



TrustLinks

Growing Communities • Transforming Lives

Trustee Recruitment Information Pack August 2023

Registered charity no. 1092324

Company No. 4351216

How about joining us at **Trust Links** as a Board Member?

Trust Links is an innovative and expanding local independent mental health and wellbeing charity, growing communities and transforming lives in Essex. We are seeking trustees who are passionate about our cause and want to use their skills and experience to help us make a difference to people's lives.

We work with more than 4,000 beneficiaries per year through: six Growing Together community garden projects providing therapeutic horticulture and positive activities for adults with mental health, mild learning disabilities and school and youth groups; REACH Recovery College and Wellbeing Hub working in partnership with local agencies to provide assessment, psychoeducational and vocational training, and peer support for adults with mental health problems; telephone befriending and counselling; projects supporting vulnerable children and young people. We are working on the further expansion of our successful Growing Together community gardens across mid and south Essex and are working with partner organisations across the UK and internationally to develop therapeutic community gardens, learning from the Growing Together model.

We are an award winning charity and have achieved the Charities Excellence Framework standard. We won the national Best Health Initiative award in The Green Flag Awards for our labyrinth project at Growing Together Shoeburyness. Our turnover is projected to exceed £2 million in 2023/24, we have 70 staff and more than 190 volunteers. We have grown significantly since our foundation in 2000 and have ambitious plans for further expansion and development.



Trustees play a crucial role in setting and supporting Trust Links's strategy. We have an excellent board of eleven trustees, but have identified the following gaps, which we would like to recruit to:

- **Fundraising, to help us develop and implement our fundraising strategy;**
- **Mental health expertise, to inform our strategy; OR**
- **Marketing and communications**

Previous board/trustee experience is not necessary and we welcome applications from all ages and backgrounds. We are keen to recruit people from BAME and marginalised communities', as these are currently underrepresented on our board. These positions could therefore suit individuals taking their first steps to develop wider board level and governance experience. If you don't have these skills but you believe that your background could be useful to us and you are interested in joining our board, please do still get in touch.

“Trustees have overall control of a charity and are responsible for making sure it's doing what it was set up to do. They may be known by other titles, such as: directors; board members; governors; committee members. Whatever they are called, trustees are the people who lead the charity and decide how it is run.”

(The Charity Commission)



Message from Chair of Trustees, Jackie Bliss

"Thank you for your interest in becoming a Trustee at Trust Links. It is an inspirational and enterprising charity having grown and expanded from the original site in Westcliff. This is a charity that changes people's lives and has been involved with well over 10,000 people since its formation over 20 years ago.

We are looking to bring on board new Trustees with a passion for improving the health and wellbeing of local people and communities and enable us to widen our expertise and knowledge within the Trustee Board.

Being a Trustee is a rewarding, interesting and challenging role. As a Trustee you play an important part in the development of the Charity, working with the Chief Executive and management team to deliver high quality and innovative services and projects to people across Essex.

The Trustee role is important in enabling the Charity to achieve its strategic aims. As the coming year offers a range of opportunities to support and develop existing and new projects, we welcome your interest in sharing this journey with us."



Jackie Bliss

Chair of Trustees



Message from the Chief Executive, Matt King

"Thank you for your interest in the trustee role at Trust Links. Trust Links was founded by local people in Southend who identified a need for positive and social activities to support the recovery of adults with mental health problems. At the same time the former allotment on the corner of Fairfax Drive and Prittlewell Chase was empty and overgrown. Bringing these two challenges together, our founders created Growing Together, a therapeutic community garden built with and by members and volunteers. The project has supported many people since its formation, transforming lives, helping people get qualifications and work, and supporting mental wellbeing and recovery.



I have had the privilege to be the Chief Executive of Trust Links for more than 12 years. The charity has grown considerably over this time and we now have Growing Together projects in Shoeburyness, Thundersley, Rochford, Basildon and Cressing Temple. Our client group includes adults with mental health problems, learning disabilities, school groups, young people and early years children and their families. REACH Recovery College and Wellbeing Hub are established and successful components of the mental health system, working closely with partners in the NHS and social care. Our children and youth provision has expanded considerably over the last few years, with regular groups for a range of ages each week. Our Eco Days environmental workshops and environmental partnerships are a key component of our work.





We have ambitious and exciting plans for the future of Trust Links. We are exploring the establishment of new Growing Together projects in Chelmsford, Canvey Island and Thurrock. We have an exciting learning programme, supporting partner agencies across the UK and internationally to learn from the Growing Together model. We are working closely with the NHS and are increasingly embedded in the local mental health system.

