

## Grassroots Trustee Job Description

### Overall Purpose

The board of trustees are jointly and severally responsible for the overall governance, financial health and strategic direction of Grassroots. They are also responsible for the integrity of its activities and for developing the organisation's aims, objectives and goals in accordance with Grassroots' governing document, and with legal and regulatory guidelines.

All trustees should be aware of, and understand, their individual and collective responsibilities, and should not be overly reliant on one or more individual trustees in any particular aspect of the governance of the charity. For example, all trustees should be able to read the financial accounts to a level that they can ask questions and understand answers of a general nature.

### Main Responsibilities

- To work effectively and appropriately as a team of Trustees to support Grassroots, its CEO and all employees in undertaking their roles.
- To ensure that Grassroots, and its representatives, function within all legal and regulatory requirements applicable, and in line with the organisation's governing document, continually striving for best practice in governance.
- To maintain the duty of trust invested in the position, undertaking such duties in a way that adds to public confidence and trust in Grassroots.
- To take appropriate professional advice in all matters where there may be a material risk to Grassroots, or where the trustees may be in breach of their duties.
- To determine the overall direction and development of Grassroots through good governance and clear strategic planning.
- To avoid any personal conflict of interest.
- To manage and use the resources of Grassroots so as to optimise its potential.
- To ensure that robust systems are in place for internal financial control and the protection of Grassroots' funds and assets.
- To undergo a thorough induction upon appointment and ongoing training to remain alert to, and aware of, their duties and responsibilities, and of the environment in which they operate.
- To achieve the purpose of Grassroots and to pursue its charitable objects, and provide public benefit.

## **Main Duties**

- To work effectively and appropriately as a team of Trustees to support Grassroots, its CEO and all employees in undertaking their roles.
- Ensuring that Grassroots complies with legislative and regulatory requirements, and acts within the confines of its governing document and to further the charitable objects.
- Acting in the best interest of Grassroots, its beneficiaries and future beneficiaries at all times.
- Promoting and developing Grassroots in order for it to grow and maintain its public benefit.
- Recognising the situation when it may be more appropriate to wind Grassroots up (where there is no longer a need for Grassroots to provide the services it does or because the charitable objects are no longer relevant to contemporary social situations).
- Financial management and awareness and overall control of Grassroots resources.
- Appointment and setting organisational salaries and monitoring.
- Ensuring the effective and efficient administration of Grassroots and its resources, striving for best practice in good governance.
- Acting as a counter-signatory on charity cheques (including any electronic transactions) and any applications for funds.
- To maintain absolute confidentiality about all aspects of the trustees' business, bearing in mind the over-riding legal obligations placed upon trustees.

## **Statutory Duties**

The following is a précis of the legal duties trustees must fulfil:

- Duty of trust;
- Duty to comply with Grassroots' governing document;
- Duty to act in the best interests of Grassroots' present and future beneficiaries;
- Duty to avoid conflicts of interest;
- Duty to safeguard assets;
- Duty not to benefit from their position;
- Duty of care;
- Duty to act personally;
- Duty to act collectively; and
- Duty to keep accounts.

Under Part 10 of the Companies Act 2006, there are specific legal duties placed upon company directors. For trustees and directors of charitable companies therefore, there are additional duties to fulfil:

- Duty to act within powers;
- Duty to promote the success of the company;
- Duty to exercise independent judgement;
- Duty to exercise reasonable care, skill and diligence;
- Duty to avoid conflicts of interest;
- Duty not to accept benefits from third parties; and
- Duty to declare interest in proposed transaction or agreement.

**Accountable to:**

As the board are responsible and liable for the governance and functioning of Grassroots, they are accountable in varying degrees to a variety of stakeholders, including: members (where applicable), beneficiaries, funders, the Charity Commission, and other regulators (e.g. Companies House).

Close attention must be given to the governing document to ascertain the type of organisational structure and the range of interested parties Grassroots has. Furthermore, there is a growing demand within the sector and the wider general public, for charities to be open and accountable for their actions and inactions. Evolving best practice would therefore lead trustees to consider the wider implications of the decisions they make, and to communicate widely the formal reasons behind such decisions or actions. Above all else, trustees must adhere to any legal and regulatory requirements applicable to Grassroots' activities.

**Trustee code of conduct**

It is the responsibility of Grassroots' trustees to:

- Act within the governing document and the law – being aware of the contents of the organisation's governing document and the law as it applies to Grassroots.
- Act in the best interest of Grassroots as a whole – considering what is best for the organisation and its beneficiaries and avoiding bringing Grassroots into disrepute.
- Manage conflicts of interest effectively – registering, declaring and resolving conflicts of interest, not gaining materially or financially unless specifically authorised to do so.

- Respect confidentiality – understanding what confidentiality means in practice for Grassroots, its board and the individuals involved with it.
- Have a sound and up-to-date knowledge of Grassroots and its environment – understanding how Grassroots works and the environment within which it operates.
- Attend meetings and other appointments or give apologies – considering other ways of engaging with the organisation if unable to attend a particular trustee meeting. Typically meetings are held on a quarterly basis.
- Prepare fully for meetings and all work for Grassroots – reading papers, querying anything you don't understand and thinking through issues in good time before meetings.
- Actively engage in discussion, debate and voting in meetings – contributing positively, listening carefully, challenging sensitively and avoiding conflict.
- Act jointly and accept a majority decision – making decisions collectively, standing by them and not acting individually unless specifically authorised to do so.
- Work considerately and respectfully with all – respecting diversity, different roles and boundaries.

**General**

Grassroots values the input of its trustees and will support them to carry out their roles. Trustees will receive an induction on beginning their work, and will be offered the reimbursement of out of pocket expenses. Grassroots would ask for a notice period of 3 months if a trustee wishes to step down due to being unable to fulfil their commitment.

Trustees are expected to honour the content and spirit of this job description and code. Please sign below to agree to the terms of the job description and code of conduct. Thank you!

Signed .....

Name .....

Date .....