



CHRN Trustees' Annual Report for the period April 2024 to March 2025.

Charities HR Network (CHRN)

Charity Number: 1193540

Registered Address:

Office 605, Albert House, 256-260 Old St, London, EC1V 9DD

[Welcome and Foreword](#)

2024-2025 was a big year for the Network and for me personally as I stepped away from my full-time Head of HR role and committed to working two days a week for the Network. Initially this was on an interim basis to demonstrate the benefits from the additional time and investment. I'm pleased to be able to confirm that throughout the year the Network has continued to grow and develop.

We continued to increase the number of events for members. The Board met in person to plan our strategy for the next two years and we were joined by Perry Timms who supported us on that day. Another highlight was the conference in October. We were brilliantly supported in the run up to the event by the team at Agenda Consulting who conducted research on the state of play of strategic workforce planning in the sector. That topic was the focus of the day and we were delighted to be joined by some amazing speakers including our keynote, Adam Gibson.

In 2024 we also looked to focus on building strategic partnerships in the sector, and beyond, with our ongoing relationships with the CIPD and NCVO.

One of the key outcomes from our strategy day was the aim to be seen as the 'go to' network for HR professionals working in the sector. Our continued growth in content, reach and membership shows that whilst there is more to do, we are delivering against that ambition.

Peter Reeve Interim CEO

Trustees during 2024/2025

The following trustees retained their role on the Board:

- Martyn Dicker – Director of People, UNICEF UK
- Gareth Elwin – Chief Executive, Morgan Law
- Sarah Lomax – Deputy CEO, Charity Finance Group
- Jane Gould – Director of People, UK Youth (CHRN Treasurer)
- Rhian Cooke – Director of People, Mary's Meals International
- Woodjan Raza - Director of People, NCVO

The following associate members remain advisers to the Board in 2024/25:

- Fiona Evans
- Tiger De Souza – Director of People, Samaritans

We believe this Board gives an incredible range of talent and experience to take the Network forward.

The following trustees stepped down from their roles on the Board in 2024/25:

- Kerry Smith

We are extremely grateful to Kerry for her amazing term of office as Chair of the CHRN Board of Trustees. During this time the Network has more than doubled its membership and has become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. This change limited the personal liability of the trustees and allowed us to grow and expand our range of products and offerings. Effectively Kerry oversaw the transition from a small personal network to a fully functioning organisation.

We are delighted that Kerry remains an active member of the Network.

Interim CEO and Co-ordinator details

Interim CEO - Peter Reeve – increased to two days a week

Co-ordinator – Lisa Lavender

During the year we have been supported at peak periods such as the conference by Max Lavender. Max also completed tasks to create and test the responsibilities for a proposed part-time administrator role.

This year we recognised that as we continue to do more we were going to need more resource and support. We launched a recruitment process that later led Milly McPherson-Bruty join us the following year as an administrator. Milly has been a great asset to the team.

Structure, Governance and Management

The CIO Foundation Constitution of the Charities HR Network details all structure, governance and management requirements.

Public benefit disclosures (Why are we here)?

The objects of the Charity are, for the public benefit, to advance the education in, and to promote improved standards of, human resources (HR) management in charities and not-for-profit organisations with the aim of increasing employee engagement and their effectiveness and efficiency, including but not limited to:

- Acting as a representative of charities and not-for-profit organisations in relation to improving the standards of HR in the sector;
- Providing a network of communication, training services and support to facilitate the improvement of HR management standards in charities and not for profit organisations.

We increasingly understand that supporting individual charities and HR practitioners is only part of our role. We are committed to working with partners such as the CIPD, NCVO, ACEVO and other infrastructure bodies to improve the overall employment landscape in the sector.

In 2024 we committed to a two-year strategy designed to deliver the most value to all our members in a complex and challenging world. At the heart of the strategy was a desire to maximise member value and to find new ways to engage with and support our members.

Moreover, enabling more powerful and lasting strength in people practices to match the heartfelt dedication and commitment we see in everyone who works with no-for-profit organisations.

Objectives and activities

In the promotion of improved standards of HR practices, CHRN offers the following support.