We are diversifying our fundraising and looking to increase individual giving, major donors, legacies, corporate and

community fundraising, helping us to help more people and be resilient as an organisation.

At Trust Links we have an excellent staff team and strong support from volunteers and the local community. Our beneficiaries are fully involved in shaping the projects and services we run through co-production. We also have a fantastic existing group of trustees. We are keen to recruit new trustees and people for sub-committees who can support us as we move the charity forward.

I hope you find this information pack useful. Please do not hesitate to get in touch should you have any questions or would like to discuss the opportunities further."

Matt King

Trust Links CEO





Our Current Board

We have a diverse mix of people on the Trust Links board. Here is a brief overview of the board members.

Jackie Bliss (Chair) – Former charity CEO and finance director



Keith Spencer (Treasurer and Finance Committee Chair)
Qualified accountant



Lysanne Eddy – Local authority senior strategic manager



Janet Phillips – Senior leader in Education sector



Henry Burgess – Local restaurant owner



Paul Bridges – Senior executive and board experience, trained accountant



Rhe Benger – Charity and HR experience



Pauline Stratford (HR Committee Chair) – Senior HR and NHS experience

Jonathan Hodge – Lawyer

Michael Anderson (Property Sub Committee Chair) – Partner at property and construction consultancy

Valerie Bloomfield – Accountant with senior VCS experience

Patron:

Jill Allen-King OBE –
Disability rights campaigner



Trust Links Strategy

Chapter 1: Vision, Mission, Values, Strategic Objectives

2021 to 2024

Our Vision



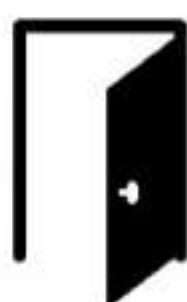
Person-centred approach to mental health and wellbeing, enabling people to lead their lives well, where communities are empowered to help and support each other

Our Mission



Transforming mental health and wellbeing through inclusive and supportive environments, Trust Links works collaboratively to empower local communities and maximise our impact

Our Values



Inclusive – welcoming and respectful

We value and celebrate the unique and diverse talents, experiences and perspectives of everyone, and treat our participants, partners, donors and each other with sensitivity and respect

A welcoming and non-judgemental approach to everything we do

Our work focuses on the individual needs of each person within our community, helping them to find and access professional support within an open, safe, and friendly space



Together – focus on recovery, growth and empowerment

Achieved through building on existing strengths, learning, and working together, recognising everyone has something to contribute

Collaboration through co-production and peer to peer support is at the heart of everything we do

Our projects aim to help people live better lives by promoting independence and teaching them how to manage their mental health and

find support. By empowering people to take control of their wellness journey, they become an active participant in their own recovery growth



Rooted in our community

At Trust Links we aim to make a difference to our local community and forge links to help with the delivery of our organisation and projects

We are adaptive and continuously improving our high-quality services to respond to local needs

We strive to build a community of support, connecting people and services across South Essex whilst working with individuals to see that they are not alone



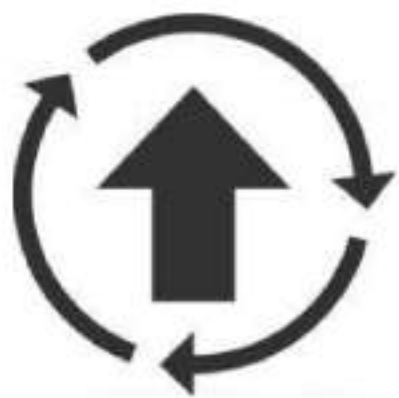
Environment - Nature and nurture

Working with nature benefits our wellbeing, as well as the community we live in

At Trust Links we understand that if we take care of the environment it takes care of us

Our practices and projects reflect our commitment to sustainability, our responsibility to the environment and the transformative power of nature

Key strategic objectives



Delivery of positive impact for people in the community

We will:

Attain positive outcomes for members

Deliver high quality programmes in a supportive environment

Monitor progress and provide constructive feedback

Utilise both qualitative and quantitative methods of feedback to suit the varied needs of the participants

Recognised as a leading Mental Health Charity

We will:



Raise awareness of the work of the Charity across all sectors
Develop successful partnerships
Proactively seeking feedback and evaluation of project delivery from commissioners, funders and partners

Create a sustainable organisation.

