

# Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

## 1. Introduction

This document sets out the terms of reference for the Advisory Committee. It provides information about the context behind the establishment of the Advisory Committee, the background of Community Links, the Advisory Committee's governance structure, membership and roles and responsibilities. This document will be reviewed annually.

## 2. Background

### I. Context

Community Links was founded 43 years ago. In 2016, we joined the Catch22 Group in an innovative partnership<sup>1</sup>. In early 2021, we will build on our partnership and merge fully with Catch22, while retaining a separate brand, maintaining our commitment to Newham, and seeking to develop our programmes and services. The Advisory Committee is central to this.

Community Links supports people in coming together, overcoming barriers, building purpose and making the most of the place they live in. From our base in East London we apply the learning from our local work to influence and achieve positive change. Over 100 staff and volunteers work together to support over 60,000 people each year across several programmatic areas. More information about Community Links can be found at [www.community-links.org](http://www.community-links.org).

### II. Our Mission

Community Links is a local charity with a national impact. For over 40 years, Community Links has been working to tackle poverty and social exclusion in the most deprived neighbourhoods of East London. Through both our direct work, as well as our extensive network of projects, we help people of all ages; empowering individuals to support themselves and each other. Our social enterprise, Links Event Solutions (LES), generates funding to support our work.

### I. Our Vision

'Ready for Everything Communities'; enabling groups of people who support each other to overcome problems, prevent them from occurring again and help each other to thrive and achieve their goals. Starting in Canning Town, and working across Greater London, we are building a *Ready for Everything* approach that can be replicated and expanded elsewhere.

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<sup>1</sup> Catch22 being the sole member of CL in governance/legal terms.

### 3. Advisory Committee Role and Responsibilities

The Advisory Committee is one of the conditions of the merger required by the Community Links. Accordingly, an extract from the 'Conditions of Transfer' behind the merger is detailed as follows;

#### 3. Conditions of Transfer

The Transfer is made on the following assurances from Catch22, to provide continuity of operations in relation to the identification of the Undertaking with its local community, Catch22 will, from the Transfer Date:

3.1 maintain a commitment to charitable activity in the London Borough of Newham, including through continuing fundraising activity in East London;

3.2 maintain use of the "Community Links" name in relation to such activity; and

3.3 establish an Advisory Committee to be consulted in relation to proposals for such activity.

The Advisory Committee recognises that Community Links being a part of Catch22 brings sustainability, scale and scope to Community Links' work, for the benefit of the people who use and access the programmes and services provided.

The role of the Advisory Committee is to safeguard Community Links' legacy, reputation and shape its future activities; ensuring Community Links continues to thrive while being part of Catch22. More specifically, the Advisory Committee has been established with the following key responsibilities:

- Providing advice and guidance on, and acting as a forum to be consulted by Catch 22 in relation to, Community Links' programmes and services.
- Reviewing the level of business development and fundraising activity directed at Newham specifically, and East London generally against the income generations targets set out in the annual budget.
- Monitoring the use of the Community Links Brand in Newham and East London.
- Reviewing proposed spend of restricted reserves which are funds given to Community Links over time specifically for Community Links' charitable activity and purposes.
- Reviewing the annual Community Links budget.
- Providing advice and guidance on local intelligence (needs, opportunities);

## 4. Governance

### I. Accountability and Reporting

The Advisory Committee has an advisory (advice and guidance) and safeguarding (monitoring and reviewing) function. It does not have decision making powers but Catch 22 recognises and acknowledges that the local views and input it will provide are important to take into account following the merger.

The Director (or equivalent senior officer) within the Community Links business unit / directorate is accountable to the senior leadership team at Catch22 for management, and the Catch22 Board of Trustees for governance oversight.

Community Links will report monthly to Catch22 senior leadership and quarterly to the Catch22 Board of Trustees. This is in line with other Catch22 Directorates.

Minutes (and papers) from Advisory Committee meetings will be made available to the Board of Catch22.

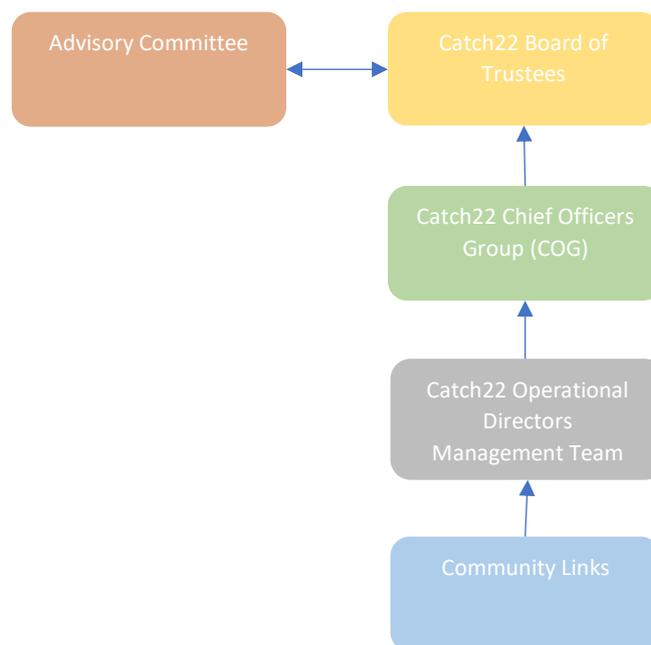


Figure 1: Reporting structure of Advisory Committee

### II. Advisory Committee Format

Meetings will focus on seeking the advice and input of Committee Members. Committee papers will provide key information and pose questions, where appropriate, for the Advisory Committee. Papers will be circulated 1 week prior to the Committee meetings.

