



Role Description: Trustee

Purpose of the role

The Trustees are responsible for the governance and management of Sheffield Parent Carer Forum (SPCF).

Background

SPCF is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. We became a limited company in order to be able to employ staff and enter into contracts, without our trustees being personally liable if things go wrong.

We are required to have trustees under charity law, and Company Members under company law. All of our trustees must also be Company Members. Should the company be wound up, each Company Member is required pay up to £1 towards its debts.

The maximum number of trustees is 20.

Appointment

SPCF aims to recruit trustees as a representation of a cross-section of Sheffield's parent carer community. Recruitment is carried out in accordance with our Volunteer Recruitment Policy. Vacancies are advertised in a number of ways, e.g. via the newsletter, on our website or on social media.

Trustees are elected at the Annual General Meeting, which is usually held in November. A person wishing to become a Trustee must either be recommended by the Trustees or be nominated for election by a Company Member. This must be done by lodging a signed nomination form between 7 and 28 days before the AGM.

Each year, one third of the trustees who have been the longest in office must stand down, but are eligible for immediate re-election.

Throughout the year, the trustees can co-opt individuals onto the Management Committee who they feel will help to fulfil the aims of SPCF. Co-opted trustees do not have voting rights, and their appointment automatically ends at the next AGM. The total number of co-opted trustees at any one time must not be more than one-third of the number of elected Trustees.

Trustees can resign at any time, by notice in writing to the Trustees.

Summary of Role

Trustees contribute by attending and taking an active part in Management Committee meetings, and as active members of sub-groups (currently Staffing Governance and Finance, and Fundraising) or working groups. Along with others, trustees represent SPCF in Sheffield and more widely.

General responsibilities

Trustees must:

1. Ensure the charity is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit
2. Comply with the charity's governing document (Articles of Association) and the law
3. Act in the charity's best interests
4. Manage the charity's resources responsibly
5. Act with reasonable care and skill
6. Ensure the charity is accountable

The handbook "The Essential Trustee" explains what each of these requirements means in practice.

Specific responsibilities

1. To be familiar with relevant documents, including:
 - SPCF's Articles of Association
 - all SPCF policies and how these impact on governance and the day-to-day running of SPCF
 - Guidance on Public Benefit, published by the Charity Commission
 - Handbook "The Essential Trustee", published by the Charity Commission
2. To adhere to the Nolan principles of public life – selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.
3. To attend the AGM and the monthly Management Committee meetings, to contribute to the discussion, and to carry out any actions agreed in those meetings.
4. To send apologies if unable to attend a meeting of the Trustees.
N.B. A Trustee's term of office automatically terminates if they are absent without apologies from five consecutive meetings of the Trustees.
5. To read the minutes of each Management Committee meeting and to request amendments (if applicable) within one week of the minutes being circulated.
6. To prepare for each Management Committee meeting by reading the appropriate papers. This will include policies under review, annual accounts, quarterly financial reports, contracts, meeting notes etc.

7. To read and comment on confidential papers shared with SPCF, e.g. in relation to local authority policy.
8. To contribute to the work of the Management Committee and Sheffield Parent Carer Forum by other delegated duties. This might include membership of Sub-Committees, or representing, and reporting back to, the Forum on other working groups or committees.
9. To maintain confidentiality regarding discussions and documents encountered as part of their role.

Please note: SPCF recognises that parent carers lead very busy lives. It is unavoidable that Trustees will occasionally have to miss meetings due to ill health, family responsibilities, work commitments or similar.

However, having an active body of trustees is essential for the effective functioning of the organisation. Meetings of the Trustees can only proceed if they are quorate – this means that they need to be attended by at least one third of the Trustees, with a minimum of four.

Whilst we aim to be as flexible as possible, if a trustee misses more than two consecutive Management Committee meetings, the Chair or Volunteer Coordinator will contact them to discuss their situation. SPCF encourages former trustees to remain active volunteers and contribute in any way they feel comfortable.

Time commitment

There is an expectation that trustees will attend ten Management Committee meetings and one AGM per year. Meetings normally last two hours and are held on Friday mornings during term time. Meeting dates will be set six months in advance. Approximately one to two hours of preparation time is required for each meeting.

Support:

- Support from volunteer coordinator
- Annual volunteer events

Location

- Management Committee meetings are held virtually or at a central location in Sheffield.
- Some tasks can also be carried out from home

Training provision

- Volunteer induction

- Fire safety procedures for the venue

Main point of contact

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