We will establish and embed a culture of good governance across all levels of the organisation



1. Finance

Maintain a healthy financial position including a range of income sources

Use resources effectively and efficiently

Proactively plan

2. People

Recruit and retain quality staff and volunteers

Support the wellbeing, development and engagement of staff and volunteers

3. Infrastructure

Provide suitable facilities (physical and digital) for all projects and activities

Provide a healthy supportive environment for staff, volunteers and members

4. Energy & the environment

Showcase good practice in our use of energy and resources



Performance Measures

To meet and maintain an agreed accredited Quality Standard charter mark, focussing on:

- Three-year forecasting budgets plans
- Reserves are built and maintained to the agreed level
- Quarterly monitoring of staff turnover and sickness
- Outcomes of the annual staff satisfaction survey
- Production of an annual maintenance/development plan for managed capital spend

- Quarterly monitoring of risks
- Percentage of annual staff appraisals completed
- Annual staff training plan to ensure staff are trained and developed in line with their needs and the Charity's objectives and values
- Production of an energy efficiency plan with annual monitoring of progress to achieve Carbon Neutrality within three years
- Increase percentage in the reduction of waste, paper and increase in recycling
- Environmentally focused improvement plans across the organisation
- Number of beneficiaries per project (against capacity)
- Monitoring project/contracted services evaluation reports with lessons learnt
- Regular monitoring impact, outcomes and randomised service user feedback
- Level of audience growth on social media
- Level of audience engagement on social media (e.g. total likes, comments and shares)



2022/23

TrustLinks

Staff
63

Volunteers
166

Full Time Equivalent: 43.3

4878

SUPPORTED PEOPLE



With **3178** people 'actively engaging' across all projects

Growing Together

2022/2023



462 Members engaging With the service



186 Newly enrolled members

Sessions run:

448
Individual member days

43
Women's group sessions

48
Music group sessions

48
Art group sessions

46
Yoga sessions

686 Individual sessions provided (including member days, women's group, yoga, football, courses and workshops)

Outcome Measures:

felt they had a meaningful structure to their week **85%**

felt part of a community **85%**

felt they are learning new skills **82%**

felt more comfortable meeting new people **69%**

felt they are improving or maintaining their physical fitness **68%**

felt they are improving or maintaining their physical fitness **53%**

felt less dependent on other people or services **51%**



Children, Youth & Families

2022/2023

Proportions of wellbeing before and after intervention:



Learning Together

67
young people supported



Families Growing Together

131
Parent/Guardian/Care-givers

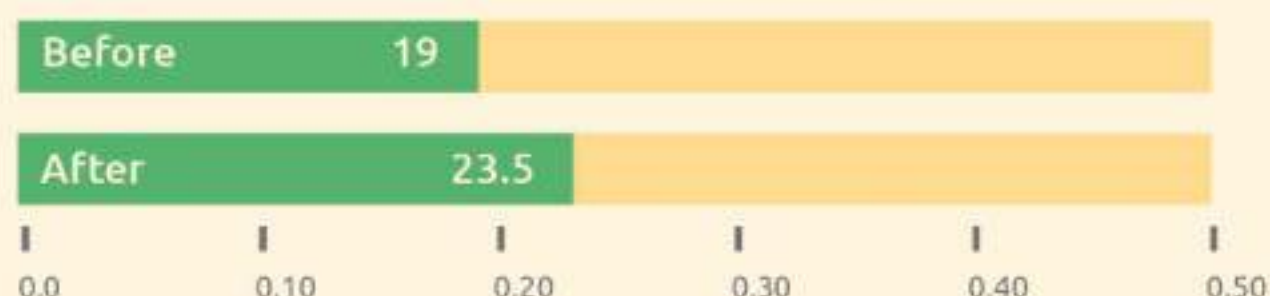


Youth Links

134 **91**
young people registered regularly engaging

Mean SWEMWBS* score:

Increase in mental wellbeing



Talking Together



61 Befriendees

53 Befriender Volunteers



REACH Recovery College & Wellbeing Hub

2022/2023



1449

Referrals into the service



1214

Courses, workshops or positive activity sessions delivered



1633

People receiving 1-1 support sessions



414

People engaging with Depression and Suicide Pathway

Outcome Measures:

