Trustee role description and person specification

Overall responsibility

Trustees are responsible for providing appropriate oversight, governance and leadership to the charity in the pursuit of its charitable purposes.

Where a charity employs staff, trustees should scrutinise the performance of the management in meeting agreed goals and objectives and monitor the reporting of performance in key areas. They should satisfy themselves as to the integrity of financial and other information, and that financial and other quality controls and systems of risk management are robust and defensible.

Trustees are responsible for determining appropriate levels of remuneration of staff and have a prime role in appointing, and, where necessary, removing, senior staff, and in succession planning.

Accountability

As the board is responsible and liable for the governance and functioning of the charity, it is accountable, in varying degrees, to a variety of stakeholders, including: members (where applicable), beneficiaries, funders, the Charity Commission, and other regulators (e.g. CQC).

Furthermore, there is a growing demand within the sector and the wider public, for charities to be open and accountable for their actions and inactions. The Charity Governance Code recommends that charities are open in their work unless there is good reason not to be and that organisations take

seriously their responsibility for building public trust and confidence in their work. The board should take the lead on this. Evolving good practice would therefore lead trustees to consider the wider implications of the decisions they make, and to communicate widely the formal reasons behind such decisions or actions.

Above all else, trustees must adhere to any legal and regulatory requirements applicable to the charity's activities.

Statutory duties

The following is a summary of the legal duties that trustees must fulfil:

Charities Act 2011

A trustee's main duties under charity law are to:

- Ensure the charity is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit;
- Comply with the charity's governing document and the law;
- Act in the charity's best interests;
- Manage the charity's resources responsibly;
- Act with reasonable care and skill; and
- Ensure the charity is accountable.

Companies Act 2006

A trustee is referred to as a director in company law and their main duties are to:

- To act within the directors' powers;
- To promote the success of the company and to act in good faith;
- To exercise independent judgement;
- To exercise reasonable care, skill and diligence;

- To avoid conflicts of interest;
- Not to accept benefits from third parties; and
- To declare interest in proposed transactions or arrangements.

Trustee responsibilities

Strategy

- To actively participate and develop the strategy by which the charity aims to fulfil its charitable purpose.
- Establish clear objectives to deliver the agreed plans and strategy and meet the charity's objectives and regularly review performance against those objectives.
- Hold the CEO to account for the effective management and delivery of the organisation's strategic aims and objectives, where appropriate.
- Promote and develop the charity in order for it to grow and maintain its public benefit.
- Recognise the situation when it may be more appropriate to wind the charity up where there is no longer a need for the charity to provide the services it does or because the charitable objects are no longer relevant to contemporary social situations.
- Analyse and positively contribute to the strategic development of long-term plans for the charity and its beneficiaries.
- Contribute to and inform the vision of the charity.

- Contribute to constructive debate regarding the strategic development of the charity and any other material and significant issues facing the organisation.
- Safeguard the good name and reputation of the charity.
- Build and maintain close relationships between the charity's various constituencies and stakeholder groups to promote the effective operation of the charity's activities.
- Agree an effective communication strategy that includes the needs of staff, beneficiaries and other stakeholders, including volunteers.
- Represent the charity at functions, meetings and in the wider media, in line with the charity's agreed strategy.
- Promote the charity and its work to fulfil its charitable objects.
- Agree the charity's values and ensure that they are reflected in the conduct and activities of the organisation and those who work for it.
- Set the tone for the charity through leadership, behaviour and performance.

Compliance

- Ensure that the charity complies with its governing document, charity law and any other applicable legislation and regulations including safeguarding and fundraising, where applicable.
- Work to achieve the purpose of the charity and to pursue the charitable objects, and provide public benefit.
- Ensure the effective and efficient administration of the charity and its resources, striving for good practice in governance.

- Manage and use the charity's resources so as to optimise impact and the delivery of the charity's objects.
- Maintain the fiduciary duty invested in the position, undertaking such duties in a way that adds to public confidence and trust in the charity.
- Ensure that financial controls are robust and that the board is kept fully informed through timely and relevant information.
- Identify and assess risks and opportunities for the charity, determining which are appropriate or desirable, and establishing effective risk management mechanisms in order to monitor these.
- Ensure that those working on behalf of the charity, including third parties abide by the standards which the charity sets and also by the relevant requirements of legislation, e.g. the relevant provision of the Charities (Protection and Social Investment) Act 2016.
- Participate in the appointment of the chief executive and other senior staff, as appropriate.
- With the assistance of the company secretary (Clerk), promote the highest standards of corporate governance in compliance with the Charity Governance Code and other regulatory requirements and good practice, where appropriate.
- Take appropriate professional advice in all matters where there may be a material risk to the charity, or where the trustees may be in breach of their duties.
- Uphold the values of the charity by example, and ensure that the organisation promotes equality and diversity for all its stakeholders.

Performance monitoring

- Ensure the effective implementation of trustee board decisions by the chief executive and the senior management team.
- Ensure a fully effective and appropriate system for the recruitment, appointment and monitoring of the work and activities of the chief executive officer and, where applicable, other members of the senior management team.
- Set challenging objectives for improving performance and monitoring performance against those targets.
- Pay due regard to ensure that any key performance indicators are in alignment with the ethos of the charity and culture it promotes.

Board activities

- Uphold the highest standards of integrity and probity, adhering to the Nolan Principles and observing the recommended practice of Principle 3 of the Charity Governance Code relating to Integrity.
- Participate fully in the work of the board, ensuring the collective responsibility of the board of trustees.
- Attend and, when possible, chair committees and ad hoc meetings of the Group Board.
- Participate in a board induction, any training and other evaluation identified as an individual and as part of the board or committee.
- Maintain the trustees' commitment to board diversity, renewal and succession management in line with the charity's governing document and/or current good practice.

- Undergo an individual and board performance appraisal and attend any additional training highlighted as a result of the evaluation process.
- Maintain absolute confidentiality about all aspects of the trustees' business, bearing in mind the overriding legal obligations placed upon trustees.

Person specification

The following characteristics, knowledge and experiences (or commitment to gaining them) would be advantageous to the role of charity trustee:

- A commitment to achieving a high level of understanding and interest in the issues the charity seeks to address / represent;
- A commitment to the values and principles of the charity;
- Good business and financial acumen;
- Experience of committee work;
- Highly developed interpersonal and communication skills;
- Ability to understand complex strategic issues, critically assess, analyse and resolve difficult problems;
- A commitment to developing a sound, independent judgement, courage, common sense and diplomacy;
- Politically astute, with the ability to grasp relevant issues and understand relationships between interested parties;
- Clear understanding, and acceptance, of the legal duties, liabilities and responsibilities of trustees;
- Sound knowledge of charity governance;

- Sufficient time and commitment to fulfil the role;
- Ability to listen to and welcome alternative opinions and experiences;
- Flexibility in thinking;
- A desire to implement the highest standards of governance.

Please go here for further information.

Declaration

I confirm I have read and understood the Trustee Role Description and Person Specification:

Print Name	
Signature	
Date	

Reviewed by	Board of Trustees
Reviewed date	April 2025
Next review date	April 2028
Distribution	Trustees