

Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights) Trustees – governance, elections, responsibilities and competencies



1. Together's governance arrangements

Together has a skilled and enthusiastic Board made up of trustees elected by Together's membership and drawn from its member organisations and individual members. The Board can have up to ten trustees, the majority of whom are elected by the membership at the AGM with up to three who may be co-opted by the rest of the Board in line with [Together's Constitution](#). Trustees include three office bearers: Chair, Vice Chair and Treasurer.

Elected trustees serve for a period of three years and are eligible for re-election for a further term of three years after which time they will be ineligible for re-election until the following AGM. Co-opted trustees can only remain in post until the next AGM, at which they are eligible to stand for election.

The Board meets four times a year unless there is a need for an Extraordinary Board meeting(s) due to specific circumstances. The role of trustees usually requires a time commitment of up to one day per month for all trustees and up to two days a month for trustees who are office bearers. There may be occasions when additional time commitment may be required.

Together has two sub-committees:

- the **Executive sub-committee** is made up of the office-bearers, Chair, Vice Chair and Treasurer, with the Director in attendance. It is chaired by the Chair. This sub-committee meets between each Board meeting. Its purpose is to provide additional office-bearer oversight and support to the Director between Board meetings, respond promptly to any issues which arise, and which may require delegated decision making/advice, identify agenda items for Board meetings and make recommendations as appropriate.
- the **Finance sub-committee** also meets between Board meetings and is chaired by the Treasurer with the Chair and up to three other trustees as members, with the Director in attendance. The purpose of the sub-committee is to maintain oversight of financial matters, provide advice to the Director, respond promptly to any financial issues which arise, and which may require delegated decision making/advice, and report to the Board with recommendations if required.

Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights)

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SCIO, charity number SC029403. Registered Office: The Melting Pot, 15 Calton Road, Edinburgh, EH8 8DL

2. Election of trustees and conflict of interest

Together aims to ensure that the members of its Board have the skills and experience to govern the charity effectively. It is committed to undertaking regular skills audits of trustees to ensure a balance of skills and interests in its Board.

Eligibility

- All trustees must be a member of Together and be endorsed by one of Together's NGO members. Each NGO member may only nominate one individual at any given time.
- All Trustees appointments are subject to a successful PVG checks which will be done by Together following the AGM.
- A person will not be eligible for election or appointment to the board if they are:
 - disqualified from being a charity trustee under the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005;
 - an employee of the organisation

Election of Trustees

Trustee vacancies are advertised via our website, social media, and to Together members. Applicants are requested to submit Biographies and Expression of Interests 10 days prior to the AGM, where voting and elections take place. Together's Executive Subgroup (comprising of the Chair, Vice Chair and Treasurer) will assess all biographies and Expressions of Interest against the required Skills, Competence and Knowledge required for Together Trustees and put all applicants who meet the required criteria forward for election (see Part 4). Feedback will be given to unsuccessful applicants as to where they fall short of the minimum required competencies.

To support successful applications, Together encourages applicants to have an informal discussion with a Together trustee or the Director in advance of applying. Together, in line with its Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy, aims to encourage and recruit trustees to ensure diversity, equality and inclusiveness on the Board in line with other organisational commitments, and will treat all trustees fairly and equally regardless of their sex, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion, age, disability or union membership status.

All trustees are expected to have an expressed commitment to children's human rights in line with Together's vision and strategic plan.

Office bearers are elected by Board trustees after the AGM and serve for a period of up to three years and can be re-elected for a further term of three years. It is expected that an office bearer has at least one year's experience of being a Together trustee.

Information on being a trustee

There is a wide range of information on trustees' roles and responsibilities. See the following for further details:

- [OSCR \(Scottish Charity Regulator\)](#)
- [Charities and Trustee Investment \(Scotland\) Act 2005](#)
- [Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations \(SCVO\)](#)

3. Trustee responsibilities

As a trustee, all members of the Board are expected to act in the interests of Together. Trustees do not represent the interests of any organisations to which they are connected through employment, personal relationship or any other role but are trustees in an individual capacity.

The Board is attentive to where a conflict of interest may arise where a trustee 'may obtain personal benefit from a particular decision in relation' to the organisation. Together has a conflict of interest policy and requests details from all trustees for its Register of Interests. Board meetings always include a conflict of interest agenda item.

In line with the legislation and OSCR guidance, Together expects that its trustees;

- Act in the interests of the charity:
 - Trustees must operate in a manner consistent with Together's purpose and act with care and diligence.
 - Together must manage any conflict of interest between a trustee and any organisation or person.
- Undertake specific duties in compliance with the 2005 Act including:
 - Providing charities details on the Scottish Charity Register; report to OSCR as required; ensure financial records and reporting comply with the 2005 Act; fundraising is in accordance with legislation and guidance; and provide information to the public.

