

Trustee Information Pack

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Trustee at Wintercomfort. The information in this pack is intended to help you understand what being a Trustee will involve: your role, responsibilities and how we work.

As a Trustee the commitment, time and energy you give will make a direct difference to the charity and everyone it helps. Trustees have the ultimate responsibility for running Wintercomfort, for its property, finances and the employment of any staff or volunteers. Being a Trustee brings real rewards - providing an opportunity to use and develop your skills to help people make positive, long-term changes to improve their lives.

Effective trustee boards need a range of people with a good mix of skills. The best boards are also diverse, with people who have an understanding of the homelessness sector as well as good financial, legal, HR, business and management experience.

Who are we looking for?

We are always keen to add people to our board with diverse insights, skills and experience. At the moment, we would especially like to recruit people with skills in the area of business, commercial, marketing and fundraising.

We would love to hear from you if you are enthusiastic about making a difference in Cambridge. If you would like an informal conversation before applying, see 'how to apply' on page 7.

What's included in this pack?

In this pack you will find:

1. Background information about Wintercomfort
2. The Trustee role description
3. Additional duties of the Treasurer
4. Terms of appointment
5. Details of how to apply

About Wintercomfort

Wintercomfort is an advice and support hub at the heart of homeless services in Cambridge. The charity provides year-round vital services for people who are rough sleeping, vulnerably housed or at risk of losing their home.

Open every day of the year, Wintercomfort provides Cambridge's only day-time drop-in service for rough sleepers, offering free meals, showers, laundry services and clothing alongside a broad range of support to help people address challenges in all areas of their life.

Services include help to access housing, training and education programmes, employment support, access to healthcare, counselling, sports and fitness programmes, dedicated women's services and specialist support for non-UK nationals. There is more information on our website <https://wintercomfort.org.uk>.

Our Mission

Wintercomfort supports those with experience of homelessness by offering essential welfare services and social, learning and work opportunities to enable service users to achieve their potential and to make positive, long-lasting changes to their lives.

Our Vision

- To be welcoming, non-judgemental, offering a safe and secure place for people to access welfare, support, advice and learning in a trusted environment seven days a week.
- To equip staff and volunteers with the tools and training they need to deliver excellence in everything that we do.
- To develop diverse income and funding streams to ensure that Wintercomfort is not reliant on any one source of funding and ensure that we have sufficient reserves to be sustainable.

Our Values

- Be non-judgemental, inclusive, respectful of others, compassionate and caring.
- Be service user focussed, deliver high quality services, be flexible, innovative, and responsive.
- Empower people to help themselves, champion personal development, and positive change.

Trustee role description

Wintercomfort is an information, advice, training and support centre in Cambridge for people who are homeless, at risk of homelessness or with a history of homelessness. Its services provide daily advice and support throughout the year, encouraging and empowering our service users to overcome disadvantage and to make positive, long-term changes to improve their lives. We provide services to aid every stage of recovery – from immediate basic welfare needs to long-term help in identifying and dealing with the problems which are undermining their stability, and enabling them to engage with education, employment and specialist health services.

Our Trustees play a vital role in making sure that Wintercomfort achieves its core purpose. They oversee the overall management and administration of the charity. They also ensure that Wintercomfort has a clear strategy and that our work and goals are in line with our vision. Just as importantly, they support and challenge the executive team to enable Wintercomfort to grow and thrive, and through this, achieve our mission.

Board members have a collective responsibility. This means that Trustees always act as a group and not as individuals.