Events currently available to members include:

- General meetings (including an opportunity to network), addressed by an invited speaker or workshop led by members on key topics facing HR professionals in the sector.
- An annual conference, providing a range of sessions on new ideas, case studies and a keynote speaker.
- An annual employment law update
- An annual update on pay and reward in the sector
- Four meetings per year for each of our special interest groups. In addition to DEI, L&D, Recruitment and Reward, a Large Charities Group (for charities with turnover in excess of £50m) was created from November 2024.
- Ad hoc workshops/Q&A/skills sessions on topics with a timely relevance to HR professionals in the sector. In the last year these have included updates on immigration, workshops on managing disputes and a highly popular mock employment tribunal.

Additional benefits:

- An opportunity to seek advice from within the diverse membership of organisations. In the last year we introduced an app platform for members to ask questions of peers. This has proved to be extremely popular with very high levels of engagement.
- Active support and sharing of expertise from our commercial partners.
- We have arrangements to discounted services with some of our partners, including discounted price of events/activities or reduced subscription fees for platforms such as CIPD HR-inform.
- A members-only area on the CHRN website for event booking and further resources.
- A CHRN community on the UGenie platform to enable members to raise questions and continue conversations between meetings.

Commercial partnerships

We recognise the importance for members of having access to resources and expertise that might not be possible within their organisations. This has led to the creation of a number of partnerships with commercial

organisations and thought leaders. These primarily support our special interest groups and our full member events. They provide an insight into best practice both within and outside the sector. Our partners in 2024-25:

- Bates Wells – our headline legal partner
- NFP – Partner to our Learning and Development Group
- Diverse Matters – Partner to our D,E&I Group
- TPP – Partner to our Recruitment Group
- Talex - Partner to our Reward Group
- PTHR – Partner to our Large Charities Group
- Agenda Consulting
- CIPD
- CIPD HR-inform
- Humanity Works [from February 2025]

Achievements and performance

Membership of the network has continued to grow, with strong engagement across an increasing number of activities and events.

The Charities HR Network had 164 members at the close of the 2024/25 financial year, an increase of 26 from 138 at the close of 2023/24. This represents an increase of 19%.

The following activities and events took place in 2024/25:

In 2024/5 we had a strong focus on strategic workforce planning. This was the headline topic for the conference and this was supported by a survey from Agenda consulting. The CEO engaged with a number of external organisations and potential partners as we looked to grow our reach and content.

Special Interest Groups:

SIGs are at the heart of our aspiration to support a far wider array of colleagues within HR teams of our members organisations. Initially introduced in 2020 these have expanded to include:

- Recruitment and retention
- Reward
- Diversity, equity and inclusion
- Learning and Development
- Large Charities Group – launched in November 2024

The SIGs provide opportunities for the specialists in the larger HR functions to come together to consider topical content. The groups are also open to other member practitioners to join on an ad-hoc basis.

2024 Conference:

The CHRN conference for 2024 took place on 9th November on the important and timely topic of **Managing Talent and Strategic Workforce Planning**. Around 100 people attended the conference and we would like to thank all our speakers for their inspiring contributions to a really thought-provoking day.

The following 28 events for our members (and reaching 670 individuals) took place in 2024/25, with dates and attendance figures included:

Date	Event	Attendance
25/4/2024	L&D Meeting	17
1/5/2024	Recruitment Group Meeting	20
15/5/2024	Reward Group Meeting	30
21/5/2024	DEI Meeting	16
20/6/2024	Members Meeting	24
26/06/2024	Bates Wells - Managing investigations and appeals	13
11/7/2024	Recruitment Group Meeting	9
18/7/2024	L&D Group Meeting	11
23/7/2024	Bates Wells Charity Governance	9
2/9/2024	Bates Wells Skills Session	33
17/9/2024	DEI Meeting	14
18/9/2024	Reward Meeting	23
17/10/2024	L&D Meeting	17
24/10/2024	Bates Wells Governance Session	11
30/10/2024	Recruitment and Retention Group Meeting	11
5/11/2024	Duty to Prevent Sexual Harassment	26
12/11/2024	DEI Group Meeting	14
14/11/2024	Large Charities Meeting	13
21/11/2024	Bates Wells - Preparing for Employment Tribunals	39
27/11/2024	Members mtg - Pay & Reward update	52
28/11/2024	Mock Employment Tribunal	44
21/01/2025	Reward Group Meeting	28
23/01/2025	Employment Law Update	58
29/01/2025	Large Charities Meeting	15
30/01/2025	DEI Group Meeting	24
6/2/2025	Recruitment Group Meeting	27
13/02/2025	L&D Group Meeting	35
25/03/2025	Members meeting - Agenda Consulting Surveys	37

Financial Review

A 5% increase in the associate membership fee was approved for the year beginning 1st April 2024.

