

Fashion
AS A FORCE
for good

**SMART
WORKS**
NORTH EAST

SMART WORKS NORTH EAST TRUSTEE

Location: **Newcastle or surrounding areas**

Time commitment: **one day a month on average**

Closing date: **31st May 2026**



ABOUT SMART WORKS

Smart Works is a dynamic, high profile and fast-growing UK charity that dresses and coaches unemployed women for success at their job interview. We empower each woman by giving her the clothes and the confidence she needs to succeed.

After visiting Smart Works, 67% of clients secure a job within a month, gaining financial independence and transforming their lives.

The Smart Works service is delivered in London, Manchester, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Birmingham, Newcastle, Reading, Bristol and Leeds. Over the past ten years, Smart Works has helped over 50,000 women, and last year alone we reached 10,600 women. It is our mission that any woman who needs our service should be able to find her way to a Smart Works centre.

In March 2025, Smart Works completed their Three-Year Plan that saw the charity double the number of women helped annually from 5,000 to 10,000 women a year. To achieve this, we grew our existing centres and open new centres in areas of need.

Smart Works North East is led by a Board of passionate and dedicated trustees, who are responsible for the governance and strategic direction of the Smart Works service nationally, working within a group structure. More information about who we are can be found on our [website](#).





ABOUT THE ROLE

A fantastic opportunity has arisen to join the Smart Works North East Board of Trustees.

Our Trustees support all aspects of our work, with the aim of providing strategic support, governance and assurance that enables us to continue to deliver our core service and increase the number of women we can support into work by dressing and coaching women for interview and job success.

The time commitment for this voluntary, unpaid role is an average of a day a month, with more time given at busy periods of the year. There will be a requirement to attend board meetings, with some trustees also sitting on subcommittees that meet around 4 times a year. In addition, there are events to attend and occasional additional duties to support our wider work.

If you feel you have valuable experience and skills to contribute to the Smart Works mission and would like to use your professional experience for good, we would love to hear from you.



DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The role profile for Smart Works trustees is aligned to the legal and charitable responsibilities that are required of all trustees by the Charity Commission. In addition to fulfilling these obligations, each trustee will bring their unique skills and experience to bear, to support Smart Works to deliver its strategic plans and operate in an effective and impactful way.

Specific responsibilities include:

Governance:

- Trustees will collectively ensure Smart Works is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit, in line with our charitable objects and our governing document. This includes, for example, ensuring that we are delivering effective and impactful services to the women we serve, and that we manage our resources effectively to achieve this.
- Trustees must always act in the best interests of the charity, and act with appropriate care and skill in doing so. This includes, for example, ensuring that board reporting reflects key measures of success, and provides the necessary assurance to trustees.
- Trustees will ensure we maintain high standards of governance, fostering transparency and ensuring the charity holds itself accountable to its stakeholders.

Strategy:

- Trustees will work together with the executive to set the strategic direction of the charity as well as the culture through which the charity operates, with a particular focus on long term planning.

Assurance:

- Trustees will work together to approve and monitor the delivery of annual plans, and will manage the finances, and manage risk, effectively.
- Trustees will be required to maintain awareness and compliance with legal and regulatory requirements relating to Smart Works

Ways of Working:

- Trustees will leverage their networks, knowledge and experience to support Smart Works, particularly in areas such as fundraising, financial management, public speaking and awareness raising.
- Trustees will advocate for Smart Works, raising its profile and the awareness of the Smart Works service, including volunteering at least 4 times a year as either a dresser, coach, in our wardrobe or at events
- Trustees are required to attend a minimum of 4 board meetings a year and should also be willing to sit on board committees as required, with up to an additional 4 meetings a year for this purpose. Meetings are typically between 1-3 hours in duration and are set out up to 12 months in advance. Board meetings are in person, whereas committees may be hybrid. A willingness to attend all meetings in person is preferable.
- Trustees will build strong working relationships with the Chair, fellow trustees, staff, volunteers and supporters. We work in a small team and tailor strong interpersonal and communication skills to all levels of seniority

SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE & PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