Duties

- Ensure Wintercomfort complies with its governing document and charity law requirements.
- Review Wintercomfort's financial plans and budgets and monitor and evaluate progress, ensuring Wintercomfort's resources are only used to support and carry out its purposes and avoiding exposing it to undue risk.
- Determine Wintercomfort's purpose, vision, goals and activities, actively taking part in setting Wintercomfort's direction and determining how it will get there through the planning process and the business/strategic plan.
- Approve organisational strategies and reviewing the policy framework and its implementation.
- Ensure that the risk register incorporates key risks which are monitored and controlled effectively.
- Provide support and challenge to Wintercomfort's CEO in the exercise of their delegated authority.
- Keep abreast of changes in the local and national homelessness sector that are relevant to Wintercomfort.
- Contribute to regular reviews of Wintercomfort's own governance. Attend Board meetings, adequately prepared to contribute to discussions.
- Act reasonably and honestly at all times and in the interest of Wintercomfort.
- Ensure the confidentiality of Board discussions.
- Use independent judgment, acting legally and in good faith to promote and protect Wintercomfort's interests, to the exclusion of their own personal and/or any third-party interests.
- Be an ambassador for the organisation, representing the organisation to its stakeholders.

As a small charity, there will be times when the Trustees will need to be actively involved beyond Board meetings. This may involve scrutinising board papers, leading discussions, focusing on key issues, providing advice and guidance on new initiatives, presenting externally, or other issues in which the Trustee has special expertise.

We are looking for

People who have a strong empathy with our mission and are willing to bring energy, enthusiasm and commitment to the role, and who will broaden the diversity of thinking on our board. Previous governance experience in a Charity setting is desirable.

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.
- Commitment to the organisation and a willingness to devote the necessary time and effort.
- Effective communication skills and willingness to participate actively in discussion.
- A personal commitment to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Willingness to lead according to our values.
- Commitment to Nolan's seven principles of public life¹: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

Time commitment

- Attending Board meetings (currently we schedule five a year). At present these are held remotely and in person at Overstream House, Victoria Avenue, Cambridge.
- Trustees who miss three consecutive meetings will usually be required to resign.
- Attending strategy and training days (approximately half a day once or twice a year).
- Reading and responding to documents between Board meetings as required.
- Ad hoc and occasional support through working groups and / or support to the executive team.

Further information

For further information about serving as a trustee, see *The Essential Trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do*².

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-essential-Trustee-what-you-need-to-know-cc3>

Terms of appointment

Length of service

Trustees are appointed for an initial 3-year term of office. New Trustees will be subject to a six-month review to assess how the appointment is working from both sides.

Remuneration

This is a voluntary position, but reasonable expenses are reimbursed.

Eligibility

Wintercomfort will not recruit or retain any individual as a trustee who is subject to legal disqualification under s181A of the *Charities Act 2011*. Prior to joining the board, prospective Trustees will be asked to sign an eligibility declaration.

Conflicts of interest

Trustees will be required to identify and declare any potential conflicts of interest as part of their legal duty to act only in the best interests of the charity. Conflicts of interest relate to a Trustee's personal interests and the interests of those connected to them.

Company Director

In order to protect the rights and obligations of the Trustees, Wintercomfort for the homeless is registered in England and Wales as a Limited Company Number 2615905. As a Trustee therefore you will also become a Director of Wintercomfort for the homeless. The obligations and responsibilities of this role are the same as that of a Charity Trustee.

How to apply

Informal conversations

For an informal conversation about the role, please contact Dr Jane Dominey, Chair of Trustees using the email address below. Please copy your enquiry email to Joanne Crellen, Trustee and Secretary.

Applications

We are welcoming applications until **5pm on Monday 4 December 2023**.

Please submit the following:

1. A short letter outlining why you would like to become a trustee of Wintercomfort and what skills and experience you would bring to the board
2. A copy of your CV

Applications should be sent to the following addresses:

- Dr Jane Dominey, Chair: janedominey@wintercomfort.org.uk
- Joanne Crellen, Secretary: jocrellen@wintercomfort.org.uk

All information submitted as part of your application will be handled and processed in accordance with duties under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

The process

All shortlisted candidates will be invited to visit Wintercomfort and meet key members of the team, including the Chair and Chief Executive. As well as showing you the work of the charity, we will conduct a short interview and answer any additional questions you have.

Following the visit, anyone who is invited to join the board will be given the opportunity to attend a board meeting as an observer. This is to allow the Trustees to meet you, and to allow you to see how we operate before making a final decision about whether you would like to join us.

Once appointed, new Trustees will receive an induction and training alongside existing members of the board.