

Fathers Network Scotland

Chair Role Description

The Chair is responsible for leading the Board of Trustees to ensure it is fulfilling its responsibilities for the governance and work in partnership with the Directors (CEOs) helping them achieve the aims of the organisation.

The Chair will lead the organisation's commitment to ensure our vision and values underpin all our decisions and activities.

The Chair will be a spokesperson and public representative as required for Fathers Network Scotland.

The main responsibilities are:

Strategic Leadership

Provide leadership for the Board in its role of setting the strategy of the organisation and ensuring it operates within its charitable objectives, and to ensure that Trustees fulfil their duties and responsibilities for the effective governance of the charity.

- Facilitate an effective and efficient relationship between the Board, Directors and staff team.
- Model and maintain the values and ensure, with the Directors, their meaningful implementation across the work and structure
- Ensure the Board regularly reviews major risks and associated opportunities, and that systems are in place to take advantage of opportunities and manage and mitigate the risks
- With the Directors, lead on the development and implementation of procedures for board recruitment, induction, development, and training
- Ensure that the Board fulfils its duties to ensure the sound financial health of the charity, with systems in place to ensure financial accountability
- Provide personal support to the Directors and ensuring, amongst other things, that they have the opportunity for professional development and review and external professional support and guidance

Governance

- Work with the Directors to establish the annual cycle, setting agendas and agreeing on papers for Board meetings
- Chair Board meetings effectively, inclusively, and efficiently, bringing impartiality and objectivity to the decision-making process
- Monitor the implementation of decisions taken at meetings.
- Ensure that the board is engaged in monitoring and ensuring the financial sustainability of the charity, through regular monitoring of the charity's accounts
- With the CEO, keep an overview of the organisation's affairs and providing support as appropriate
- To ensure the Board evaluates and strives to improve its structure, performance. (See footnote)

Meetings and Commitments

There are around 6 board meetings per year, usually in Edinburgh (or via Zoom if required) usually lasting for two hours. Additional adhoc meetings eg of a subgroup, take place as required, mornally online. The Chair also meets with the Directors as required, usually online.

Knowledge, skills and behaviours needed:

Personal Qualities

- An ability to foster effective communication between all Board members
- Be positive about developing relationships with the community, members and other stakeholders
- Show evidence of personal integrity and strong values consistent with those expressed by Fathers Network Scotland
- A high level of self-confidence.
- A commitment to equal opportunities and a good understanding and appreciation of diversity.
- Excellent interpersonal skills, including being able to operate as member of a team.
- An ability and willingness to give time and effort to the role.

Leadership and management skills

- Experience and/or understanding of charity governance
- Experience or involvement in, developing and implementing a strategic vision
- Management experience including an appreciation of financial matters
- Some experience of representing an organisation to decision-makers, such as politicians, statutory bodies, private and corporate funders or voluntary sector personnel
- Have an understanding of committee work and the ability to chair a meeting effectively
- Achievement, preferably at a senior level

You must be eligible to serve as a Charity Trustee. (You are disqualified under the Charities Act if you have been removed as a charity trustee or company director because of wrongdoing, are an undischarged bankrupt or have a current composition or arrangement including an individual voluntary arrangement (IVA) with your creditors, have an unspent conviction for an offence involving dishonesty or deception, such as fraud).

Footnote:

The Board, working with a mentor, prepared a working governance document drawn from our Articles of Association. In the relatively short time since it was prepared the pandemic and significant changes in personnel have disrupted its implementation, but it stands as a statement of our aspirations toward good governance. If reading that document along with this, you should note that the term “Directors” as it appears there refers to Board members. In this, it refers to our CEOs – a confusion we should probably rectify at some stage.

FNS originally had two co-chairs who shared the task of chairing meetings and leading the organisation, and acting as secretary to the board – sending out agendas, preparing minutes etc. The current chair has continued to carry all of these tasks, and is willing to retain the secretarial aspects of the work for the time being.