

Chair role description

**ABOUT ABBEYFIELD**

Abbeyfield is one of the largest voluntary sector UK-wide providers of housing and care for older people, committed to alleviating loneliness while maintaining independence. Volunteers at all levels are vital in helping us provide support, care and friendship for around 8,000 residents.

**ABBEYFIELD’S MISSION**

Abbeyfield’s mission is to enhance the quality of life for older people. We offer care, support and services which reflect this; we believe that we all deserve to enjoy our later years and get the most out of life – whatever our individual circumstances.

**Duties and Responsibilities of an Abbeyfield Chair**

Chairs of Abbeyfield member societies are responsible for providing effective leadership and management to the board of trustees, enabling them to fulfil their responsibilities for the overall governance and strategic direction of the charity. Often viewed as an ambassador and public face of the charity, they provide a vision that ensures the house/home is full, provides high quality support and care, and is well-integrated into the community. Where there is a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or equivalent, the Chair will support, and, where appropriate, challenge the CEO and ensure that the Board functions as a unit and works closely with the entire Executive of the charity to achieve agreed objectives.

**Reporting to: Board of Trustees (Executive Committee)**

**Role Purpose and Responsibilities:**

* Providing leadership to the charity and its Board, ensuring that the Charity has maximum impact for its beneficiaries.
* Ensuring that Trustees fulfil their duties and responsibilities for the effective governance of the Charity.
* Ensuring that the Board is able to regularly review major risks and associated opportunities, and satisfy itself that systems are in place to take advantage of opportunities, and manage and mitigate the risks.
* Ensuring that the Board fulfils its duties to ensure sound financial health of the charity, with systems in place to ensure financial accountability.
* Leading the trustees in the development of the strategic plans for the charity and ensuring that the charity is run in accordance with the decisions of the trustees.
* Liaising with the charity secretary with the drafting of agendas and supporting papers for trustee meetings and ensuring that the business is covered efficiently and effectively in those meetings.
* Undertaking a leadership role in ensuring that the board of trustees fulfils its responsibilities for the governance of the charity.
* Leading on the development and implementation of procedures for board induction, development, training, and appraisal.
* Implementing an effective communication strategy that includes the needs of staff, beneficiaries and other stakeholders.
* Maintaining the trustees’ commitment to board renewal and succession management.Develop the knowledge and capability of the Board of Trustees.
* Encourage positive change where appropriate addressing and resolving any conflicts within the Board.
* Ensure that the Board of Trustees is regularly refreshed and incorporates the right balance of skills, knowledge and experience needed to govern and lead the charity effectively, and which also reflects the wider population.
* Act as an ambassador for the cause and the charity.
* Act as a spokesperson for the organisation when appropriate.
* Represent the charity at external functions, meetings and events.

**The statutory duties of a trustee are:**

* To ensure the organisation complies with its governing document - sometimes known as a trust deed, constitution, or articles of association.
* To ensure that the organisation pursues its objectives as defined in its governing document.
* To ensure the organisation applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objectives - the charity must not spend money on activities which are not included in its own objectives, no matter how 'charitable' and 'worthwhile' 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 organisation and to ensure the proper investment of the organisation's funds.
* If the organisation employs staff, to appoint the Chief Executive Officer and monitor his or her performance.

In addition with other trustees to hold the charity “in trust” for current and future beneficiaries by:

* Ensuring that the charity has a clear vision, mission and strategic direction and is focused on achieving these.
* Being responsible for the performance of the charity and for its “corporate” behaviour; ensuring that the charity complies with all legal and regulatory requirements.
* Acting as guardians of the charity’s assets, both tangible and intangible, taking all due care over their security, deployment and proper application.
* Ensuring that the charity’s governance is of the highest possible standard.

As well as the various statutory duties, any trustee should make full use of any specific skills, knowledge or experience to help the board make good decisions.

The above list of duties is indicative only and not exhaustive. The Trustee will be expected to perform all such additional duties as are reasonably commensurate with the role.

**Person Specification**

Abbeyfield will require:

* A commitment to the aims and objectives of the Society and to promoting it in the interests of residents.
* A willingness to give some time and effort.
* Strategic vision.
* Good, independent judgement.
* An ability to think creatively.
* An understanding of legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship.
* An ability to work effectively as a team, contributing an independent perspective.
* Possess integrity, objectivity, accountability, honesty and leadership.
* Eligibility. Some people are legally disqualified by law from acting as a Chair including anyone who has an unspent conviction for an offence involving deception or dishonesty; anyone who is an undischarged bankrupt; anyone who has been removed from the trusteeship of a charity by the courts or Charity Commission for misconduct or mismanagement; anyone who is disqualified from being a company director under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986.
* Attendance on the Abbeyfield Society’s induction programme.

**(Where Applicable) - Relationship with the Chief Executive and the wider management team**

* Establish and build a strong, effective and a constructive working relationship with the Chief Executive, ensuring s/he is held to account for achieving agreed strategic objectives.
* Support the Chief Executive, whilst respecting the boundaries which exist between the two roles.
* Ensure regular contact with the Chief Executive and develop and maintain an open and supportive relationship within which each can speak openly about concerns, worries and challenges.
* Liaise with the Chief Executive to maintain an overview of the Charity’s affairs, providing support as necessary.
* Conduct an annual appraisal and remuneration review for the Chief Executive in consultation with other Trustees.
* Ensure that the Chief Executive has the opportunity for professional development and has appropriate external professional support.

**Terms of Appointment**

Chairs’ appointments will be reviewed annually, and newly inducted Chairs should expect to serve for no more that 2 terms of 3 years.

Chairs are required to attend scheduled meetings and some ad hoc meetings. Time commitment is to be agreed with fellow trustees and is likely to be commensurate with the maturity of the Society’s business planning process.

Abbeyfield is committed to supporting its Chairmen and provides a thorough induction to the organisation and role. You will be expected to attend some training events relevant to the role, as necessary.

Whilst the role is unpaid, reasonable expenses are payable in line with Abbeyfield’s standard expenses policy.