

# Shadow Board: Operating Model & Cadence



# Introduction

The Comfort Cases UK Shadow Board is a leadership and advisory group for people aged 19–35 who want to use their voice, skills, experience and networks to help create change for children entering or moving within the care system. It is designed to bring fresh thinking, lived experience, professional insight and younger voices closer to charity decision-making.

This is not just a discussion group.

It is a structured way to influence strategy, strengthen advocacy, grow our reach and help end the practice of children moving with their belongings in bin bags.

For every new start.  
For every move.  
No more bin bags.

# Purpose and Strategic Context



## Why a Shadow Board Matters for Comfort Cases UK

This is for people who want their voice to move beyond “awareness” and into action.

The Shadow Board matters because it helps Comfort Cases UK:

- Listen before decisions are made
- Keep lived experience connected to strategy
- Strengthen the #NoMoreBinBags movement
- Understand what dignity looks like in practice
- Build future leaders, advocates and changemakers
- Grow networks, partnerships and public awareness



You do not need to be a trustee or have trustee experience to influence trustee-level thinking.

The Shadow Board helps turn:

Experience → Insight

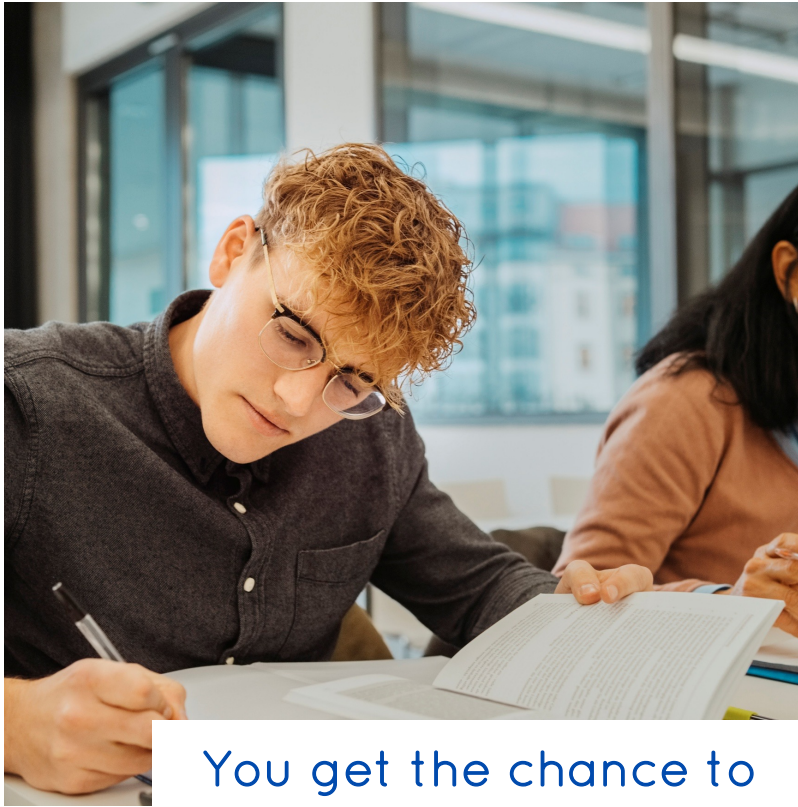
Insight → Recommendations

Recommendations → Trustee-level discussion

Trustee-level discussion → Better decisions

You are the bridge between lived reality and trustee oversight, translating experience into insight and structured input that trustees can act on.

# Structure & Membership



You get the chance to learn how charity leadership works from the inside.

The Shadow Board is:

- Advisory, not legally responsible
- Connected to the Main Board
- Guided by a Trustee Link
- Supported by clear roles and expectations
- Designed to influence, not duplicate governance
- Built around learning, leadership and contribution



This is for you if.....

- You care about how children are treated at moments when life changes suddenly.
- You believe dignity should not depend on luck, postcode or which professional happens to be present on the day.
- You want to use your voice, skills, experience or networks to help build something practical and powerful.
- You may have lived experience of care.  
You may work in a related sector.  
You may be a student, early-career professional, volunteer, campaigner, creative, fundraiser, organiser, communicator or connector.
- You may simply be someone who cannot ignore the idea of a child moving with their belongings in a bin bag.



