



Insights from our Guardian Council:

with Chair, Liam Black



We sat down with Liam Black, Chair of our Guardian Council, to dig into what sets Togetherall apart from the rest. Liam speaks of his experience as Chair, as well as personal instances that led him to the field of digital mental health.

Liam has been on the Togetherall Board for seven years, three of which as Executive Chairman. He is the founder and Chair of our Guardian Council, a group of mental health and business experts that holds Togetherall accountable for safe and effective practices. He is an impact investor, mentor, writer, and has recently been appointed as a trustee of the Jaguar Land Rover Foundation. He and his wife have three children and four grandchildren.

Liam is non-executive director of Togetherall. He has no shares in the business. He is fascinated by how organisations hold themselves to account on their mission and purpose.



Liam Black
Chair of Guardian
Council and Togetherall
Non-Exec Director

The two questions the Guardian Council members help us to answer are:

1. Is Togetherall fulfilling our purpose?

Charter Principles:

- Access: continuously expanding our reach and it's available to all – no discrimination
- Impact: improve the mental well-being of members and deliver real benefit to commissioning orgs
- Sustainability: a financially self-reliant business model with the ability to attract investment to meet our ambitions

2. How can we continually improve to ensure our principles and actions align?



Q. What is a social impact organization and why do they exist?

LB

Togetherall exists because the founder felt compelled to do something to help others after a friend took her own life. We continue to exist because there is huge demand out there for a safe online platform for people to give and receive support and know that mental health professionals are there 24/7 to ensure safety and confidentiality.



Q: Can profit and social impact co-exist?

LB

Yes – and we are the living proof of that. The business wasn't created simply to make money and all our staff, board and investors are aligned behind the need to give equal attention to profit and impact.



Q. Why are social impact organizations in the mental health space relevant?

LB

Why is Togetherall considered a social impact org? Our company's activity is underpinned by our [Charter](#) which spells out our commitment to ensuring that our members and their needs are always prioritized. Also our first significant investor was Impact Ventures UK – now a part of [Lightrock](#) – which was created to help social purpose businesses scale, it reports to its investors – including Better Society Capital – on impact as well as financial performance. Both are vital because if there is no money there is no mission. Big social impact aspirations require capital to grow and be sustainable over time.



Q. How is this operationalized within the business at Togetherall?

LB

Our exec team are required to report on impact to our monthly board meetings of directors and investors alongside commercial performance. Overseeing all this is our Guardian Council of mental health experts whose mandate is to hold the board accountable for any claims made about impact and to scrutinize any significant strategic development. In 2024 a big issue was if and how we should introduce [Trained Peers](#). At every step of the process from concept, through piloting to scaling it up. The Guardian Council was involved, and it would not have launched without the Guardians' backing. Unique in the industry, the Guardians are much more than an advisory group and have become an integral part of the company's culture. I know too that the existence of the Guardian Council gives employees and people who want to work with us confidence that the company's social purpose is real and protected.



Q. Why have you decided to join Togetherall effort to help safely scale digital mental health support across the world?

LB

I joined Togetherall seven years ago as executive chairman to help grow the company and our impact. In that time, we survived Covid, rebuilt the platform, launched in the Unites States and recruited a world class exec leadership team. It's been quite a ride. I love what we do and seeing how much we help so many people.



Q. Why are mental health and wellbeing so important?



As someone who has struggled with anxiety and depression during my thirties, I know how debilitating it can be. Staying well in mind and body is a number one priority for me now in my sixties. The better I am, the better I will be as husband, father and grandfather – and the better my contribution will be to my colleagues at Togetherall and the other organisations with which I am involved.



Q. What have been some of the more significant changes in this space over the past 10-20 years?



Openness and tech. When Togetherall started almost 20 years ago the idea that people would be open about their mental health struggles was revolutionary. Stigma was huge. We still have a long way to go – especially with men – but the stigma is less and mental health is much more openly discussed.

Today there is a huge range of apps and platforms available, many unfortunately without any real clinical rigour, and this can be confusing for people. But as we know from the research we do with our thousands of members, being able to access support at any time of day or night on any device is a huge leap forward from where we were 20 years ago.



Q. In your opinion, what are some of the changes we should anticipate going forward?



The ubiquity of AI. For us at Togetherall we will never not have real human beings moderating the platform and interacting with members. But how might we use AI to enhance the experience? The operation and ethics of all that will keep the Guardian Council busy!

We are a pioneer in peer-to-peer support, and we are the only such community with such robust clinical moderation and support available 24/7 (overseen by one of the industry's leading clinicians, Ben Locke, Ph.D.). Our Guardian Council is another element of our culture which provides members and commissioning partners that we will do the right thing always and are not in this for quick buck.



Q. How important is trust and safety within the mental health and well-being space?



They are the most important things. You can have the jazziest tech and marketing spiel but if users of services feel their data is at risk or that the platform is being run by amateurs without any professionally accredited clinical underpinning, then rightly they will not trust the service and thus not get the help they are looking for.



Q. If you knew then what you know now, what would you change related to this space? Togetherall's approach?



We were lucky and launched our new platform a month before Covid hit! It was a little stressful. Launching earlier might have reduced that.



Q. What is the most exciting aspect of your involvement with Togetherall?



I love that we have helped so many people and have been at it for so long – and I really like being part of a great team and learning all the time.



Established in 2007, Togetherall is available to more than 20 million individuals worldwide. Togetherall is the leading clinically managed, peer-to-peer, online support community where members can share what's on their minds, anonymously, safely, and in-the-moment, 24/7/365. Members can connect through shared lived experiences with a global network of peers, backed by the safeguarding of nearly 50 licensed and registered clinicians overseeing the community around-the-clock. These clinicians empower individuals in peer support and foster and maintain a safe, vibrant environment.

If you are interested in offering safe and scalable ways to support your people's mental health, [contact us](#) to learn more about Togetherall's online community.

