



Role Profile Trustee

About The Fostering Network

As the UK's leading fostering charity, we are the essential network for fostering and we bring together everyone who is involved in the lives of children and young people in foster care.

We support foster carers to transform children and young people's lives and we work with fostering services and the wider sector to develop and share best practice.

We work to ensure all children and young people in foster care experience stable family life, and we are passionate about the difference foster care makes. We champion fostering and seek to create vital change so that foster care is the very best it can be.

Our vision is for a vibrant fostering community across the UK to work together so every child and young person has the chance to flourish.

Overall purpose of the role

Our trustees are legally responsible for the governance of The Fostering Network (TFN). This means they must make sure that TFN achieves its objectives, which are set out in our Articles of Association. The trustees ensure that we have a strategy, and that our assets and resources are only used for charitable purposes in line with the governing document. Trustees make sure that we operate in line with any relevant laws, particularly the Charities and Companies Acts.

Trustees have a collective responsibility – they work together for the best interests of TFN. This role description should be read in conjunction with the Trustee Code of Conduct.

Role Details

Location: Hybrid – in-person expected once a year minimum

Time commitment: We have 4 board meetings per year, held in person. Trustees are expected to attend these, and devote sufficient time to read through the board papers in advance. We request that all trustees join at least one committee, these committees also meet 4 times per year online. There may be other events that trustees are invited to attend, and other opportunities to get involved. We estimate the time commitment to be a minimum of 12 days per year focused mainly around the meeting periods.

Terms of office: Our trustees have a term of office of 3 years, with potential for two further terms at a maximum of 9 years.

Remuneration: This is a voluntary, unremunerated role. Reasonable travel expenses to all meetings are covered.

Main Duties

Strategy & Governance

- Take proactive steps to understand TFN's aims and objectives as set out in our governing document and ensure that we operate in accordance with them.
- Help set the strategy for the organisation, including the financial strategy, and ensure implementation and progress is monitored.
- Use your skills, knowledge and experience to further our work, putting aside any personal interests, and declaring any conflict of interest if/ when they arise.
- Uphold TFN's policies and procedures including confidentiality, safeguarding and data protection, with particular reference to the Trustee Code of Conduct.
- Uphold and contribute to TFN's approach to equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- Ensure the organisation is accountable and transparent in its activities.
- Ensure TFN applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objectives – we must not spend money on activities which are not included in our charitable objectives, no matter how 'charitable' and 'worthwhile' those activities may be.
- Ensure that we are accountable and transparent in our activities.

Finance, Legal & Risk

- Ensuring compliance with relevant charitable and company legislation.
- Review relevant financial, risk and compliance reports to ensure you are aware of TFN's financial position and key risks.
- Proactively seek assurance from the CEO and senior staff regarding any areas of concern and work collaboratively to identify solutions.

Board Participation

- Attend and actively contribute to meetings of the board as relevant, and undertake agreed tasks between meetings.
- Review papers in advance of meetings to ensure meaningful and productive discussion
- Contribute towards an annual review of the board's performance.
- Support the identification, recruitment and induction of new board members and the chair.

Working with TFN staff

- Understand and maintain boundaries between the governance perspective of the board, and the work of any staff and volunteers.
- Provide support and challenge to the CEO and other staff to ensure they are carrying out their roles and achieving the TFN's strategic and charitable objectives.

External representation

- Act as an ambassador and champion for TFN.
- Represent the board's agreed position when speaking publicly on behalf of TFN.

- Use personal and professional networks to help the executive with access to potential donors and supporters including governments, international bodies, corporates, trusts and foundations, NGOs, and individuals.
- Provide advice and assistance in raising and maintaining TFN's external profile..

Person Specification

- An understanding of foster care based on experience
- Strategic vision, sound and independent judgement.
- Ability to communicate persuasively and a willingness to speak their mind.
- Demonstrable experience of building and sustaining relationships with key stakeholders and colleagues to achieve organisational objectives.
- Understanding of and commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion with the ability to bring diverse perspectives to the Board.
- A proven track record of sound judgement and effective decision making.
- A history of impartiality, fairness and the ability to respect confidences.
- Commitment to TFN's vision, mission and objectives and a willingness to devote the necessary time and effort to supporting their delivery.
- Understanding of TFN's work, impact and users.
- Willingness and capacity to be available to staff for advice and enquiries on an ad hoc basis.
- 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 Chief Executive.

In addition to these criteria, we will recruit for specific knowledge and lived experience to ensure that the composition of the board remains in line with our Articles of Association and reflects the stakeholders we seek to support.