



# Board of Directors - Role Description

## About Abianda

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Abianda is a London-based social enterprise that works with young women affected by gangs and county lines, and the professionals who support them. Our mission is to bring about a culture shift in the way services are delivered to young women affected by gangs and county lines, so that:

- they feel safe to access help
- they are no longer a hidden group in our communities
- they are free from harm and abuse

We do this by:

- delivering frontline services to gang-affected young women aged up to 25
- delivering training and professional development programmes to professionals who work with them

"I feel like I am living now, I can breathe." - Young woman's feedback

Our unique model of practice addresses the barriers that stop young women from seeking help. By asking young women the right questions and offering an equal, transparent relationship we help them to discover their own resilience and competence, and to develop the power to change their situation.

## Purpose of the Board of Directors

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- To articulate and communicate the vision of the organisation;
- To focus on strategic planning and direction;
- To make decisions in the best interests of the organisation, its sustainability and the wellbeing of its team;
- To hold each other and the Abianda leadership to account against actions, targets and principles of the organisation;
- To offer advice and expertise to support long-term sustainability;
- To consider, and be representative of, the views and experiences of staff and young women in advising on strategy and decision making;
- To participate in relevant staff policies that have escalated to the Board;
- To ensure that the organisation is meeting regulatory and legal requirements across its activities and infrastructure;
- To direct the governance of the organisation's work by approving policy and measuring its impact;
- To guide the delivery and development of Abianda programmes acting as a 'reality checker'
- To act as a bridge between the Abianda Board and wider networks and community of partners;
- To monitor cashflow and ensure there are proper financial controls in place;
- To support the fundraising strategy and business development of Abianda where possible and appropriate;
- To ensure that organisational decision making is sense checked through the lens of equality;
- To work alongside other Board Members so the Board functions well together as a whole.

## Role requirements and responsibility of the Board

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### Organisational involvement and accountability:

Directors give their time to Abianda with no remuneration. Most will have full time jobs, families and other commitments to tend to. We welcome and appreciate their efforts.

Directors will only be appointed, however, if they can commit to the various meetings throughout the year, carry out actions allocated to them *and* take on additional necessary activities with the organisation and/or staff team.

### Essential commitment

- Read papers in advance of meetings
- Respond to allocated actions within the time period stipulated
- Attend and participate in four quarterly board meetings and at least 2 'mid-way calls' per year

- Clearly demonstrate the skills and expertise you bring to the board and how you will represent the voices of the young women we serve
- Complete an advanced DBS check and register on the DBS Update Service online, consenting to Abianda to make DBS checks every six months
- Sign Abianda's NDA and abide by its GDPR policy
- Engage in annual equalities session with external facilitator/Abianda team
- Engage in safeguarding training for board members/trustees
- Engage in grievance and disciplinary procedures if necessary
- Scrutinise Abianda's finances with due diligence
- Provide references on request
- To be able to present an 'elevator pitch' for Abianda detailing:
  - What do we do?
  - How do we do it?
  - Why do we do it?
- Provide a personal profile and picture for our website and a statement as to why they wanted to be an Abianda board member

#### Desirable commitment

- Available for review and sign off of policies outside of formal meeting processes;
- To sign off annual statutory accounts;
- Engage in additional activities (detailed below) outside of executive meetings according to capacity and availability.

## Meetings

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- Meetings will be held quarterly, four times a year. Meetings are three hours long and will take place via video conferencing or in person;
- There will be four additional 1 hour 'mid-way calls' throughout the year with the CEO. These provide an opportunity for the board to check in and provide support and advice on emerging issues arising between quarterly board meetings;
- Meetings are currently chaired by the CEO;
- The Abianda team will disseminate an agenda and meeting papers one week prior to the meeting date;
- The Abianda Team Administrator will provide secretariat for the Board

#### **Additional activities:**

We expect our board members to share their expertise beyond the traditional confines of executive meetings.

While we appreciate that each member will have constraints on their time, we ask directors to recognise the importance of having a presence and visibility within the wider staff team and with the young women who use our services. This supports transparency and trust across our governance and strategic efforts.

This includes:

- The board will collectively conduct focus group meetings with team members and young women every other year in order to develop relationships and understand issues emerging from the wider team and to ensure decisions are rooted in the realities of our work. The board will produce a report that summarises its findings, cross organisational themes and recommendations. This will be presented to the CEO;
- Each board member will be expected to meet with a member of Abianda's Senior Management Team on a monthly (or every other month) basis in order to share skills and expertise and build knowledge of the organisation. For example, financial input and planning; sense checking high risk safeguarding decisions; advising on public relations and marketing for specific events; support with strategic thinking;
- Be available for one off discussions with team members should challenges or issues arise where strategic and executive input may be useful;
- Collectively ensure that at least one board member attends any internal equalities training/meeting as part of the organisational practice development plan;
- Attend safeguarding training for board directors/trustees;
- Meet with the young women working for Abianda, outside of the traditional board meeting space, to ensure that their opinions and experiences are influencing decision making;
- Invited to the annual SMT and board away day;
- Invited to an annual team social event.

## Benefits for Board members

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- To work closely with a small organisation that has significant impact in the lives of vulnerable young women;
- To be part of an amazing team of people who are changing systems and structures to make the lives of young women safer;
- Attend 1 x away day each year and 1 x social event, immersing yourself in a vibrant team of exceptional people;
- Professional and personal development on:
  - Insight into young women's lives
  - Advising team members
  - Creating an organisation where people want to stay and work
  - Being part of the growth of an organisation that is the national lead in working with gang affected girls and young women.
- Skills development in a non-executive team, governance and regulatory procedures;
- Personal growth from exposure to equalities work and increased connection to oppression and challenges faced by girls and young women in our communities;
- Personally and publicly connected with an organisation that has a developing reputation for bringing about social impact and change.

## Recruitment and retention process

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We actively seek board members who have experiences of the issues we address in our work with young women, or who have direct experience of working in the sectors that Abianda navigates. Alternatively, we recruit on the basis of the very specific skills and expertise the candidate can bring to the group. We are currently looking for new Board members with expertise in **Finance** and **HR**.

- Board members will be recruited through our networks and friends, and through formal advertising routes;
- Board members will be recruited from as broad a range of people and communities as possible;
- Candidates will be interviewed by the CEO, one current board member and one young woman or member of the Abianda team;
- Successful candidates will be inducted into the organisation, attending:
  - Briefing on Abianda, our model and approach to safeguarding
  - Meetings with the leadership team and representatives from every 'layer' of the organisation (young women, entry level post holders, practitioners, Senior Practitioners, SMT)
- Successful candidates will be expected to read relevant organisational policies, including safeguarding procedures and guidance, grievance, financial governance, health and safety, safer recruitment, performance management (checklist and sign off to be completed);
- Director's appointments will be reviewed after two years. A mutual decision may be made for continued Directorship or to opt out. Abianda's Chief Executive has the authority to terminate membership at this point or if it is felt that the Board member is no longer able to carry out its duties to the organisation sufficiently;
- If there are three consecutive non-attendance of quarterly board meetings, without an excusable reason, the board member could be asked to step down.

## How to apply

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To apply to join Abianda's Board of Directors please email your CV and a cover letter (max 500 words), explaining the skills and experiences you bring and how your values align with Abianda's, to [hello@abianda.com](mailto:hello@abianda.com) (with 'Abianda Board application' in the subject line). Applications close 31 October.