



Dear Trustee Applicant,

Re: Trustee Position for Deafblind Scotland Board of Directors

Thank you for your interest in the role of Trustee for Deafblind Scotland. This is an exciting time for the organisation, having gone through a period of growth including to develop a unique specialist Guide Communication service for deafblind people and to undertake a capital fundraising campaign that allowed us to build a Learning and Development Centre within our own 'Field of Dreams'. We now want to raise our ambitions still further to reach the very many people living with dual sensory impairment across Scotland to ensure that they live connected and fulfilling lives. This is a big ambition and one which requires committed and aspirational leadership. If that sounds like you then please read further.

Deafblind Scotland are an organisation that is determined that all our efforts to improve the lives of deafblind people should be guided by those who most understand what needs to change – deafblind people. We are therefore committed to ensuring that we are led by this experience and to this end 50% of our Board of Trustees are deafblind. We also want to ensure that we engage the most talented and passionate external experts that can bring onto the Board a range of experience from business, third and public sector leadership or policy making in Scotland. We therefore are seeking applications from candidates that have either lived experience of a dual sensory impairment or those who can bring us that key external advice and guidance. All candidates must share the values of the organisation as laid out in this pack and meet the essential criteria within our Person Specification. Our Governing documents do not allow for applications from current employees of Local Authorities, however if you have this experience and you are no longer employed by a local authority your application would be welcome. We are also not able to accept applications for those who have been employed by Deafblind Scotland over the past 2 years. Please note all Trustees are required to be members of the PVG scheme and will be asked to apply if being offered the role as Trustee.

If you wish to apply please send a CV and a Vision Statement outlining what you would bring to the role and the way in which your experience would align with the criteria outlined within the role description. This statement should be no more than 2 pages in Arial point 11. Please send your application to: ce@dbscotland.org.uk by 6th January 2021

1 Neasham Drive, Kirkintilloch, Glasgow, G66 3FA

Tel/Text: 0141 777 6111 Fax: 0141 775 3311

Email: info@dbscotland.org.uk

Web: www.dbscotland.org.uk

Scottish Charity No: SC 031167 Company Reg No: 216974

FREE HELPLINE 0800 132320

For deafblind people and those who support them
- do use us for help, information or just a chat.



Thank you again for your interest in this role and reading this far in the candidate pack. If you feel this role is for you, please apply as specified above. However, if the role isn't for you but you want to be part of supporting our journey towards a fairer, more equal life for deafblind people please feel free to contact our CEO to discuss further at ce@dbscotland.org.uk.

Kind Regards

Issy McGrath
Co-Chair
Deafblind Scotland

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DEAFBLIND SCOTLAND
TRUSTEE CANDIDATE PACK



Deafblind Scotland's vision is:

'a society in which deafblind people have the support and recognition necessary to be able to exercise their rights and fully participate in their communities as equal citizens'.

1. About deafblindness

People who are deafblind (or severely dual sensory impairment) have substantial visual and hearing loss which causes extreme difficulty with communication, information and mobility. Deafblindness can lead to profound levels of loneliness, boredom, stress and distress and as a result deafblind people are at heightened risk of experiencing depression. Deafblindness does not always mean complete sensory loss. Individuals can retain some residual sight and/or hearing but experience enough of a sensory impairment to impact on the ability for one sense to compensate for another. Most individuals become dual sensory impaired across life – called acquired deafblindness. Currently there are an estimated 31-34,000 people living in Scotland with a dual sensory impairment and many are also living with other long term conditions as a result of health and socio-economic inequalities and due to the prevalence rates of deafblindness being higher in an older demographic (around 3 out of 4 deafblind people are over 65). The higher rates of conditions such as dementia and depression amongst people with sensory impairment in turn further exacerbate these inequalities and certain groups are at heightened risk of having co-morbid long term and sensory impairment conditions such as people from South Asian communities where there is a greater incidence of diabetes and diabetic eye conditions. A recent Deafblind UK study established mental distress is three times more common among Deafblind people than the general adult population. 50% of those surveyed reported high levels of anxiety, depression and physical/somatic symptoms. When communication is limited, people become socially and emotionally isolated. When people cannot get around by themselves it affects their confidence, independence and daily living skills. Without access to information, people cannot make informed decisions, and this leads to further loss of independence. One of our members described her life like "living in a cupboard with the door closed".

