

Work Rights Centre Trustee

Role description

Location: Remote (with optional annual in-person strategy day in London)

Commitment: Approx. 4 days per year (including quarterly board meetings and Resource Committee meetings) plus an optional all day Vision Day

Remuneration: Unpaid (Travel expenses reimbursed)

Work Rights Centre is a charity dedicated to helping migrants and disadvantaged Britons to access employment justice and improve their social mobility. We provide a free legal advice service that changes lives with expert employment and immigration legal advice, and we challenge the systemic causes of injustice with research, parliamentary advocacy, and strategic litigation.

Having started in 2016 with just one advice desk in a public library, we are now one of the leading advocates of vulnerable migrant workers. We could not do this without good governance from our Board of Trustees. This is what this role sets out, in conjunction with the Guide to Governance.

About the Board of Trustees

Trustees are expert volunteers who oversee the governance of the charity. They shape its strategic direction, scrutinise finances and resource allocation, and support the staff team in developing the policies and procedures needed to comply with legislation and provide an excellent service for the public benefit. As governors of the charity, the board of trustees have two foundational objectives:

- **Ensure that the charity fulfils its legal obligations**, and follows best practices set out by the Charity Commission. According to the Charity Commission, the mission of the Board of Trustees is to ensure that the charity carries out its purpose for the public benefit, that it complies with the governing document and the law, that it is accountable and resources are managed responsibly. To this end, you must act with reasonable care and skill, and always in the charity's best interest.¹
- **Ensure good governance**. This is about fostering an environment where the charity has the vision, resources, reputation, and team cohesion to achieve its mission. It is about understanding the charitable mission of the Work Rights Centre, and taking a lead in upholding the procedures, policies, and organisational infrastructures needed to deliver it.

¹ [Charity Commission for England and Wales \(2020\) Guidance. The essential trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do.](#)

Responsibilities

The responsibilities of Trustees revolve around the two main objectives set out above. They require thorough understanding of the charity's governing document, any conflicts of interest, and the legal framework which governs fundraising, employment, GDPR, and providing advice. Trustees use this knowledge to oversee the functioning of the charity.

There is also a practical element to governance which falls within Trustees' responsibilities. [The Charity Commission Essential Trustee Guide](#) provides a detailed overview. In summary trustees have a duty to:

Review and approve **key strategy documents**, and support senior staff in producing them:

- Business plan - setting out the charity's strategic aims, and resources required to reach them
- Governance guide - setting out the framework for delegating duties across the Board and staff
- Finance manual - setting out the financial management and control, as well as policies for staff expenses, reserves and procurement
- Annual budget
- Risk policy and register

Ensure that the organisation **reports to the Charity Commission** with:

- Annual report and independently reviewed accounts, in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice
- Changes to trustee details and/or the governing document.
- A record of any serious incident.

Participate in the life of the charity, by:

- Attending quarterly Board meetings and reviewing the associated documentation.
- Being generous with your subject expertise, including by engaging at subcommittee level.
- Respecting the complementary roles of charity staff and trustees, and using your expertise to support them.

Additional responsibilities for the Treasurer

In addition to the core responsibilities outlined above, the Treasurer will also oversee the Work Rights Centre's finances, on behalf of the board of trustees, to ensure our short and long-term sustainability; and assist the Chair in ensuring that the Board fulfils its duties. In partnership with the CEO and Deputy CEO, the Treasurer will:

- Ensure that the charity operates within the financial guidelines set out in current legislation, by the Charity Commission, in the charity's constitution and financial policies.
- Ensure that the charity has adequate financial and internal audit controls and that these are monitored and reviewed regularly.
- Identify and bring to the attention of the board any financial risks facing the charity.

- Ensure that the charity's resources are sufficient to meet the charity's current and future needs.
- Oversee and support the completion of the budget in advance of the new financial year, and ensure it is monitored through quarterly management accounts.
- Advise the board on the fundraising strategy set out by the CEO and her Deputy, and monitor the progress against the fundraising strategy on behalf of the board.
- Advise the board on the financial implications and operational risks arising from board decisions.
- Periodically scrutinise management accounts and performance against budget, and advise the board accordingly.
- Periodically evaluate the charity's cash flow position, and inform the board of any concerns.
- Ensure that funding received for specific purposes is separately accounted for and spent for the purposes for which it was given.
- Liaise with the external independent reviewer/auditor of the accounts as needed.
- Act as a signatory for grant agreements, cheques and other important documents.

Skills and Experience

The current charity board would benefit from the addition of trustees with expertise in charity finance.

We are also looking for Trustees who recognise the fact that governing a charity is about a balance of scrutiny and support. The Directory for Social Change has drafted an excellent guide for trustees DOs and DON'Ts.² In summary, we want you to be:

- An active player - who recognises that the work of trustees is not limited to scrutiny during Board meetings, but also a careful reading of Board papers and accounts, signing grant agreements, and the adoption and regular review of key policies;
- A team player - who will lead on governance, but empower operational staff with the freedom to deliver the charity vision;
- A seasoned manager - with an ability to identify opportunities, risks, and the key resources the charity needs to deliver on its mission;
- An excellent communicator - who can engage meaningfully in board meetings, committee meetings, and personal communication when needed;
- Emotionally intelligent - who acknowledges that team morale and trust are as foundational to the charity as its bedrock of written policies and procedures.³

Finally, the Work Rights Centre is a charity founded by migrants, for migrants and vulnerable Britons. Many of our staff have had lived experiences of the issues encountered by our clients, and we would like to extend this to the Board of Trustees.

²[10 Things Terrible Trustees Do and Brilliant Trustees Don't](#)

³ According to Charity Commission regulations, you cannot be a trustee if you are bankrupt (undischarged) or have an individual voluntary arrangement (IVA), if you have an unspent conviction for certain offences (including any that involve dishonesty or deception), or if you are on the sex offenders' register.

Accountability

Individual trustees are accountable to members of the Board, and to the Charity Commission. This role description and associated Governance Guide set out expectations and framework.

How to apply

Please send your CV and a brief cover letter outlining why you are interested in joining the Work Rights Centre's Board to Kasia Figiel, Deputy CEO kasia.figiel@workrightscentre.org by **Sunday, February 8th**. We will acknowledge and review all applications. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to meet the Chair of Trustees, Rob McNeil. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to write to us.