## Who are our members?

We are looking for people

- aged 19–35
- mix of care-experienced and non-care-experienced members
- two-year commitment with a one-year review.

We welcome applicants who bring:

- Lived experience
- Professional insight
- Digital confidence
- Creative thinking
- Community connections
- Fundraising energy
- Advocacy skills
- Care sector understanding
- A strong belief in how children are treated



What can you give?

You can bring:

- Your perspective
- Your questions
- Your lived or learned experience
- Your creativity
- Your workplace or community networks
- Your social media understanding
- Your professional skills
- Your passion for children's dignity and belonging
- Your willingness to help Comfort Cases UK grow



What we ask..

We ask that you:

- Attend and contribute to meetings
- Take your role seriously
- Respect confidentiality and safeguarding
- Use your voice responsibly
- Represent Comfort Cases UK with care
- Work constructively with others
- Stay aligned to the charity's mission and values
- Act professionally, with integrity, respect & responsibility

# Cadence, Outputs, and Measures of Success

\*see appendix for more details



## Shadow Board Meeting Cadence: at a Glance

### MONTHLY → QUARTERLY → TRUSTEE BOARD

- **Monthly online meetings**  
A focused working session on one theme, challenge or opportunity.
- **Mid-cycle touchpoints**  
A chance to sense-check ideas with the CEO, Trustee Link or relevant sponsor.
- **Quarterly insight output**  
A short summary of key insights, recommendations and questions for the Main Board.
- **Annual presentation**  
A chance to share what the Shadow Board has learned, influenced and achieved.



A message from  
Sarah, our CEO

This is your chance to be part of something clear, practical and deeply human.

I am inviting you to walk alongside me, us, to shape and strengthen our offer to grow a movement where children matter and where how we treat them can have lifelong positive impact.

I value your voice, your experiences, your points of view, your networks and your skills.

I value your passion and willingness to try new things and step out of your comfort zone to create impact for our beautiful community.

I want every child to know they matter.

Not someday.

Not when systems improve.

Not when someone else fixes it.

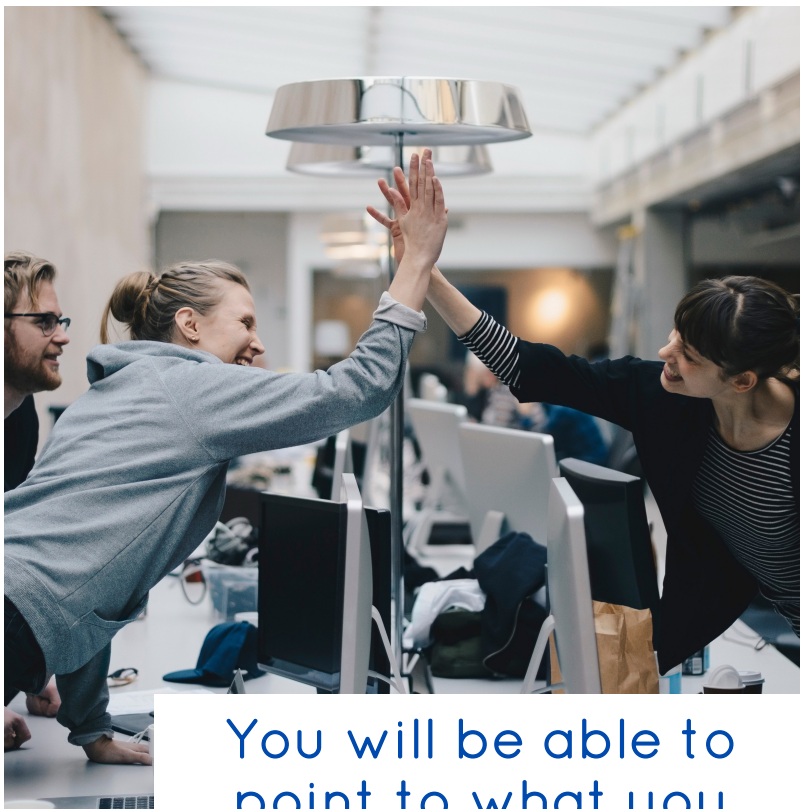
Now.

Because belongings are not rubbish.

Children are not statistics.

And no child should carry their life in a bin bag.

Will you join me?



You will be able to  
point to what you  
helped build

You will help Comfort Cases UK listen better, reach further, speak more powerfully and grow its impact.

