

Role Description

Trustee

ME Research UK's principal aim is to commission and fund scientific (biomedical) investigation into the causes, consequences and treatment of Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (also known as ME/CFS).

Since 2000, we've invested over £1.5m in biomedical research and, in terms of scientific papers published, ME Research UK has funded more projects (45 to date) on ME/CFS than any other single organisation in the world outside North America. With our small, committed team of core staff, an advisory panel of professional scientists, and a dedicated Board of Trustees, we are committed to establishing ME Research UK as a major force for change that will make a real, long-term difference to the lives and prospects of people with the disease.

1. Role

The most effective Boards are ones which benefit from individuals from a diverse range of backgrounds, experiences and skill sets. The role of a Trustee is to ensure that ME Research UK fulfils its charitable aims. The Board of Trustees are jointly and severally responsible for the overall governance and strategic direction of the charity, its financial health, the probity of its activities and developing the organisation's aims, objectives and goals in accordance with the governing document, legal and regulatory guidelines.

All Trustees, should also be aware of, and understand, their individual and collective responsibilities, and should not be overly reliant on one or more individual Trustees in any particular aspect of the governance of the charity.

2. Main Accountabilities

- To ensure the organisation complies with its Constitution and pursues its objectives
- To ensure the organisation applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objectives - the charity must not spend money on activities which are not included in its own objectives, no matter how 'charitable' and 'worthwhile' those activities are.
- To contribute actively to the Board of Trustees' role in giving firm strategic direction to the organisation, setting overall policy, defining goals and setting targets and evaluating performance against agreed targets.
- To safeguard the good name and values of the organisation.
- To ensure the effective and efficient administration of the organisation.
- To ensure the financial stability of the organisation.
- To protect and manage the property of the organisation and to ensure the proper investment of the organisation's funds.

In addition with other Trustees to hold the charity "in trust" for current and future beneficiaries by:

- Ensuring that the charity has a clear vision, mission and strategic direction and is focused on achieving these.

- Being responsible for the performance of the charity and for its “corporate” behaviour; ensuring that the charity complies with all legal and regulatory requirements.
- Acting as guardians of the charity’s assets, both tangible and intangible, taking all due care over their security, deployment and proper application.
- Ensuring that the charity’s governance is of the highest possible standard.

As well as the various statutory duties, any Trustee should make full use of any specific skills, knowledge or experience to help the board make good decisions.

The above list of duties is indicative only and not exhaustive. The Trustee will be expected to perform all such additional duties as are reasonably commensurate with the role.

3. Person Specification

Individuals are sought who have a strong empathy with our mission to commission and fund scientific (biomedical) investigation into the causes, consequences and treatment of ME/CFS. Individuals with a diverse range of experience, skills, and expertise with an interest in scientific research and with an understanding of our work and ambitions are particularly sought.

Experience

- Successful experience of operating within a board in a charitable, public sector or commercial organisation
- Demonstrable experience of building and sustaining relationships with key stakeholders and colleagues to achieve organisational objectives
- A proven track record of sound judgement and effective decision making

Knowledge, skills and understanding:

- Commitment to the organisation and a willingness to devote the necessary time and effort. We hold 4 Trustees’ meetings per year in Perth and Trustees will be involved in preparation for meetings
- Preparedness to make recommendations to the board, and a willingness to speak their mind
- Good, independent judgement and strategic vision
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of Trusteeship
- An ability to work effectively as a member of a team
- An understanding of the respective roles of the Chair, Trustees and staff