



Possability People Trustee Pack

If you need this document in a different format please contact us:

volunteer@possabilitypeople.org.uk

01273 89 40 40

Welcome from our Chair of Trustees

Dear applicant

I'm Maddy Hamp, and I've been Chair of Trustees at Possability People since 2019. As a disabled person myself, I feel proud to be part of an organisation that brings real change to the lives of disabled people and those living with long term physical and mental health conditions.



We have a committed and passionate team of staff, volunteers, and trustees, all of whom are united in a common goal to improve the lives of disabled people and those living with long term health conditions. We are proud to have supported and empowered tens of thousands of people since we first began in 1981, and we are dedicated to continuing to do so.

I am delighted that you are considering joining our team in this important and rewarding role. This pack aims to give you an insight into our work, values, and culture as well as provide an overview of the opportunities and responsibilities that trusteeship brings.

I hope you find the information in the pack useful, and I look forward to hopefully working together in the future.

Best wishes

Maddy Hamp

Chair of Trustees

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About Possability People

Our vision: A society where anything is possible regardless of ability.

Our mission: Enabling and empowering people with health conditions to live the life they choose.

Possability People is a well-established charity operating in Brighton & Hove and across Sussex. We are a user led organisation, whose membership, staff, volunteers, and trustees, are drawn from people with a personal or professional experience of disability.

Over 75% of our staff and volunteers
have lived experience of disability.

Against the backdrop of significant events such as the pandemic, the energy crisis and the cost-of-living crisis - all of which have disproportionately affected disabled people - we continue to provide a range of services that support disabled people, enabling and empowering them to live the life they choose.



We support people with their benefits claims through our Advice Centre, provide them with care and support through our At Home service, give them the skills they need for employment, facilitate them leaving hospital and returning home, hire out scooters and wheelchairs to enable them to get out and about more quickly and easily, and help them to advertise for a PA.

You can find more information via our website by visiting www.possabilitypeople.org.uk or by viewing the [Charities Commission website](#).

About our current trustee board

Our current board of trustees have a wealth of personal and professional experience and come from a variety of backgrounds. Some trustees have lived experience of disability, but all of them are passionate about supporting disabled people to live the life they choose.



Our trustees usually meet once per month, usually online on a Wednesday evening, or more frequently as necessary. They work closely with the Chief Officer and there are also opportunities to get involved within specific areas of the charity's work, such as our volunteering programme, finance committee, or fundraising team.

Our trustees are elected by our members at our AGM each year, however new trustees can be co-opted to the board at any time in the year.

What our Trustees say

"Being a Trustee at Possability People has been a very interesting and rewarding experience. We have a lot of important issues to deal with and the challenge of arriving at the best decision for the organisation is one that I always enjoy.

The Board of Trustees are a very friendly group and, while we don't always agree on everything, we are always able to come to a consensus in an amicable and respectful way - which is just how it should be."

Gerry Zarb, Trustee

"Although as a trustee we have to deal with many challenges, we are supported by our incredible staff and volunteers who ensure that are services users have the best experience possible."

"I find it very rewarding being a trustee of Possability People as we provide a whole range of vital services to improve the lives of disabled people and those living with long term health conditions living in Brighton & Hove (and across Sussex).

Throughout my life I have seen how people have been treated differently and marginalised based on these factors and even more so after the last few years.

I am a passionate believer in the leading with the social model of disability to break down as many barriers as we can. Although as a trustee we have to deal with many challenges we are supported by our incredible staff and volunteers who ensure that are services users have the best experience possible (and I am often moved by the feedback we receive from our service users saying how much Possability People has helped them).

For me to be able to apply my legal skills and knowledge to such a worthwhile charity is invaluable."

Samantha Oakley, Trustee

What does a trustee do?

Becoming a trustee is a rewarding and interesting role, with plenty of opportunity for personal growth. More importantly, you have the opportunity to make a real difference to the lives of disabled people and those living with long-term health conditions, including mental health.



Trustees ensure their charity has a clear strategy, and that its work and goals are in line with its vision, putting beneficiaries first.

Trustees don't do the day-to-day running of the charity, delegating this to the staff. Instead, they play the role of a 'critical friend' to the Chief Executive by giving support and by challenging – in a supportive way – to help them manage effectively. Trusteeship is an unpaid, voluntary role.

As well as providing strategic direction to Possability People, our trustees ensure we comply with our governing document (known as our Memorandum and Articles of Association), charity law, company law and other relevant legislation or regulations.

You can find out more about the role of trustees in Appendix 7 – More information.

Who we're looking for

We are looking for to increase the number of trustees on our board and are looking for candidates who are truly passionate about our vision and mission. Maybe you could play a part in ensuring the development and sustainability of the charity as we continue to support disabled people?