21

Gained employment

26

into further education

22

into volunteering

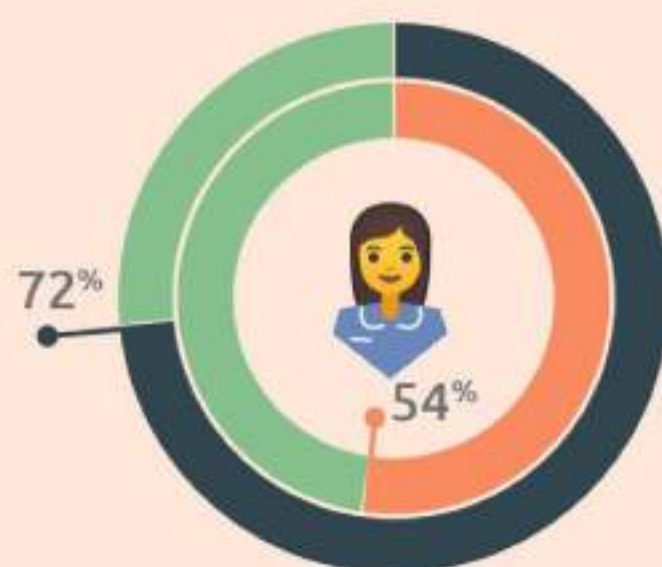
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Maintaining employment

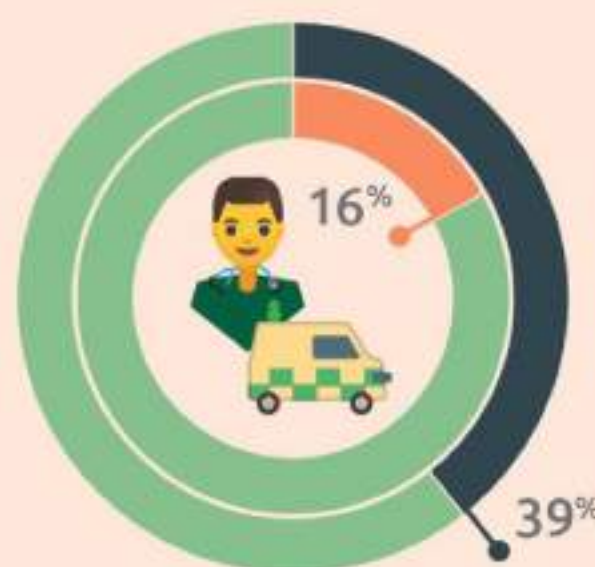
Percentage of individuals accessing Primary and Secondary services and A&E attendances.

(Baseline vs Follow up CSRI Data**)

Initial Assessment
First Review



Primary Care Services



Secondary Care Services



A&E Attendances

PHQ-9*** Average Scores: Initial Assessment vs 1st Review (6 weeks)

