



The Role of the ME Research UK Trustee

Our Aim

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

Since 2000, we have invested over £1.5 million in biomedical research and – in terms of scientific papers published – ME Research UK has funded more projects (49 to date) on ME/CFS than any other single organisation in the world outside North America.

With our committed team of core staff, an advisory panel of professional scientists, and a dedicated Board of Trustees, we are committed to furthering 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 this illness.

The Role

The most effective Boards are those that 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 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 our Constitution, and all legal and regulatory guidelines.

"I've gained so much being a Trustee of ME Research UK.

"My daughter has been ill with ME for 22 years and her life, and the life of the whole family has been severely affected.

"That left me feeling quite helpless, so I became a Trustee of ME Research UK in an effort to do whatever I can to further the understanding of ME – its causes and possible treatments. Realising that the best way to achieve answers is through high quality research, I dedicate what energy I have to promoting the excellent research the charity funds. I believe we are making a difference and bringing hope to others living with ME."

Sue Waddle, Vice Chair

All Trustees should be aware of, and understand, their individual and collective responsibilities, and each particular aspect of the governance of the charity should have more than one individual Trustee involved.

The time commitment is, as a minimum, attending 4 Trustees' Meetings per year in Perth, or by video link when necessary. Trustees will also be involved in preparation for meetings and dealing with 'Matters Arising', specific to their area of expertise, throughout the year.

Main Trustee 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;
- To contribute actively to the Board of Trustees' role in giving firm strategic direction;
- 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; and
- 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 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; and
- Ensuring that the charity's governance is of the highest possible standard.

As well as the various statutory duties, each 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.

Trustee Personal Attributes

Applications are welcomed from individuals who have a strong empathy with our mission to commission and fund biomedical research into the causes, consequences and treatment of ME/CFS. ME Research UK needs people with a diverse range of experience, skills and expertise, who also have an interest in scientific research.

Skills and Understanding

ME Research UK would particularly welcome applications from people with one or more of the following attributes:

- Knowledge or experience of biomedical science/research.
- Experience of operating within a board of charitable, public sector or commercial organisations;
- 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;
- Commitment to the organisation and a willingness to devote time and effort;
- Confidence to participate fully in discussions and decision-making using good, independent judgement and strategic vision;
- The ability to understand and accept the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of being a Trustee;
- An ability to work effectively as a member of a team; and
- An understanding of the respective roles of the officers and staff of the charity.