Attributes

- Strong commitment to Smart Works organisational purpose, mission and values
- Strong commitment to the delivery of inclusive services to the women we serve, as defined on our website, as well as commitment to positive, inclusive and collaborative organisational culture
- Strong understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of Trusteeship as set out by the Charity Commission
- Ability to contribute to the work and ongoing development of Smart Works, not only through regular attendance of Board meetings, but also through sub-committees of the Board, and/or ad hoc 'task and finish' group activity, as appropriate.
- Ability to use previous experiences in a relevant manner, whilst at the same time being able to separate oneself from prior allegiances and interests, so that conflicts can be managed openly and transparency guaranteed.
- Ability to bring good judgement to the board, including discussing and making decisions on matters outside of your direct area of expertise.
- Ability to think strategically and work with the rest of the board to set the strategic long-term direction of Smart Works
- Appreciation of the nature of risk management at Board level.
- Ability to distil complex information and bring a pragmatic approach to its application.

Sector Specific Expertise

Smart Works regularly completes board reviews and skills audits. At the current time, applicants with experience and knowledge in the following areas would be advantageous:

- Charity law and regulation
- Accounting, finance, audit
- Fundraising
- Risk
- Legal
- Change Management
- Fashion Retail

The successful candidates will be expected to use their prior experience and knowledge to the benefit of Smart Works.

Skills

- Highly effective communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to converse beyond your own domain of expertise and to discuss complex and/or intractable problems and contribute to solutions, even if these are not perfectly aligned to your own views.
- Ability to maintain a rich network to sustain the knowledge and experience offered to Smart Works
- Ability to provide support and advice to the Trustees and officers in the affairs and strategic development of Smart Works

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- Must also demonstrate a clear commitment to operating by the standards relating to public life and knowledge of the Charity Commission's requirements of Trustees.
- Provide support to determine the strategic direction of the Centre.
- Advocate for the Centre, raising its profile and the awareness of the Smart Works service in the geographic area.
- Build strong working relationships with the Chair, fellow trustees, staff, volunteers and supporters.



BETTER REFLECTING OUR COMMUNITY

We are committed to ensuring that our Board of Trustees better reflects the diversity of the communities we serve and the lived experiences of the women who rely on our services. Research from our [Unemployment Index](#) shows that ethnic minority women and women with disabilities face significantly greater barriers to employment, and we recognise that lived experience of unemployment brings invaluable insights to our mission.

We particularly encourage applications from individuals with:

- Ethnic minority backgrounds,
- Disabilities or long-term health conditions,
- Lived experience of unemployment or economic hardship,
- And/or individuals who can offer a fresh perspective beyond our existing networks and sectors.

We value a diverse range of skills and experiences, and are committed to inclusive, transparent, and supportive recruitment. If you are passionate about making a difference and feel you could contribute to the strategic growth and governance of Smart Works, we would love to hear from you.

What our trustees say...



Serving as a trustee at Smart Works has been an incredibly rewarding and formative experience. During my time with the organisation, I have had the opportunity to grow both personally and professionally, gaining valuable insight into governance, strategic decision-making, and the impact of purpose-driven leadership.

Being part of a mission that empowers women to succeed in the workplace has deepened my understanding of social impact and strengthened my commitment to inclusive, community-focused work. I have developed greater confidence in navigating complex challenges, collaborating with diverse stakeholders, and contributing meaningfully at a strategic level.

This experience has played a significant role in my career progression, equipping me with skills and perspectives that I carry forward into my professional journey. While I am now stepping down from my role, I do so with immense gratitude for everything I have learned and for the opportunity to contribute to such an inspiring organisation.

I would wholeheartedly encourage anyone considering a trustee role to embrace the opportunity. It is a unique and enriching experience that will undoubtedly support both personal and professional growth, while allowing you to make a meaningful impact.

Smart Works will always hold a special place in my career, and I remain a strong advocate for its mission and continued success.

Julie Cuthbertson, outgoing trustee



Learn more and apply

If you are interested in learning more about the role before applying, please email recruitment@smartworks.org.uk to be connected with a member of the Smart Works North East Board of Trustees.

To apply for this position, please apply via our online portal by **31st May 2026**. If you require any adjustments for your application, please email recruitment@smartworks.org.uk.

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to an interview in **mid June**. From this, selected candidates will meet with the Smart Works Charity CEO prior to appointment.