Responsibilities as a trustee are specified under charity law as regulated by OSCR:

'Charity trustees' are defined in section 106 of the 2005 Act as people having the general control and management of the administration of a charity. Charity trustees can also sometimes be known as committee members, directors or board members.

Charity trustees are not only responsible for their own actions, they are also responsible for the actions and decisions taken by the charity trustees when acting together.¹

Trustees have ultimate responsibility for directing the affairs of Together to ensure that it is solvent, well run and delivering the charitable outcomes for which it has been set up. A trustee of Together is responsible collectively for ensuring:

- A clear vision, mission and strategic direction has been set and that they are aligned with budgets, operational plans and fundraising plans.
- Operational management processes are appropriate e.g. policies, quality and service standards, values, recruitment to senior positions.
- Compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.
- All financial obligations are met, and assets are managed in line with good practice.
- Major risks to Together are regularly identified and reviewed and that systems are in place to mitigate or minimise these risks.
- The governance structure is appropriate to a charity of its size and complexity and reflects the diversity of its users.
- Be available to support the Director as and when required.

¹ Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2005/10/part/1/chapter/9>

4. Trustee competences: skills, experience and knowledge

Trustees should have the knowledge and understanding to maintain an oversight of its activities at a strategic level, and be able to contribute well informed views, constructive challenge and a commitment to best practice. A trustee's ability to contribute in this way will often, but not always, draw on professional and/or practitioner experience at a senior level. It is expected that trustees have an expressed commitment and knowledge/understanding of children's human rights.

Together's trustees are expected to demonstrate many of the following personal competences and have the capacity to apply these to the direction of the organisation. In 2023, following a skills audit of existing Trustees, we particularly welcome applicants with skills and knowledge in law and strategic marketing and communications.

TRUSTEE

All Trustees must be eligible to become a charity trustee as set out in the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005.

Overall

- Demonstrable interest and commitment to children's human rights and working to achieve social justice.
- Understanding, awareness of, and commitment to, the principles and practice of equal opportunities and diversity.
- Demonstrable skills in strategic oversight, development and team/collective working.
- Understanding and, where possible, experience of role as charity trustee
- Understanding of the distinctions between governance and management.
- Personal capacity for regular time commitment as a trustee
- Understanding of public policy formulation and influencing techniques across national and local policymaking in Scotland
- Knowledge of the children's sector across Scotland
- Understanding of financial statements, budgets and accounts in line with governance responsibilities
- Knowledge and, where possible, experience of, current fundraising and finance practice relevant to charities.
- Knowledge of policies and practice related to effective management of organisations including human resources, staff management and organisational development.
- Effective communication skills, verbal and written, and use of IT.

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Knowledge and skills

- Ability to contribute, and support, a small team in a cooperative, flexible and supportive manner.
- Background in any of the following areas with a specific focus and/or interest in children and young people's human rights: policy and public affairs; strategy and strategic planning; communications; service development and provision; finance, audit and risk; fundraising; media and PR; IT and digital strategy and innovation; professional experience in any of Together's areas of work.
- Legal knowledge or experience .
- Ability to support Together in marketing and communications on a strategic level.

Leadership and Commitment

- Understand and accept the duties and liabilities of being a charity trustee.
- Empathy with the vision, mission and aims of Together.
- A willingness and ability to devote the necessary time and effort.
- Actively demonstrate the values of Together.

Leadership and Management

- Support the Director, providing a sounding board and guidance for proposals which affect the work of Together.
- Contribute as a Board member to the strategic and organisational developments and the appointment of a Director and any new Trustees.
- Understand and contribute to strategic leadership and management within a small organisation.

Management and Accountability

- Exercise sound and independent judgment.
- Willingness to make and stand by collective decisions, including those which may be unpopular.
- Commitment to equality and diversity and with an inclusive approach.
- Ability to manage difficult and/or challenging situations.
- Commitment to maintaining confidentiality on confidential and/or sensitive information.

Focus and Organisation

- Apply knowledge strategically and keep mission focussed
- Think creatively
- Analyse and evaluate management information and other evidence
- Willingness to listen and learn

Communications and Information

- Communicate clearly and sensitively and to take an active part in discussions
- Influence and engage and work effectively as part of a team
- Willing to express own opinion in a reasoned way, while also listening to the views of others
- Able to challenge constructively and ask questions appropriately
- Ensure that communication channels and information flow between Together and its members/stakeholders are working well and meet business needs.

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