this way are included below along with Voice Board Members sharing their experiences;

- Am I comfortable sharing aspects of my experience with others?
- How might I feel listening to other people's experiences which may cover everything from being on treatment and beyond to bereavement?
- Is this the right time for me?
- What support might I find helpful to participate fully?

"When I was applying to join the Voice Board, I had just had my son who was only a few months old. I really felt like it was the right time for me to do something like Voice Board as I had just recently had to share a lot of my history with medical professionals again and had a lot of time to process all that I had gone through as a teenager. Starting on maternity leave and then transitioning to being a full-time mum the Voice Board has been such a wonderful way for me to continue to input into a system, utilise some of my professional skills and connect with others that have been through similar experiences."

"One of the things I've really loved about the Voice Board is that as much as we help YLVC, it's helped me. There's something really powerful about everyone being together with a shared experience, recognising everyone's individual and unique journey but at the centre of it all you know others get it."

For me, one of the most powerful things is the diversity of people, having young people, siblings and parents all talking about a topic together but from their own perspectives has really opened my eyes, and heart, towards what my family probably went through as well. We really do all become each other's biggest advocates and where cancer can be so isolating it's so nice now knowing I've got a community of people really to champion me on in whatever comes next!"

"After Harry sadly died, I felt I wanted to do something positive to ensure better outcomes for young people and their families impacted by cancer. Young Lives were an incredible support to us both when Harry was undergoing treatment and since he died. I wanted to give something back to this charity that we all hold in such regard. I continue to be impressed with Young Lives in my dealings with the charity as a Voice Board member, I feel both valued and supported and thoroughly enjoy working on projects with other Voice members and representatives across the charity."

"The Voice Board are conscious of the different needs for individuals, and it was comforting to see members take the time & get the support they need to discuss their journey and how it could have been improved. Personally, I found it difficult to hear some of the stories, but these group meetings are also uplifting, knowing you're not alone & understanding everyone's journey is different shows why the work the Voice Board do is so important."

What else might I need to consider?

The Voice Board is part of our governance and crucially brings lived experience and insight into our decision making. With places being limited, we ask all applicants to commit to attending the 4 online meetings and the 2-in-person events as a minimum each year.

If you'd prefer to take part in a more ad hoc way, as and when it works for you, we'd encourage you to sign up to our [Voice Hub](#). From online surveys to creative projects, research studies to NHS panels, there are all sorts of ways to get involved, to create positive change for children and young people with cancer and their families. We'll share the opportunities on our hub via email, and you can choose any that feel right for you. Get involved as much or as little as you like. There is no pressure and no ongoing commitment; you can dip in whenever you like.

"Whilst there is flexibility in when sessions are held and everyone's availability/circumstances are taken into account; I think you'll get more from this role if you are in a position emotionally and practically to get involved in a variety of projects. In hindsight I dived straight into this work not long after Harry died. It's worked out for me but for others it might be that they need longer to feel ready. There are lots of different ways to work with the charity depending on what you feel able to give."

Next Steps

If you'd like to chat to a member of the Voice Team about the role and what's involved, please contact Emma Wood Voice Manager on 07977 995012. We will also be holding an online session for anyone interested in applying where you can find out more, meet our Voice Board and ask any questions you might have.

This will take place on Monday 27th July 12.45 - 1.25pm and you can sign up to take part [here](#).

Thank you for your interest in joining the Voice Board and supporting our work in this way.