Growing our revenues is critical to the longer-term sustainability of the Network and we have worked to grow our revenues through increased membership and targeted commercial partnerships. These commercial partnerships are important in delivering content and expertise, as well as helping to keep membership fees at a low rate. To date, we have been able to maintain 80-90% membership renewals year-on-year and have continued to grow absolute member numbers.

Key risks and uncertainties disclosures

In 2024 the Network developed a risk register to understand challenges that we might face and how we would respond. The main concern for the Network is the financial volatility in the sector. Whilst we do everything possible to keep membership fees as low as possible, it is a real risk that the financial health of individual charities may lead to non-renewals and a slowing of membership growth.

Plans for 2025/6

Our plans for 2025/6 focus on our performance, our people, our positioning and our products.

Performance: We will continue to grow the network, aiming to reach 200 members.

People: We will recruit additional trustees to the board, including more member representation, to replace those standing down and coming to the end of their terms.

Positioning: We have committed ourselves to developing content and resources that may not be directly accessed by HR professionals in the sector but will support their work in the wider charity. This initially includes sessions on understanding charity governance delivered by our partners Bates Wells.

Products: We will continue to offer a wide array of special interest groups. Additionally, having secured a potential conference sponsor for 2025 we will be working with them to deliver a larger and more impactful conference event in October 2025.

Reserves

The agreed level of reserves was set at a minimum of 3 months expenditure (infrastructure, CEO and Co-ordinator costs) and in the eventuality of closing the network, up to 6 months, at which point the Finance Committee would scrutinise the networks financial position.

Material items

The only material item owned by CHRN is a laptop used by the Co-ordinator. This is 5 years old, depreciating in value and now out of an extended warranty: due for replacement in 2025.

2024-25 Statement of Financial Activities has been reviewed by an external examiner and filed as a separate document of the annual accounts with the Charity Commission.



Statement of Financial Activities

Income and Expenditure for year ended 31st March 2025

Income	
Associate membership fees * see note 1	37883.60
Corporate associates * see note 2	16820.74
Additional conference place fees * see note 3	1160.00
Total income	55864.34
Expenditure	
Trustee insurance	527.13
Website hosting	288.00
Office 365 and zoom licenses (including extra conference zoom)	940.15
UGenie (replacing Guild) license	765.00
Membership of Charity Finance Group	112.00
Co-ordinator fees (Lisa Lavender)	14978.37
CFG/other training	514.28
Interim CEO fees (Peter Reeve)	24000.00
Additional administration support (Max Lavender)	3339.59
Travel expenses	1173.67
Event expenses	5940.96
Accounts external examination	300.00
Bates Wells – registered address	462.00
Infrastructure development projects (website development)	960.00
Total expenditure	54301.15
Income over expenditure for the year	1563.19
Balance brought forward from 2023-24	14139.73
Total funds carried forward to 2025/26	15702.92

Co-ordinator: Lisa Lavender

Treasurer: Jane Gould

Independent examiner:

Examiner's signature:

Date:

Chair of CHRN Board of Trustees: Martyn Dicker

Chair's signature:

1 / 9 / 25

Date:

Notes for the Independent Examiner.

Relating to sections of the Income & Expenditure summary.

1. The associate membership fee income includes 3 early renewal payments made by members before 01/04/2025 for the next membership year. This amounted to £735 (on 14th, 28th and 31st March 2025) in the relevant bank statements.
2. In addition to five corporate associate sponsorships, Croner-I provided revenue share contributions in December 2024 and March 2025 totaling £2,440.74.
3. One free conference place is available per member organisation. Those requesting additional places paid a small fee (£100 in person and £80 virtual). These fees were paid between 22nd August and 15th October 2024, noted with an * on the relevant bank statements.



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