

Downright Excellent Trustee – Trustee - Secretary lead role description

Context and purpose

- Downright Excellent (DEX) is a small charity committed to enabling children with Down syndrome to maximise their potential. We deliver a range of specialist interventions and support to children with Down syndrome and their families.
- The Trustee – Secretary will act as ‘company secretary’ for the Board.
- The skills, experience and expertise of the Trustee-Secretary will help us ensure that we are delivering best practice in terms of board administration and wider governance of DEX
- A specific background in charity governance or having been a secretary before is not necessary, but a commitment to learning and development in the area is.

Main responsibilities

- Act as secretary to the Board – working closely with the Chair and Chief Executive to:
 - Coordinate Board meetings
 - Set Board meeting agendas
 - Circulate Board meeting papers and agendas
 - Take minutes of Board meetings
- Keep up to date with best practice in charity governance and compliance
- Monitor DEX’s compliance with best practice in charity governance, Charity Commission regulations using our own compliance monitoring tools.
- As part of our trustee team, give firm strategic direction to the organisation, setting overall policy, defining goals and setting targets and evaluating performance against agreed targets.
- Draw on your networks to support our work.
- Help ensure that the operations team have the capabilities that they need to implement the safeguarding policies and processes.

Qualities of a safeguarding trustee

- Experience of charity governance, compliance, Charity Commission regulations, company secretaryship, or a real enthusiasm to learn.
- Proactive, entrepreneurial, coming up with ideas around improvement and development.
- Ability to work as part of a team and willingness to take collective responsibility for the governance of our charity.
- Ability to work at a strategic level whilst understanding the detail and complexities of delivery, and the influencing skills needed to bring volunteers and team members along with plans.
- Strong communicator – willing and able to help the board understand safeguarding.
- Ability to analyse risks and opportunities, and take a balanced approach to both.
- Extensive networks, and a willingness to draw on contacts as appropriate.
- Committed to DEX’s long-term success.

In addition to the above, the Trustee Secretary has the same responsibilities and qualities as all trustees:

Responsibilities of all trustees

- Support and provide advice on DEX’s purpose, vision, goals and activities.
- Approve operational strategies and policies, and monitor and evaluate their implementation.

- Responsible for safeguarding our service users, team, and stakeholders in all aspects of the way DEx works.
- Oversee DEx's financial plans and budgets and monitor and evaluate progress.
- Ensure the effective and efficient administration of the organisation.
- Ensure that key risks are being identified, monitored and controlled effectively.
- Review and approve DEx's financial statements.
- Provide support and challenge to DEx's CEO in the exercise of their delegated authority and affairs.
- Keep abreast of changes in DEx's operating environment.
- Contribute to regular reviews of DEx's own governance.
- Attend Board meetings, adequately prepared to contribute fully to discussions.
- Use independent judgment, acting legally and in good faith to promote and protect DEx's interests, to the exclusion of their own personal and/or any third party interests.
- Contribute to the broader promotion of DEx's objects, aims and reputation by applying your skills, expertise, knowledge and contacts.

Essential qualities and attributes of all trustees

- Willingness and ability to understand and accept their responsibilities and liabilities as trustees and to act in the best interests of the organisation.
- Ability to think creatively and strategically, exercise good, independent judgement and work effectively as a board member.
- Effective communication skills and willingness to participate actively in discussion.
- A strong personal commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion.
- Enthusiasm for our vision and mission.
- Willingness to lead according to our values
- Commitment to Nolan's seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership

Terms of appointment

Terms of office

- Trustees are appointed for a three year term of office, renewable for two further terms to a maximum of nine years.
- This is a voluntary position, but reasonable expenses will be reimbursed, subject to prior agreement.

Time commitment

- Around a day a month, taking into account meetings, preparation, and contact between meetings:
 - Attending 6 Board meetings annually of around 2.5 hours. Currently meetings are held online.
 - Attending one longer strategy day a year (usually a Sunday in October) and two or three issues-based workshops
 - We aim to send papers out a week in advance of Board meetings. Our trustees tell us that they usually spend between one and 2 hours reading the papers and preparing for the meetings
 - Outside of Board meetings, there will be additional contact – usually by email, Zoom or phone.

Although the role is unpaid, we will reimburse reasonable expenses such as travel.

Checks

- We will take up references
- Because of the nature of our work, we ask all trustees to undergo a DBS check which we will facilitate and pay for
- We ask all trustees to undertake an online safeguarding course
- Trustees are asked to complete the Charity Commission '[Charity Trustee: declaration of eligibility and responsibility](#)'
- We also require trustees to complete a declaration of interests form

How to apply

To apply, please send your CV or an informal summary of your experience and a covering letter telling us why this role at DEx attracts you to our Chair, James Davis at chair@downrightexcellent.com, cc gemma@lovegovernance.com.

Do contact us if you would like a chat before applying.

Closing date: 30 June 2024

The duties and responsibilities highlighted in this Role Description are indicative and may vary over time.