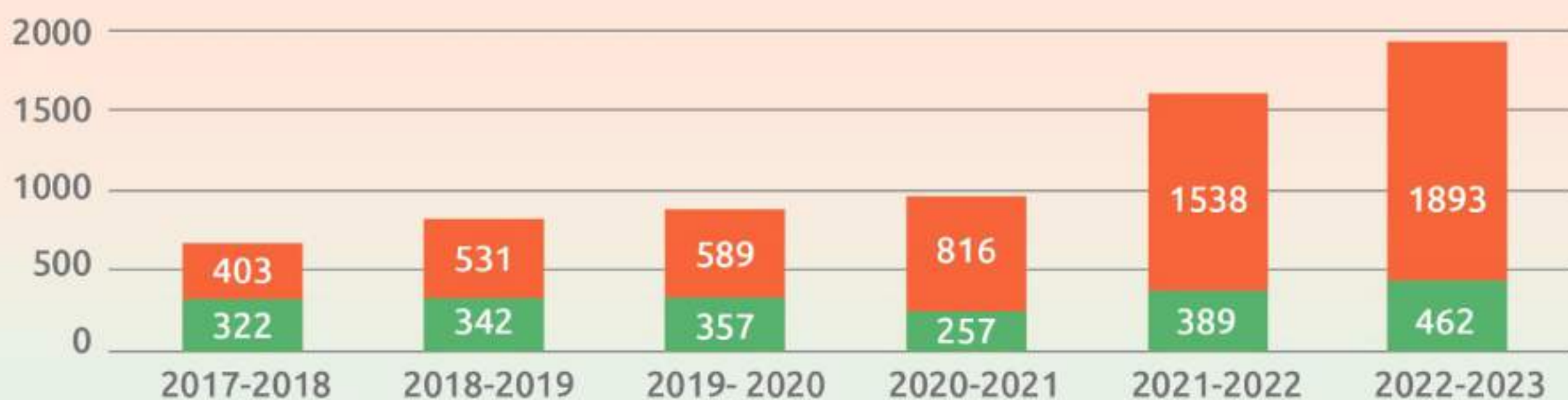


TrustLinks

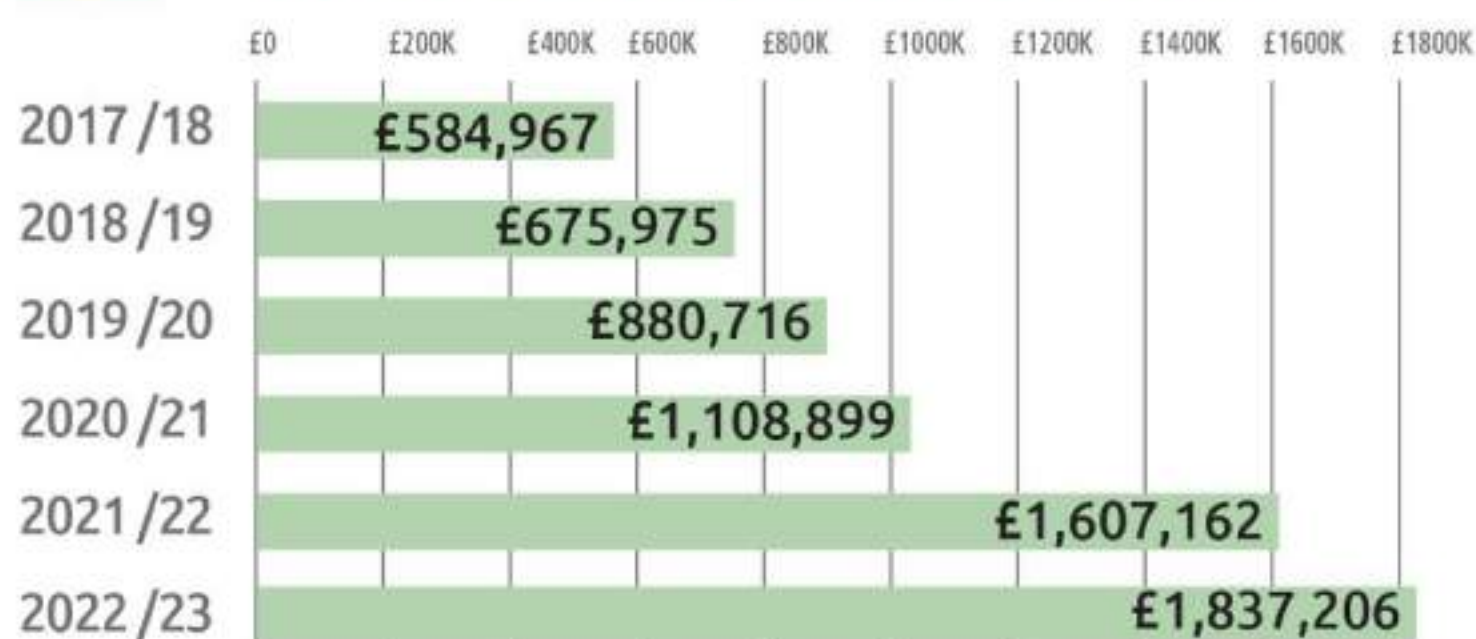
Number of members engaging with Growing Together and REACH 2017-2023