We need trustees with the right skills and experience to guide and challenge the strategic direction of every area of the organisation. You'll find a full role description in appendices 2 to 4.



As a course of positive action and to ensure a wide representation of our diverse communities, we actively encourage applications from disabled people, people from minority ethnic groups, and those who are transgender, non-binary, or gender-diverse. We recognise some of these communities are currently under-represented in our organisation and we would love to hear from you.

All trustees must abide by the Code of Conduct (see appendix 1) and agree to the declarations described in appendix 2.

What we'll ask of you

As a charity it is imperative we have a reliable Board, fit for purpose. You don't need prior experience being a trustee; If you are committed, passionate, and determined, we would love to hear from you.

We will provide all the training and support you might need to be an amazing trustee.

There are opportunities for you to help shape decision making and operational plans moving forward.



All Trustees work on a voluntary basis and the right candidates would be expected to ensure that professionalism and time management are of a high standard. We are a vibrant, engaging group with a depth of professional experience.

All Trustees are asked to attend an AGM, a minimum of 6 Board meetings a year (normally 1.5 hours each month on a Wednesday evening, held online), as well as occasional ad-hoc meetings as needed. There will be a series of induction meetings (online and in person) at the start of your appointment, and ad hoc training when available. We also ask that trustees give around 4 hours a month in additional support.

You will need to either live in or near Brighton and have an understanding of, or strong interest in, issues affecting disabled people and charitable organisations.

We ask all trustees to commit to an initial 2 year appointment in the role.

If you are unsuccessful in being appointed as a Trustee, we would urge and welcome you to harness your interest by supporting the charity as a volunteer. Please ask us about the unique volunteering opportunities we have.

Application process

To apply, please email volunteer@possabilitypeople.org.uk with:

1. Your **CV** (no more than 3 pages)
2. **Cover letter** or statement (no more than 2 pages) explaining:
 - Your interest in the charity
 - Any relevant professional experience
 - Motivation in applying for your chosen trustee role
 - What you believe you can contribute to Possability People
3. A **brief statement** confirming you agree to the declarations set out in Appendix 2.
4. Details of two **referees** including your more recent employer (full name, relationship to you, length known, email and telephone number) We will not contact them without prior agreement from you



Once we've received your application we'll contact you for an initial chat over the phone. The next stage will be to visit our offices Kemp Town, Brighton, to meet some of the team and to discuss things in more detail.

The final stage is a more informal meeting with our Chair of Trustees before co-opting you onto our Board of Trustees.

Appendix 1: Code Of Conduct

The 'Nolan Principles' code of practice has been written with regard to the seven principles of public life identified by the Nolan Committee in their First Report on Standards in Public Life in May 1995.

Selflessness

Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends

Integrity

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

Appendix 2 - Declaration

I declare that in making a trustee application:

- I am over age 18.
- I am not an undischarged bankrupt.
- I have not previously been removed from trusteeship of a charity by a Court or the Charity Commission.
- I am not under a disqualification order under the Company Directors' Disqualification Act 1986.
- I am, in the light of the above, not disqualified by the Charities Act 1993 (section 72) from acting as a charity trustee.
- I undertake to fulfil my responsibilities and duties as a trustee of Possability People in good faith and in accordance with the law and within Possability People's objectives/ mission.
- I do not have any financial interests in conflict with those of Possability People (either in person or through family or business connections) except those which I have formally notified in a conflict of interest statement. I will specifically notify any such interest at any meeting where trustees are required to make a decision which affects my personal interests and will absent myself entirely from any decision on the matter and not vote on it.

When making an application, please include a statement in your covering email confirming agreement with the above declarations.

Appendix 3: Role Description - Trustee

Role Description

- To ensure that the organisation complies with its governing document, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations.
- To ensure that the organisation pursues its objects, as defined in its governing document.
- To ensure the organisation applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objectives.
- To contribute actively to the board of trustees' role in giving firm strategic direction to the organisation, setting overall policy.
- To ensure strategic direction is informed by an on-going dialogue with the membership of the organisation.
- To ensure that mechanisms are put in place to demonstrate our user-led status.
- To safeguard the good name and values of the organisation.
- To ensure the financial stability of the organisation.
- To work with and support the Chief Officer to ensure the organisation is administered efficiently.

In addition to the above statutory duties, each trustee should use any specific skills, knowledge or experience they have to help the board of trustees reach sound decisions. This may involve:

- Scrutinising board papers.
- Leading discussions with members.
- Feeding back views of the membership.
- Focusing on key issues.
- Providing guidance on new initiatives.
- Other issues in which the trustee has special expertise.

