

# Candidate Pack: Trustee

Mar 2026



## Welcome from Mick Urwin, Chair of Alcohol Change UK

Thank you so much for your interest in joining our Board of Trustees at Alcohol Change UK. I joined the board in 2022 and have been incredibly impressed by the charity's strategic ambition and impact, its warmth and thoughtfulness, and its people – both our staff team and our board.

I was elected Chair in March 2025 and am delighted to be launching this process to welcome to the charity **four new trustees**.

Being a trustee of Alcohol Change UK is genuinely rewarding. I hope you will consider joining our positive and collaborative board and our dynamic, impact-centred, fast-changing charity.

## About alcohol harm and Alcohol Change UK

Alcohol harm is widespread, serious – and completely avoidable.

Too many of us fall into the trap of believing that alcohol harm is something limited to a small group of so-called 'alcoholics'. While there are, indeed, hundreds of thousands of people with alcohol dependency who deserve a good quality alcohol treatment service, **alcohol harm** also affects many millions more people: whether through a diagnosis of cancer, an early death from heart disease, a deepening of mental health problems, a childhood scarred by a parent's drinking, or violence. There are also less serious harms from alcohol that, nonetheless, hold us back as people and as a society: poor sleep, low mood, less energy, over-spending, lost time, lost memories, less present with our friends and family, less exercise, higher blood pressure, headaches, less clear headed, or under-performing at work or at the gym.

In fact, over 10 million people in the UK are drinking at levels that are risking their health or affecting others. Alcohol harm costs the NHS at least £3.5bn a year and our police, courts and prisons at least another £4bn. All of us are currently affected by alcohol harm.

But none of this alcohol harm is inevitable.

Alcohol Change UK exists to eliminate the harm from alcohol without being anti-alcohol and while being pro-fun! We never tell people how much or how little alcohol they should consume. We believe that people should be free to choose, without *external* pressure, how much or how little alcohol they want. We believe that the solutions to alcohol harm lie in both societal change and individual empowerment – not just one or the other of these two. We don't come at this topic with an ideology, but simply as humans, caring for each other, and focused on the evidence, not opinion.

Alcohol Change UK believes in an holistic approach, working to end alcohol harm by delivering five big changes in the UK:

- better policy and regulation
- healthier drinking cultures
- people taking control of their drinking before they require specialist alcohol treatment
- an alcohol treatment system that is inclusive and properly funded
- and new knowledge to ensure that our work and the work of everyone who seeks to reduce alcohol harm is based on the best available evidence.

**Our vision:** A world free from alcohol harm.

**Our mission:** To significantly reduce serious alcohol harm in the UK.

### **Our values**

*Truthful:* We seek and tell the truth.

*Compassionate:* We care deeply about everyone seriously harmed by alcohol, whoever they are.

*Ambitious for change:* We are optimistic and determined.

In March 2024 we approved a major new five-year strategy that will see us invest significantly from our reserves, to drive growth in both our income and our impact. This is a really exciting time: the stakes are high.

### **About the board and Trustee role**

Trustees are volunteers who oversee the strategic direction of the charity and ensure its compliance with regulators and the law. They are also ambassadors for the charity; and they provide the staff team, which does the day-to-day work, with both scrutiny and support.

The full board meets quarterly. Two meetings focus on 'business' – approving budgets and policies, making key decisions, etc. The other two are more discursive, covering strategic issues.

We have four sub-committees: Finance Audit Investment & Risk, Impact & Income Development, Research & Policy, and Governance & People. Trustees are generally encouraged to join at least one sub-committee, which gives them more detailed insight into the charity's work in that area. A number of trustees choose to sit on multiple sub-committees (there is no upper limit) and trustees are also welcome to attend any sub-committee, for example as a one-off, to see what happens or if they have an interest in a particular agenda item. Sub-committees also meet quarterly.

And there is usually one strategy day a year.

We currently have eight trustees on our board, with experience in public affairs, law, policing, business, research, marketing, inclusion and influencing government. We are looking to recruit **four further trustees**. Our primary focus is to bring different **perspectives** to the board rather than skills, given that the delivery of the charity's work is delegated to a skilled staff team.

- One trustee with experience of **research** (of any type) – an attitude of curiosity, intellectual rigour and open-mindedness.
- One trustee with professional experience of **alcohol treatment** (at any level) – the perspective of delivering compassionate support via treatment services, whether charity or NHS settings.