The Director of Community Links will serve as Committee Secretary.

The Advisory Committee Chair and Director of Community Links will agree the agenda for each meeting. An indicative Committee workplan is in Annex 1.

The Director at Community Links will support the meetings to be a facilitative process to allow inclusion across all members. Thus, papers will not be drafted with a presumption of technical expertise or an in-depth knowledge from Committee members.

Minutes will document the key discussion points at the Committee and will be circulated to Committee members ahead of the next meeting.

Where further input or specific focus is required, Committee members will be asked to drive specific work through smaller task and finish groups. These projects will be expected to regularly feedback to the wider Committee.

The Chair will facilitate participation of all members of the Committee and allow space for feedback.

## 5. Membership

### III. Committee Membership

The Committee will have a Chair and a Vice-Chair, appointed by the Advisory Committee at the first meeting.

There will be up to 10 members of the Advisory Committee (including the Chair). A quorum will be 3 members.

Appointments will be made on a two-year cycle, renewable for a maximum of four years.

Committee members will be drawn from a variety of personal and professional backgrounds, with an emphasis on reflecting the diverse communities where Community Links works, the ability to provide local intelligence, and the ability to scrutinise technical elements such as the annual budget. Thus, the skills and background required of Committee members will broadly be two-fold (with no presumption that any one Committee member will meet every requirement);

- Local knowledge – through lived and/or professional experience.
- Technical expertise to scrutinise budgets and use of funds.

The Director at Community Links will facilitate and coordinate meetings, confirming attendance, sharing papers and taking minutes and actions.

Other members of the Community Links /Catch22 team will attend the Committee as and when required and at the request of the Committee and be on hand to facilitate the co-production and inclusivity for all members.

### IV. Recruitment

A person specification is available at Annex 2.

Prospective Committee members will be recruited via an open recruitment process, with candidates applying by submitting a CV and statement about their motivation for applying and how they meet the person specification.

The Advisor Committee roles will be advertised externally using Catch22's existing recruitment platform, Smart Recruiters, which advertises roles via popular recruitment platforms Indeed.com and LinkedIn in addition to advertising on both the Community Links and Catch22 websites.

Candidates will be required to give the names, positions, organisations and telephone contact numbers of one referee, relevant to the role. References will only be taken once a candidate's express permission has been granted.

The first Advisory Committee members post its establishment will be interviewed and appointed by the Chair of the Community Links Board of Trustees. Any vacancies on the Advisory Committee will be made up of Community Links Board of Trustees members until such a time that Advisory Committee members are recruited. Following this, any prospective candidates will be interviewed by the Chair and one other member of the Advisory Committee.

We welcome candidates from a diverse range of backgrounds and our aim is for the Advisory Committee to reflect Newham and East London.

#### V. Frequency and Format of Meetings

The Committee will meet for 2 hours three four times a year, unless it agrees to meet more frequently for specific reasons.

The Committee will meet at 17.30-19.30 to maximise attendance from members. The Committee will meet online as well as face-to-face as the situation demands. Where appropriate, Committee members will be invited to host face-to-face meetings, otherwise, 105 Barking Road will be used to host meetings.

#### VI. Attendance Requirement

Regular attendance at the Advisory Committee is vital if it is going to be able to provide the safeguard and advice and guidance which is expected. As such, Committee members will be expected to attend a minimum of 3 out of the 4 meetings per year.

#### VII. Declarations of Interest

A conflict of interest can occur when a Committee Member (or their friends or family) have a financial, commercial, legal, or professional relationship with another organisation, or with the people working with them, that could influence their views.

At the start of each meeting, the Chair will ask Committee members to declare if they have any conflicts of interest which prevent them from attending part or the whole of the Committee meeting.

#### VIII. Amendments and Review of Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually. If the Terms of Reference need to be changed in year, then amendments need to be proposed and agreed at a Committee meeting.

## 6. Annex 1 – Indicative workplan

Key responsibility					
	Frequency	December	March	June/July <sup>2</sup>	September
Providing advice and guidance on, and acting as a forum to be consulted by Catch 22 in relation to, Community Links' programmes and services.	Every meeting	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reviewing the level of business development and fundraising activity directed at Newham specifically, and East London generally against the income generations targets set out in the annual budget.	Every meeting	✓	✓	✓	✓
Monitoring the use of the Community Links Brand in Newham and East London.	Every meeting	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reviewing proposed spend of restricted reserves which are funds given to Community Links over time specifically for Community Links' charitable activity and purposes.	Annually			✓	
Reviewing the annual Community Links budget.	Annually			✓	
Providing advice and guidance on local intelligence (needs, opportunities)	Every meeting	✓	✓	✓	✓

<sup>2</sup> This meeting coincides with the annual budget setting process for the financial year which runs from 1<sup>st</sup> September to 31<sup>st</sup> August

## 7. Annex 2 – Person Specification

Prospective Advisory Committee Members will be expected to exhibit one or more of the qualities below;

- Lived experience / Understanding / an interest in the issues facing the communities we support.
- Experience of working in their specialist field at a strategic level.
- The capacity to analyse strategies and plans and draw out the implications and opportunities.
- An inquiring mind, with excellent problem-solving skills and a balanced approach to risk.
- Sound, independent judgement, and a willingness to speak out.
- Understanding and acceptance of the role and responsibilities of the Advisory Committee.