Person specification

- Nolan's seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership. (See Appendix 1.)
- A commitment to the organisation.
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship.
- A willingness to devote the necessary time and effort.
- Impartiality, fairness and the ability to respect confidences.
- Good communication and interpersonal skills.
- Tact and diplomacy.
- A willingness to speak their mind.
- Good, independent judgement.
- Strategic vision.
- An ability to think creatively.
- An ability to work effectively as part of a team.
- Experience of committee work.
- Leadership skills.

Appendix 4: Additional duties of the Chair

The following duties and qualities are in addition to the general Trustee Role Profile

- Chairing and facilitating board meetings.
- Giving direction to board policy making.
- Bringing impartiality and objectivity to decision-making.
- Monitoring that decisions taken at meetings are implemented.
- Planning the annual cycle of board meetings.
- Setting agendas for board meetings.
- Representing the organisation at functions, meetings.
- Acting as a spokesperson as appropriate.
- Where staff are employed:
 - Liaising with the Chief Executive to keep an overview of the organisation's affairs and to provide support as appropriate;
 - Leading the process of appraising the performance of the Chief Executive;
 - Sitting on appointment and disciplinary panels
 - Liaising with the Chief Executive Officer to develop the board of trustees
 - Facilitating change and addressing conflict within the board and within the organisation, liaising with the Chief Officer to achieve this.

The **Vice-Chair** acts for the Chair when the Chair is not available and undertakes assignments at the request of the Chair.

In most circumstances it would also be desirable for the Chair / Vice-Chair to have knowledge of the type of work undertaken by the organisation and a wider involvement with the voluntary sector and other networks.

Appendix 5: Additional duties of the Finance Lead

All trustees are expected to have a basic understanding of financial principles and contribute to monitoring our financial performance. The Finance Lead acts as a key conduit between the Board and our Senior Leadership Team. Working closely with the Finance Manager, the Finance Lead uses their specialised financial expertise to translate financial reports and figures into clear insights for the Board.

While not handling day-to-day budgeting themselves, the Finance Lead ensures that all financial activities are in the charity's best interests and flags any areas of concern.

The following duties and qualities are in addition to the general Trustee Role Profile

Essential skills of the Finance Lead

- Qualified accountant (or significant financial experience) supported by demonstrable commercial awareness and knowledge.
- Proven ability to analyse, communicate and explain financial information and consequences to members of the Board and other stakeholders.
- A team orientated approach to problem solving and to management.
- Excellent analytical and evaluative skills, demonstrating both sound judgement and the willingness to make unpopular recommendations to the Board.
- Committed to Possability People's cause and objectives.

Desirable skills of the Finance Lead

- Experience of charity finance, fundraising and pension schemes.
- In addition to Finance and Accounting skills, experience in one or more areas of non-executive governance and management e.g. strategic planning, business management, human resources, experience of trusts or other grant giving bodies particularly fund raising and legal knowledge.
- Willingness to act as an ambassador to external bodies, charities, and companies.

Appendix 6: Additional duties of the Board Secretary

The Board Secretary ensures the board runs smoothly. They organise meetings, take and share minutes, and follow up on actions to ensure tasks get completed. This role is key to keeping everyone informed and on track.

The following duties and qualities are in addition to the general Trustee Role Profile

- Set up an annual calendar of trustee meeting dates, AGM, etc.
- Prepare meeting agendas in consultation with the Chair and circulate with meeting papers.
- Take minutes during meetings, noting attendance, decisions, and actions.
- Circulate minutes to trustees and keep accurate records of meetings and follow-up tasks.
- Actively follow up on agreed actions between meetings to ensure they are completed.

Essential skills of the Board Secretary

- Excellent organisational and time-management skills.
- Strong written and verbal communication abilities.
- Proven experience in minute taking and administrative support.
- Self-motivated with a proactive approach to follow-up and problem-solving.

Appendix 7: More Information

The following links to documents and videos provide more information on the role and responsibilities of trustees. Click on the links to continue.

Government guidance

- [Charity Trustee Welcome Pack](#)
- [Trustee Welcome Pack](#) (video version)
- [5 minutes guides for charity trustees](#)
- [Trustee role](#)
- [The Essential Trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do](#)
- [The Essential Trustee](#) (pdf version)
- [The Essential Trustee](#) (key points video)

General

- Visit [ThinkNPC](#) and search 'trustees' for lots of useful articles
- [NCVO Trustee training pack](#)
- [What does it take to become a trustee?](#) (video)

Becoming a trustee

- [How to become a trustee](#) (video)
- [Become a Trustee](#) (with videos)

Governance, roles and responsibilities

- [Above and Beyond](#)
- [Charity Governance Code](#)
- [NCVO Trustee role and responsibilities](#)
- [Trustees' legal responsibilities](#)