- One trustee with experience of **strategic charity finance** – especially interest in weighing up long-term financial strategic choices (not month-to-month financial management: we have a finance team).
- One trustee from **any background**.

All trustees are asked to bring a **commitment to and passion for our vision, mission and values**.

## What we can offer

1. Our board of trustees, and our charity as a whole, is warm and welcoming.
2. Everyone is entitled to have their views heard and we work hard to be inclusive of everyone.
3. We are well organised and professionally run.
4. We are a dynamic and fast-paced organisation, with a huge range of interesting work happening.
5. You will have opportunities for personal development and to attend a range of interesting events in your role as a trustee.
6. Finally, and most importantly, we are laser-focused on making as much difference as possible to end alcohol harm.

## Time commitment

We estimate the minimum time commitment to be 56 hours (7 days) per year, as follows:

- Prepare for (4 x 2 hr) and attend (4 x 3 hr) board meetings per year = 20 hours
- Prepare for (4 x 45m) and attend (4 x 1½ hr) sub-committee meetings per year = 9 hours
- Attend one annual board away day = 8 hours
- Attend one annual board dinner = 3 hours
- Other ad hoc meetings, communications (e.g. emails on specific issues) and events (e.g. parliamentary events) = 16 hours

Full board meetings and away days are usually held face-to-face in London although remote access by video conference is usually available. Travel time will need to be added to the above time estimate, based on your location.

Sub-committee meetings are usually held by video conference. Sub-committee meetings are usually scheduled for 1½ hours and some do take that long, but many complete within 1 hour. Some trustees choose to join more than one sub-committee: add an extra 9 hours per sub-committee to the total estimated time commitment.

The trustee with **charity finance** knowledge might use an extra two to four hours for meetings with our auditor.

## Who we are looking for

In many ways, charity trusteeship is like being a member of a jury. You're not expected to be an expert in alcohol harm. You are also not expected to represent a particular interest or position. And your personal skills are less important than your wider perspective. Your main role is make reasonable decisions based on the evidence, which is provided using clear, well-presented information.

You need to be fair-minded, share your views, listen openly to the views of others, and help to make decisions. All charity trustees make decisions collectively (once a decision is made, we all get behind it, whatever we thought before the decision) and usually at Alcohol Change UK we make try to make decisions by consensus rather than by compromise or vote. You should also be interested in learning and developing, as you are likely to be exposed to new knowledge.

We do *not* require previous experience of being a charity trustee. Everyone starts somewhere.

We always welcome applications from candidates with first-hand experience of alcohol harm in their family or in life; and many of our current trustees have that experience.

Alcohol harm affects everyone in society, but it doesn't affect everyone the same, so it is essential that our board has a good diversity of perspectives. **We particularly welcome applications from people from working class backgrounds, from younger people and from minoritised racial communities.**

# Trustees' Role Description and Person Specification

## 1. Being a Trustee of Alcohol Change UK

Our Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for the UK's leading charity in the field of alcohol harm. We are a registered charity (No. 1140287) and a company limited by guarantee (No. 07462605). Our trustees are also members of the charity and directors of the company. Governance is in accordance with both charity and company law. This role description uses the term 'trustee' to refer to all three roles (trustee, member, director).

As well as overseeing proper governance, the Board is responsible for strategic decision-making, upholding the reputation of the charity and ensuring that it delivers on its charitable object to reduce alcohol harm. As a trustee you will share this collective responsibility and bring your personal perspectives, skills, experience and connections to bear.

This is an important time for the charity, as we are in the third year of our five-year strategy (Apr 2024 to Mar 2029). Our new trustees will play a key role in helping us deliver on this strategy and in particular navigating a major change in our financial position.

## 2. The Duties and Responsibilities of Trustees

### A. Governing Documents

Our primary governing document is the Memorandum and Articles of Association which sets out the formal duties and responsibilities of the trustees, directors and members. It is complemented by our Scheme of Delegation. We have also adopted the Code of Good Governance, and remain compliant with the rules of the Charity Commissioners and Companies House.