Success includes:

- Useful insight shared with trustees
- Members gaining confidence, skills and leadership experience
- Network referrals to the CEO
- New packing event leads
- New volunteers or supporters
- Meeting fundraising targets
- Strong meeting attendance
- Growth in digital engagement
- Stronger storytelling and advocacy
- A successful annual presentation

Every 15 minutes, a child enters the foster care system.  
Together, we can change their story.



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 [@comfortcasesuk](#)



# Cadence, Outputs, and Measures of Success - appendix



## Monthly Shadow Board Working Sessions

### Focused Thematic Sessions

Each session targets a specific strategic or operational priority for in-depth discussion and problem-solving.

### Participatory and Reflective Approach

Sessions encourage sharing experiences, challenging assumptions, and collaborative exploration of ideas.

### Constructive Facilitation

Facilitators ensure all voices are heard and discussions remain trauma-informed and productive.

### Synthesis and Clear Outputs

Sessions end with clear summaries of successes, challenges, and realistic changes in accessible language.



## Mid-Cycle Sponsor Touchpoints with the CEO or Trustee

### Purpose of Mid-Cycle Touchpoints

These meetings ensure shadow board insights align with organisational reality and focus on impactful outcomes.

### Session Format and Focus

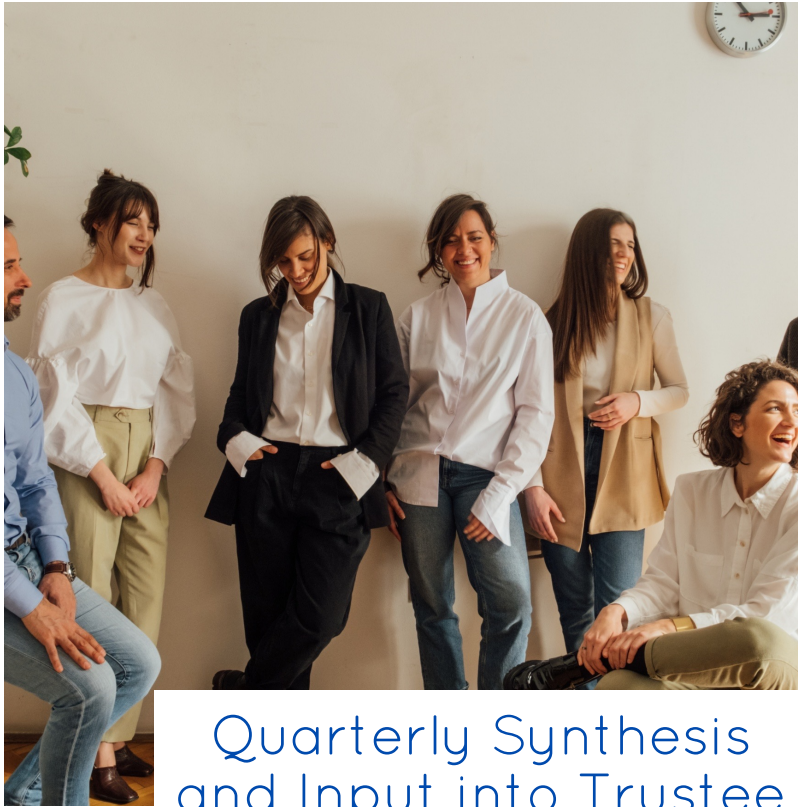
Short, sixty-minute sessions emphasize sense-checking ideas, exploring feasibility, and prioritizing initiatives.

### Managing Constraints and Creativity

Discussions clarify funding, capacity, and safeguarding constraints while encouraging creativity and challenge.

### Building Trust and Partnership

Regular sponsor engagement strengthens trust, shared purpose, and champions shadow board influence.



## Quarterly Synthesis and Input into Trustee Board Papers

### Concise Insight Delivery

A one-page summary delivers key insights, recommendations, and challenge questions to respect trustees' time and sharpen focus.

### Standardised Format

Using a standardized format ensures trustees know what to expect and can quickly engage with the material presented.

### Strategic Timing

The synthesis aligns with board paper deadlines to influence trustee discussions before decisions are made.

### Governance Connection

Shadow board members may attend meetings to link frontline insights directly to strategic governance discussions.