

BECOMING A TRUSTEE

Frequently Asked Questions

What do Trustees do?

Trustees are responsible for ensuring that a charity has a clear strategy, that it remains true to its vision, and that it complies with all necessary rules and legal obligations. As Care for the Carers is both a Registered Charity and a Company Limited by Guarantee, the Board of Trustees are also the organisation's Directors. They have a number of formal roles and responsibilities, including appointing key people and keeping a check on the organisation's finances and activities.

What questions should I ask myself when thinking about becoming a Trustee?

- What skills and experience do I have to offer?
- What makes me passionate?
- Does Care for the Carers' work feel relevant and does its vision inspire me?
- Can I commit the time and the energy?
- Do my caring, career or family commitments limit this?
- What support/flexibility will I need to be able to really engage in the role?

How much time would I need to commit to being a Trustee?

This will depend on how many sub-committees you join and whether you wish to take on a more active role such as Chair, Vice-Chair or Treasurer. Board meetings currently take place every other month, via Microsoft Teams (we do expect to return to some face to face meetings at our offices in Eastbourne, but will retain some virtual meetings as this has supported Trustees to manage commitments). These are two hour meetings, preceded by an informal 15-minute Trustee catch-up. Meetings are arranged at a time convenient for the majority of the Board.

What are the aims of the organisation?

Care for the Carers aims:

- To empower carers to be involved in decisions and making choices that affect their lives.
- To ensure that carers are recognised and valued.
- To inform carers of their rights and help them to access the services and support to which they are entitled.
- To enable carers to acquire skills, knowledge and understanding of their role as a carer.
- To enable carers to access a good quality of life within and outside caring (to include health and well-being, leisure, education and employment).

Would I need to do any preparation before taking up a Trustee post?

Care for the Carers is keen to support prospective Trustees to find out as much as you can about the charity, what would be required of you as a member of the Board and what support you might need from us. This could be through an informal discussion with our Chief Executive, Jennifer Twist, or by coming along to our virtual open evening on 21st October 2021 and meeting current Trustees. Alternatively we will be happy to provide you with a briefing pack including the strategic and legal documents that underpin our work.

Can I see the organisation's annual report and accounts, annual review, plans and governing documents?

Yes, absolutely. Please contact us and we will share these by email or post.

What work would I be doing, and is there a role description?

Please see the Trustee Role Description, available on our website or on request.

Would I have any personal liability for my decisions?

A conscientious and committed Trustee need have few worries about personal liability, but it is important for all Trustees to understand their position. If Trustees act prudently, lawfully and in accordance with the governing document, then any liabilities (i.e. debts or financial obligations) that they incur as Trustees can normally be met out of the charity's resources. Further information is available in the Charity Commission's free publication, **The Essential Trustee: What you need to know, what you need to do**, and summary document: **Charity Trustee: what's involved**.

What sort of induction would I receive?

We will work with you to give you a good grounding in the Governance of the charity and a robust overview of our work. You will have the opportunity to meet with existing Trustees, Senior Management and the wider team, and see our work by shadowing the team, attending events and speaking with carers and Members. We will provide you with briefings about Care for the Carers' work, the strategic and political issues affecting carers, and access to resources (such as e-learning) that will support you in your role.

Are Trustees paid?

No, Care for the Carers Trustees are volunteers.

Would I be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses?

Yes, of course. The organisation refunds all out-of-pocket / travel expenses.

Is there support available to new Trustees?

Yes, there is plenty of support and advice available for both new and existing Trustees. Within Care for the Carers, the Chief Executive supports Trustees by providing regular briefings to the Board on the progress of the organisation and key issues in relation to carers, and will provide the induction, support and training necessary to enable Trustees to carry out their duties. In addition, the following resources are available:

- The Governance Hub provides several publications on trusteeship on the **Governance Hub website**, and a free helpline for governance issues: 0800 652 4886.
- **The Charity Commission** has free publications, offering in-depth advice on being a Trustee, in particular [The Essential Trustee: What you need to know](#). You can contact them on 0845 300 0218 for a list of publications, or access it via **The Charity Commission website**.
- Volunteer Centres help people to find suitable volunteering opportunities, and can continue to provide advice and support right through the volunteering experience. Our local Volunteer Centre is Volunteer Centre East Sussex: <http://www.vces.org.uk/>

- For general guidance on being a Trustee please see:
<https://reachskills.org.uk/knowledge-centre/support-boards/becoming-and-being-trustee/our-guide-being-trustee>

Can anyone become a charity Trustee?

Most people over the age of 18 can become charity Trustees, but a few are not eligible. Those who have been disqualified as company directors and those who have been convicted of an offence involving dishonesty or deception are some of the people who usually cannot become Trustees. We are particularly keen to achieve a diverse Board of Trustees, and we welcome applications from all sections of the community.

If you are considering nominating yourself to join Care for the Carers' Board of Trustees, and have any other questions, please do contact us.

Jennifer Twist, Chief Executive

27th September 2021