### B. General Duties and Responsibilities

The following are general duties, based on documentation from the Charity Commission and Companies House:

- a) To act in the interests of the charity's objects – that is, its cause and its beneficiaries.
- b) To act reasonably and prudently in all matters.
- c) To avoid personal views, opinions and prejudices affecting your decision-making.
- d) To protect – and actively promote – the property, interests and reputation of the charity.
- e) To set the strategic direction, provide strategic oversight, and make critical decisions.
- f) To always make decisions collectively as a board and in particular to actively support all board decisions (that are made in accordance with the charity's constitution) regardless of your personal position on such decisions.
- g) To understand how the charity works, including being fully aware of the charity's general risks and its financial position.
- h) To ensure compliance with all statutory requirements as set out by Companies House and the Charity Commission and by other relevant statutory bodies and legislation.

- i) To challenge and support the CEO and, through them, the broader staff team.

### **C. Additional Duties and Responsibilities**

The following additional duties and responsibilities have been adopted by Alcohol Change UK:

- a) To abide by Alcohol Change UK's policies, such as those on equal opportunities, health and safety, safeguarding, code of conduct, conflicts of interest, GDPR, etc.
- b) To endeavour to achieve at least 75% attendance at Board meetings. In accordance with the governing documents, trustees missing three consecutive board meetings without reasonable cause will normally be asked to step down.
- c) To undertake training as required and to participate in an annual development appraisal.
- d) To join at least one of the charity's four sub-committees.
- e) To represent Alcohol Change UK at events and to act as a positive ambassador for Alcohol Change UK amongst its key audiences.
- f) To understand and respect the boundary between governance and the operational matters that are delegated to the staff team.
- g) To respond to Alcohol Change UK correspondence in a timely manner.

### **3. Person Specification**

All trustees need the following:

1. Strong commitment to the vision, values and mission of Alcohol Change UK.
2. An ability to think strategically; that is, thinking of the big picture and the long-term, being impact-focused, and considering the relationship between internal and external factors.
3. An ability to work as part of a team, especially understanding and respecting the nature of collective decision-making.
4. Excellent communications skills, especially active listening, succinctness, clarity, positivity and tact.
5. Commitment to the 7 Nolan Principles on Public Life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.
6. Discretion and the ability to maintain confidentiality.
7. A willingness to contribute your individual skills, perspectives, knowledge and experience without acting as representative of any particular interest.

Trustees are appointed for an initial term of three or four years, following which they may be re-elected for a second and third term of three years.

Trustee roles are unremunerated but reasonable travel, accommodation, childcare and subsistence expenses are of course covered.

#### 4. Exclusions

You cannot be a trustee of Alcohol Change UK if you:

- are under 18 years of age
- are incapable of managing and administering your own affairs;
- have an unspent conviction relating to any offence involving deception or dishonesty;
- are an undischarged bankrupt or have made a composition or arrangement with, or granted a trust deed for, their creditors (*ignore if discharged from such an arrangement*);
- are subject to a disqualification order under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986 or an Order made under section 429(b) of the Insolvency Act 1986;
- have been removed from the office of charity trustee or trustee for a charity by an Order made by the Charity Commissioners or the High Court on the grounds of any misconduct or mismanagement or are subject to an Order under section 7 of the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Act 1990, preventing you from being concerned in the management or control of any relevant organisation or body.

## The application and appointment process

1. If you would like an informal discussion about being a trustee at Alcohol Change UK, please email Sharon Littlejohn on [sharon.littlejohn@alcoholchange.org.uk](mailto:sharon.littlejohn@alcoholchange.org.uk), who will schedule a phone call with our CEO, Dr Richard Piper.
2. Please apply only using our official application form: <https://form.typeform.com/to/kpm4hBAW>. **Use of our official application form is essential.** It is designed to enhance equality of access across the pool of candidates. The application form will ask you to upload your CV as part of the form.
3. If you have any accessibility needs that mean you cannot use the official application form, please contact us as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements.
4. We do not accept cover letters or CVs sent to us by email. They will be discarded.
5. The deadline for submission is **9am, 30 March 2026**.
6. All candidates will hear whether or not they have been shortlisted by **10 April 2026**.
7. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to an interview that will take place during the daytime on **20 or 21 April** – please do your very best to save this date.
8. The successful candidate will be designated as 'trustee elect' and asked to attend the board meeting on **Mon 6 Jul 2026**, 5pm to 8pm. Please do your very best to save this date. This will give you an opportunity to see and be part of a board meeting. At the end of that meeting, you will be formally asked if you wish to join the board as a trustee (at that point you can decide to withdraw if you wish). If you do wish to join, the current board members will discuss and formally decide on your appointment, at which point you will be a trustee of Alcohol Change UK.
9. From **Tue 7 Jul** your full induction will begin.