



Becoming a Board Member

Many thanks for your interest in becoming a Board member of The Rock Trust. The following provides some general information about the role and what is expected.

Introduction

The Rock Trust is a Lothians based charity (No:SC018708) which provides a range of support services to young people who are either homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Our mission statement states:

'The Rock Trust aims to provide opportunities for homeless and vulnerable young people to develop personal, social and practical skills, as well as the sense of self worth necessary for independent adult life'

We provide a range of services to help achieve this which include:

- Supported accommodation (over 50 spaces in single, shared and parent and child accommodation).
- Support to vulnerable young people living in their own flats
- A healthy living centre called the Underground
- A Networks service which supports young people to develop their own support networks – which helps them to move out of homelessness and into training, education and work

Each year we work with over 400 of the most vulnerable young people in Edinburgh and the Lothians' – young people facing such issues as abuse, neglect and poor physical and mental health. Common to most is a past history lacking much in the way of positive life experiences.

About the Board

The Rock Trust is both a Charity and a Company Limited by Guarantee, the Board members are both Members and Directors of the Company. The Board of Directors are recruited from various backgrounds, legal, financial, practice based or academic to ensure that they have the skills necessary to provide leadership to the organisation through Chief Executive and Senior Management Team.

1. Our Board Members are volunteers and as such they take part in the same recruitment and induction process as all other team members. This involves the completion of an application and the taking up of references, an informal interview with the CE and Chair, attendance at

a Board meeting to observe and to be invited to join officially. Once you are invited to join the Board, if of course you accept, you will be given the opportunity to participate in the Induction process.

2. The volunteer inductions are undertaken quarterly and involve 4 three hour training sessions, these are usually held on Wednesday evenings for four consecutive weeks. These training sessions will ensure that you understand the overall work and ethos of The Rock Trust. In addition you will have the opportunity to meet Senior Management Team members and read all policy information to give you an understanding of the structures in which we work.

During the induction process, all time spent with the organisation or working from home to read policies is negotiated and therefore the period in which it takes place can vary from person to person, however, once a member the following commitments are required:

- 8 x 3hrs Board Meetings (usually Tuesdays 6-9pm),
- 4 x 1-2hrs Working group or committee meetings (Audit, Property, H&S etc) you may join as a director
- 1 x 8 Hour Annual Away Day
- Occasional events that occur throughout the annual calendar

Your commitment to the Trust (above tasks totalled) would amount to around one working day per quarter in meetings. In addition to this there will be papers to read or work to be undertaken prior to meeting attendance and there are training opportunities available which are optional. We are currently working to reduce the Board meetings to 4 annually but as we are currently working through governance policies this may not happen until March 2011.

If you feel that you can give this type of commitment to The Rock Trust please complete the application form attached and return it to me, or if you would like to meet to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact me

Some further information – taken from the Trust’s Governance Handbook

INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITIONS

What is Governance?

There are many definitions of governance. The Rock Trust has chosen to use the following¹:

The systems and processes concerned with ensuring the overall direction, effectiveness, supervision and accountability of an organisation.

The Hub has also developed some principles of good governance and these are set out in Appendix 4.

Trust Objects

The Articles of Association define the objects for which The Rock Trust (the "Trust") is established as:

- the relief of those in need, by reason of youth, age, ill health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage, by alleviating homelessness;
- the advancement of citizenship or community development by raising awareness about homelessness;
- the advancement of health by alleviating homelessness;
- the advancement of education by raising awareness of, and educating people on, the issue of homelessness; and
- the prevention or relief of poverty by alleviating homelessness.

Trust Mission

The Trust aims to provide opportunities for vulnerable young people to develop personal, social and practical skills as well as the sense of self worth necessary for independent adult life.

“Because every young person has potential”

Trust Values

Underpinning all the work of the Trust is the belief that each person has the right and the responsibility to be an accepted and participating member of the community. Our work with young people is based on our ability to be honest, fair and respectful. We are committed to providing accessible, person-centred services; to working in partnership with other agencies; to respecting the skills and experience of young people, staff and volunteers and to being open and accountable. The Trust’s values determine the manner in which it will achieve its objectives.

¹ [taken from “Good Governance: A Code of Practice for the Voluntary and Community Sector” (Published by National Council for Voluntary Organisations on behalf of The National Hub of Expertise in Governance in 2005 (the “Hub”))]

The Trust will:

- ensure a person-centred approach is used in all activities and that we show patience and persistence in all of our communications;
- engage young people at the heart of all activities it undertakes through service user participation and involvement;
- challenge all its stakeholders to pursue actions that support its mission and to recognise potential;
- conduct all its business in an honest, fair and respectful manner, ensuring that we work in partnership to benefit all stakeholders;
- achieve excellence and share our learning to gain recognition nationally.

Legal Framework and Role of Board

The Trust is a company limited by guarantee (Company No. SC146616) and is registered as a charity in Scotland (SC018708). The Board of Directors (referred to as "**the Board**") are elected by the members of the company to govern the company. The Board have resolved that only current Board Directors shall be members of the company.

Board Directors have 7 duties under the Companies Act 2006:

1. promote the success of the company (paramount);
2. act within their powers;
3. exercise independent skill and judgment;
4. exercise reasonable care, skill and diligence;
5. avoid conflicts of interest;
6. not to accept benefits from third parties; and
7. declare interests in proposed transactions or arrangements with the company.

In addition, they have duties under the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 (the "**2005 Act**"):

- act in the interests of the charity;
- seek, in good faith, to ensure that the charity operates in a manner that is consistent with its objects or purposes;
- act with the care and diligence that it is reasonable to expect of a person who is managing the affairs of another person; and
- ensure that the charity complies with the provisions of 2005 Act, and other relevant legislation.

In a word, the role of the Board is 'leadership'. On its website, the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations elaborates on this and states that:

- there should be clear purpose and direction (strategic planning is recommended);
- all decisions taken should be in line with, and safeguard, the ideals and purpose as laid out in the founding statement or constitution;
- assets should be safeguarded and used efficiently for the beneficiaries;
- all legal obligations must be fulfilled;
- there should be effective management, efficiency and work carried out within the policies and budgets, any relevant good practice guidance and the law;
- there should be accountability both financially and in other ways;
- there should be proper procedures for recruitment and supervision of staff; and

- the Board itself should be representative and function effectively.

Recruitment and Induction

Board Directors can, in normal circumstances, serve a maximum of 8 years on the Board. They are appointed for 4 years and may be appointed for a further 4 years on a majority decision by the other Directors. There is also the possibility for this 8 year period to be extended for another 2 years maximum under exceptional circumstances. This means regular renewal of Board Directorship but it also requires robust processes for the recruitment and induction of new Board Directors.

Details of the processes are included in the Performance Management Handbook and parallel those which apply to staff and to other volunteers.