



**Sarah Collis**

**CEO**

**Self Help UK**

## **Candidate Statement**

As a leader of an emerging small national organisation, championing the value and role of peer support groups across the UK, I get to work with people who embody the principles of empowerment and reciprocity that I value the most. Self Help Groups are by their very nature gatherings of people who through initial self-interest, understand the value of shared experience and community. These values are what I will bring to the board of National Voices. At a time when the VCSE faces increasing challenges in areas of finance, governance and increased competition for resources of all kinds, it is vital that we have a membership organisation that understands the needs of all its members and one that can successfully advocate, influence and campaign for public policy that integrates the sector in areas of public services.

As CEO of Self Help UK, all too often I still find that commissioners and policy makers wish to engage with our sector but fail to fully comprehend what it is we can offer and how it is important to co-produce with our sector to create holistic approaches. The words say one thing and the actions often say another. I bring over 25 years of experience influencing government, commissioners and policy makers towards inclusion of the VCSE. My experience has shown me that the most powerful voice comes from those with the most compelling insight and that only comes from a close connection to lived experience. Smaller charities provide much of that compelling voice and I would welcome the opportunity to add one more to the stewardship of National Voices.

I believe that the voice of small charities within National Voices ensures that the unique challenges we face are recognised within national policy. We make up the majority of the VCSE sector and yet are most likely to be missing from the 'collective table' when government, policy makers and commissioners engage with the sector. National Voices gives us a broader platform on which to raise our voices and as a trustee, I will use the opportunity to make that voice one that is heard and valued.

I have extensive board experience as both a non-exec director of local and national charities and hold representative roles in a number of arena's including STP's, Local Strategic Partnership and prevention and personalisation transformation boards.

As a trustee, I will bring my insight, passion and expertise to support National Voices to shape how we engage with our health economies nationally in order to make real shifts in inclusion within the health and care systems locally.

I bring a strong track record of innovation in integrated service development and a deep passion for the role of our sector and the need for good infrastructure and governance. Together we are a voice that cannot be ignored.