

# ALISON LOWE

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## Personal Statement

I am a proud Yorkshire lass who has worked in the Voluntary Sector for 30 years, combining this with my interest in local politics and community involvement. As Chief Executive of a medium-size mental health charity, it has been my privilege to deliver excellent services that meet the needs of our service users whilst also being strategically relevant in a very uncertain funding environment. Since my appointment to Touchstone 17 years ago, I have transformed the organisation from one with no direction, few policies and a budget deficit to one that has a city-wide reputation for excellence with a strong balance sheet. I have written a 10-year Strategic Business Plan to give focus and impetus to the organisation as well as the confidence to deliver in a very competitive market. Touchstone is now in considerable surplus due to my excellent financial management and both the infrastructure and governance are in place to develop the organisation yet further. Touchstone has doubled in size since 2018.

As well as this, Touchstone is Investors in People-Platinum, a Stonewall Top 100 organisation since 2014, and a Sunday Times Best Company for the 9<sup>th</sup> successive year. In 2018/19, Touchstone was named number 1 Most Inclusive UK Employer for the 3<sup>rd</sup> year running by Inclusive Companies, beating the likes of Sky, EY and Bloomberg. I believe that my vision, clarity of purpose and ability to manage change whilst embedding our values has all contributed to this success.

I also feel that my voluntary sector experience and local government knowledge, built up over 29 years as a local councillor, makes me an ideal person to contribute and influence at the highest level. I chaired the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel for 5 years, holding the Police and Crime Commissioner to account alongside 13 other members from across the political spectrum and I also chaired the Yorkshire and Humber Employers Committee for 9 years which is the regional negotiating body for local authorities on pay, terms and conditions.

## Education

Inst. Leadership and Management	Diploma in Leadership, Mentoring and Executive Coaching, Level 7
Leeds University	MA Medieval Studies
Leeds University	History BA (Hons) 2:1
Parklands Girls High School	3 A Levels, 6 O' Levels

## **Work Experience**

Sharing Voices Bradford Interim CEO

### **Responsibilities:**

Sharing Voices is a BAME mental health charity which commissioners invited me in to manage, during a period of change. I successfully turned SVB around in less than 6 months and it is now going from strength to strength.

April 2004 - current                      Touchstone                      Chief Executive

### **Responsibilities:**

- Providing leadership and strategic direction for organisation and 350 staff and volunteers
- Managing £9.2 million budget
- Strategic Business Planning and delivery of objectives
- Ensuring appropriate governance arrangements in place
- Overseeing and reporting on performance and contract management
- Developing and maintaining partnerships and knowledge sharing to support achievement of above
- Ensuring Health and Safety, Information Governance and Risk Management arrangements are sound and in place
- Policy development and review

Foundation Housing                      Service Director

### **Responsibilities:**

- Providing senior management to 5 West Yorkshire Teams providing 1000 units of supported housing to ex-offenders under a West Yorkshire Probation contract  
Managed £5 million budget and 120 staff  
Lead Supporting People Manager  
Responsible for risk assessment and management of prolific, high risk and mentally disordered offenders in the community.  
Responsible for development of new and existing services

Foundation Housing                      Team Manager in Calderdale, Bradford, Leeds

### **Responsibilities:**

- Managed various West Yorkshire Teams to deliver supported housing to ex-offenders
- Managed and set annual Team Budgets
- Identified and pursued appropriate development opportunities for staff

Foundation Housing                      Housing Support Worker

St Anne's Community Services                      Day Care Officer

## **Training**

I have undertaken a range of relevant training over the years including:

Health and Safety/Risk Assessment

Finance and Budget setting

Strategic Business Planning

Equal Opportunities/Diversity

Common Purpose 1993-4

ILM level 7 Leadership and Executive Coaching 2008

ACEVO membership/leadership development on-going

Challenging Leaders Peer Group 2013-17

Kings Fund Cascading Leadership Programme 2018-current

Windsor Castle Association of Leadership Fellows since January 2020

## **Other Experience**

1992 – current Trustee Wooden Spoon Fundraising Committee, a Children’s Charity raising @ £100k p.a. and national trustee 2011-2021.

1990 – May 2019 Leeds City Councillor (Armley)

2005 – current member of Forum Central, Chair since 2018

2007 – current Board member Leeds CAB

2008-current Member and Chair Leeds Survivor Led Crisis Service

2010- May 2019 Chair Yorkshire and Humber Employers’ Committee

2012- May 2019 Member and Chair, West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel

2020 – Co-Chair of Leeds and York Partnership Foundation Trust Equality and Inclusion Group

2020 – Chair Leeds Statues Review

2020 – Chair BAME VCSE Review Panel into Health Inequalities (led by the ICS).

2020 – current NED Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust

I chaired many committees as a Leeds City Councillor over a 29-year period including the Health Scrutiny Board, as well as being Shadow Lead Member for Children’s Services and City Services and Environment. I was latterly lead for Personnel on the Council and Chaired the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel on behalf of the 5 local authorities and 2.3 million residents where I oversaw expenditure of the then £400+ million force budget. I was also formerly a member of the West Yorkshire Police Authority for many years where I chaired the Macpherson Steering Group and was a member of the Leeds Best Value review of policing in the city. I was Deputy Lord Mayor of Leeds in 2003 – 2004 and was made an Honorary Alderwoman of the city in January 2020 after 29 years’ service. In this role, I led the review of statues in Leeds during Summer 2020.