Growing Together
REACH

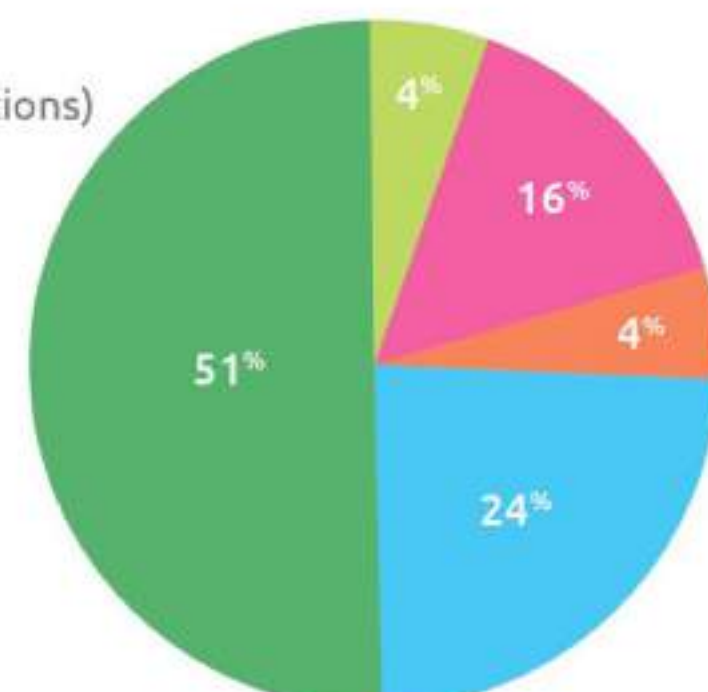


Trust Links Income



Funding mix:

- 51% Grants (Trusts & Foundations)
- 24% NHS & Council contracts
- 04% Personal Budgets
- 16% National Lottery Community Fund
- 04% Gifts & Donations





Trustee Job Description

Job purpose

Be corporately responsible for the overall governance and strategic direction of Trust Links developing its aims, objectives and goals.

Contributing to the effective working of the board and to further the organisation's vision and mission.

Main tasks

- To take part in formulating and regularly reviewing the strategic aims of the organisation.
- With other trustees to ensure that the policy and practices of the organisation are in keeping with its aims.
- With other trustees to ensure that the organisation functions within the legal and financial requirements of a charitable organisation and strives to achieve best practice.

Main duties

1. Formulating strategic aims

- Consider the organisation as a whole and its beneficiaries, whether as a member of the trustees or any of its committees, sub-committees, groups etc.
- Reflect the organisation's vision and principles, strategy and major policies
- Contribute specific skills, interests and contacts and support the organisation in fundraising activities.
- Give strategic direction to the Charity

2. Financial

- Agree a budget each year
- Ensure there are proper controls in place to ensure money can be accounted for and not misused.
- Ensure the charity's assets are only used to support or carry out its purposes

3. Ensuring policies and practices are in keeping with aims

- Follow the Code of Conduct at all times, particularly when exercising the functions of the trustees, or any of its committees, sub-committees, groups.
- Attend meetings of the trustees.
- Reflect the trustees' policies and concerns on all its committees, sub-committees, groups.
- Monitoring the creation and implementation of internal policies

4. Monitoring and evaluation

- Defining goals, setting targets and evaluating against performance

5. Ensuring best practice

- Be an active member of the trustee body in exercising its responsibilities and functions.
- Maintain good relations with senior managerial staff.
- Take part in training sessions provided for the benefit of the trustees.
- Fulfil such other duties and assignments as may be required from time to time by the trustee body.

Person specification

- Commitment to the organisation's aims
- Willingness to devote the necessary time and effort
- Good, independent judgment
- Understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship
- Ability to work effectively as a member of a team
- Commitment to Nolan's seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership
- Good communicator
- Tact and diplomacy

Deadline to apply: 12 noon on Monday 4th September

What the Role Will Entail

The trustee role is unpaid pro bono, but reasonable expenses can be claimed. Trustees are required to attend board meetings, which are held on a Wednesday every 2 months for 2 hours. The meetings are located across our sites in South East Essex, to enable trustees to visit our projects. A full day Awayday is held in September each year.

We expect trustees to read all of the papers for the board, which are circulated the week before meetings. We hope trustees will share their skills and experience appropriately, through communication with staff and other trustees. In return, new trustees will get a full induction, access to training opportunities and the chance to contribute to an exciting, innovative and growing charity. You can read about the role of trustees on the Charity Commission's website: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/charity-trustee-whats-involved>

Trusteeship is a wonderful way of gaining new skills and experiences, and a powerful sense of giving something back, as you can see from this research by Getting on Board:

Benefits to Trustees ★



The Application and Appointment Process

Please send your CV and a short statement about why you are interested in becoming a trustee to chiefexec@trustlinks.org or by post to: Trust Links, 47 Fairfax Drive, Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex SS0 9AG by noon on Monday 4th September.

We will invite shortlisted candidates to an interview with the CEO, chair of trustees and selected members of the trustee board.

Trust Links will take up two references for successful candidates and also undertake a DBS criminal records check. An induction will be arranged.

Appointment is subject to agreement of the existing trustees and subsequent vote at the Annual General Meeting.

We will endeavour to arrange meetings around your existing commitments wherever possible.

If you would like an informal conversation with the CEO or one of the current trustees, please email chiefexec@trustlinks.org

