

Trustee Role Description

Eligibility

Scottish Mediation is a charitable company limited by guarantee and its Directors are charity trustees. Trustees are drawn from the pool of individual members or representatives of member organisations. However, the role on the Board is not to represent the interests of their 'nominating' organisation per se – rather to contribute an awareness of that field of interest, in providing strategic direction for the forum itself. In addition, the Board may co-opt Trustees with relevant skills/expertise on an annual basis. It is the responsibility of individual trustees to ensure they are personally not disqualified from being a charity trustee.

Statutory and Other Duties

The statutory duties of a trustee are:

- To ensure that the organisation complies with its governing document, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations
- To ensure that the organisation pursues its objects as defined in its governing document
- To ensure the organisation uses its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objects: the organisation must not spend money on activities which are not included in its own objects, no matter how worthwhile or charitable 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 charity and to ensure the proper investment of the charity's funds
- To appoint the chief executive officer and monitor his/her performance

Other duties

In addition to the above statutory duties, each trustee should use any specific skills, knowledge or experience they have to help the Board of Trustees reach sound decisions. This may involve:

- Scrutinising Board papers
- Leading discussions
- Focusing on key issues
- Providing guidance on new initiatives
- Other issues in which the trustee has special expertise

Key commitments

SM Trustees may expect to commit between half and one day a month to the role and more if involved in other activities which may involve the following:

- Quarterly general business Board meetings per year, (usually Tuesday afternoon in Edinburgh) + preparation and travel time
- Two special performance and strategy review board workshops/meetings (half or full day in Edinburgh) + preparation and travel time
- An AGM (Edinburgh) and Annual Forum + preparation and travel time

Engaging Positively with Conflict

Other commitments may include:

- Representation at external meetings and events, including meetings with civil servants, Ministers, MSPs and funders
- Attendance at SM events and assistance with chairing/facilitating these
- Input into email communication between Trustees over matters relating to policy issues, project development, SM management.
- Participation in SM working groups as appropriate
- Support to SM staff on project management/development

Maximum term of office

At each AGM, all Trustees who have been appointed by the existing Trustees since the date of the last AGM retire from office; and out of the remaining, one third (to the nearest round number, based on the longest serving) also retire from office. Trustees may be reappointed if willing to continue acting. There are a number of circumstances in which Trustees must stand down, which are detailed in the Articles of Association but include:

- becoming an employee of SM; and
- ceasing to be a Member SM, or the organisation he/she represents

Personal qualities

Integrity: As well as specific skills a trustee should have certain qualities that make them suitable for holding the position of charity trustee. The Nolan Committee identified seven principles of public life that should guide public figures:

- Selflessness
- Openness
- Integrity
- Honesty
- Objectivity
- Leadership
- Accountability

Personal Attributes of a Trustee

- An enthusiasm for the work of the organisation
- Sense of leadership and a commitment to carry out the duties of a Trustee
- A commitment to be well informed about the work of the charity
- An ability be open minded, to exercise judgement and work collectively
- The ability to work as a member of a team and to balance tact with candour and be tolerant of the views of other people
- A preparedness to offer personal and business skills and experience to support the work of the staff when required
- A willingness to act as a champion for the organisation
- The ability to treat sensitive information confidentially

Engaging Positively with Conflict