

## **In their own words: Stories from two NHS staff who are trustees of local charities**

### **Tracy Beese**

Tracy has been a trustee of White House Cancer Support for the last five years. White House Cancer Support provides a range of services for those recently diagnosed with cancer.

**What was your motivation to become a trustee?** “I became a trustee of White House Cancer Support to ensure that the board at the White House were sighted on cancer new initiatives, the long term cancer plan and to provide a collaborative working relationship with the Trust. I was at the time the Lead Cancer Nurse for the trust and had been attending as the clinical nurse specialist for skin cancer for over 10 years.”

**What were you expecting to get out of it?** “I wanted to be involved in ensuring that the people of Dudley had the best support possible following their cancer diagnosis and treatment and to introduce new initiatives from the national cancer plan which would utilise and benefit a collaboration between the charity and our Trust.”

**Were your expectations met?** “Yes, I have been on the White House Cancer Support board for 5 years and during the time acted as chairperson. I feel I have guided the direction for patients to get the best experience.”

**Any advice?** “Work closely with all of the board members and listen, everyone has their expertise to offer, we are forever learning.”

### **Paul Singh**

Paul Singh, Head of Equality, Inclusion Diversity & Workforce Wellbeing for Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust is a trustee for two local charities in Dudley. Paul joined the Centre for Equality & Diversity (CfED) board in 2013, and has held the positions of charity secretary and treasurer and is currently the board lead for health inequalities. CfED is a charity working to support and advocate on behalf of local disadvantaged communities to tackle health inequalities across the Dudley Borough. CfED supports migrants and the wider community, over 65% of CfED’s clients have asylum seeker or refugee status. Through recent work with supporting Dudley MBC with the Syrian and Afghan resettlement programme it has been identified that these communities continue to face several health inequalities. Paul has also recently joined White House Cancer Support as a trustee. White House Cancer Support provides a range of services for those recently diagnosed with cancer.

**What was your motivation to become a trustee?** “I became a Trustee for both charities as I wanted to make a difference and give something back to my community. I was born and bred in Dudley and have experienced some inequalities being from the South Asian community. I have a passion and commitment in tackling health inequalities which has led me also in having a career in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion for over two decades. My

mother is currently in remission of cancer and there were some challenges, however, we received some great support from the White House wanting me to join the charity.”

**What were you expecting to get out of it?** “Being a trustee of a charity is a real privilege, I wanted to be involved in supporting my local community and make a difference to vulnerable people of Dudley.”

**Were your expectations met?** “Yes, I sit on the board of trustees for both charities which normally consists of attending one meeting every two months. I always look forward to board meetings and supporting the great work the charities, staff and volunteers do. I can honestly say that I get far more back, in that of knowing that I am helping.”

**Any advice?** “I would wholeheartedly recommend for those considering becoming a trustee and volunteering. You don’t need to worry whether you are qualified or whether you have enough life experience to make a difference. All you need is to care about the cause. You will get to work closely with board members who have their own lived experience and you will learn a lot and make a difference, a lot more than you will realise.

Being a board member has been one of the richest sources of learning in my professional life, being with a team helps build up skills and life experience.”