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2. Why Deafblind Scotland needs you

Over the past year we have all come to know how it feels to be socially disconnected and to experience periods of loneliness and/or boredom and frustration. Deafblindness it is an unusually isolating condition: irrespective of social distancing and lockdown it can cause profound loneliness. This loneliness alongside leading to avoidable misery is also well-researched as impacting negatively across all life outcomes and can even be life shortening.

Despite these significant challenges when support is available many deafblind people lead fulfilling lives and go on to take on new challenges and contribute to the lives of others. Unfortunately, all too often deafblindness is misunderstood across society and as a result this support is not always available to them. We are working hard in deafblind Scotland to change this and have big dreams for the next 5 years.

Having been successful in running a capital campaign to build our very own 'Field of Dreams' a purpose built Learning and Development Centre in Lenzie now under the new leadership of our CEO and Board of Trustees we intend to create an ambitious new 5-year strategy across 2021. One that will make it possible for deafblind people to 'Dare to Dream' of a better future and to ensure that funders, commissioners, policy makers and the public as a whole are aware that access to inclusive communication support should be a right and not a privilege.

Over the past year the limitations and challenges within our current Social Care System has come sharply into focus. People with a sensory impairment and in particular older people with a dual sensory impairment are amongst those most impacted by the social care system. As Scotland emerges out of the pandemic and looks to create a new fairer society and social care system, we want to do all we can to ensure that this is built around those who experience the greatest health and social inequalities - deafblind people.

For further information on the impact of deafblindness on people's lives please visit our website (<https://dbscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Deafblind-Participation-Guide-21st-version-DRAFT.pdf>)

3. About Deafblind Scotland

Deafblind Scotland's (DbS) vision is 'a society where deafblind people have the permanent support and recognition necessary to be equal citizens. As an award-winning national charity and Scotland's principal authority on meeting the complex needs of individuals with acquired deafblindness or with a single sensory impairment at risk of developing a second sensory loss our primary objective is to help deafblind people to live as full and valued members of their communities and to encourage support, contact and friendship between deafblind people and sighted/hearing people.

Objectives

To help deafblind people (or those with a severe single sensory impairment at risk of developing a second sensory loss) in Scotland to live as rightful and valued members of their communities and to encourage and support, contact and friendship between deafblind people and sighted hearing people.

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To liaise with health and social service providers to make appropriate and inclusive support and services available for deafblind people in Scotland.

To provide and advocate for the provision of facilities and resources for the support, education and personal development of deafblind people in Scotland.

To advance awareness of deafblindness across society, thereby growing public support for the improvements needed to enable deafblind people to achieve their potential.

Services provided by Deafblind Scotland include communication access support; advice on navigating self-directed support; information/formatting services; welfare rights information and advice; accredited training; skills development and wellbeing activities; and a specialist Guide Communicator service. DbS membership can be the crucial factor in determining whether a deafblind person is able to maintain an independent lifestyle. It is therefore important to us that we do all we can to reach out to deafblind people in any area in Scotland where they are isolated or in need of support. However, to do this effectively we need to continue to grow and develop our presence across Scotland.

To enable us to do all we can to support deafblind people to live independent lives of their choosing, Deafblind Scotland has created a highly skilled bespoke Guide Communicator workforce. These Guide Communicators receive Signature accredited Guiding and Inclusive Communication Training, alongside undertaking SQA qualifications in BSL and in Health and Social as required with the SSSC. Being able to offer this specialist social care service to deafblind people can be a lifeline to many, especially for the large number that are living alone without family support.

Guide Communicators are able, to help with practical tasks such as shopping, picking up prescriptions or attending hospital appointments. However, importantly they help the deafblind person gain an understanding of the world around them, communicating information in a way that they can understand – often described as ‘the eyes and ears’ of a deafblind person.

4. Organisational Structure and Decision Making

Deafblind Scotland is a membership organisation whereby deafblind people can join as ordinary members which affords them voting rights at our Annual General Meeting. Deafblind Scotland is committed to lived experience leadership and to this end has recently amended our Governing documents to ensure that 50% of our trustees are deafblind. We work to ensure that deafblind people’s voices are not only used to guide the development of the organisation but are heard at local/national government levels. We achieve this through hosting and supporting the facilitation of the Scottish Advisory Group on Deafblindness (SAGoD). To support deafblind Trustees to operate on the Board of Directors and for members to meaningfully contribute to the work of the organisation through Board Sub-Committees and Groups or via SAGoD, specialist communication support is provided, including formatted documentation, additional briefing sessions, electronic note-takers and British Sign Language, Tactile BSL and Deafblind Manual interpreters.

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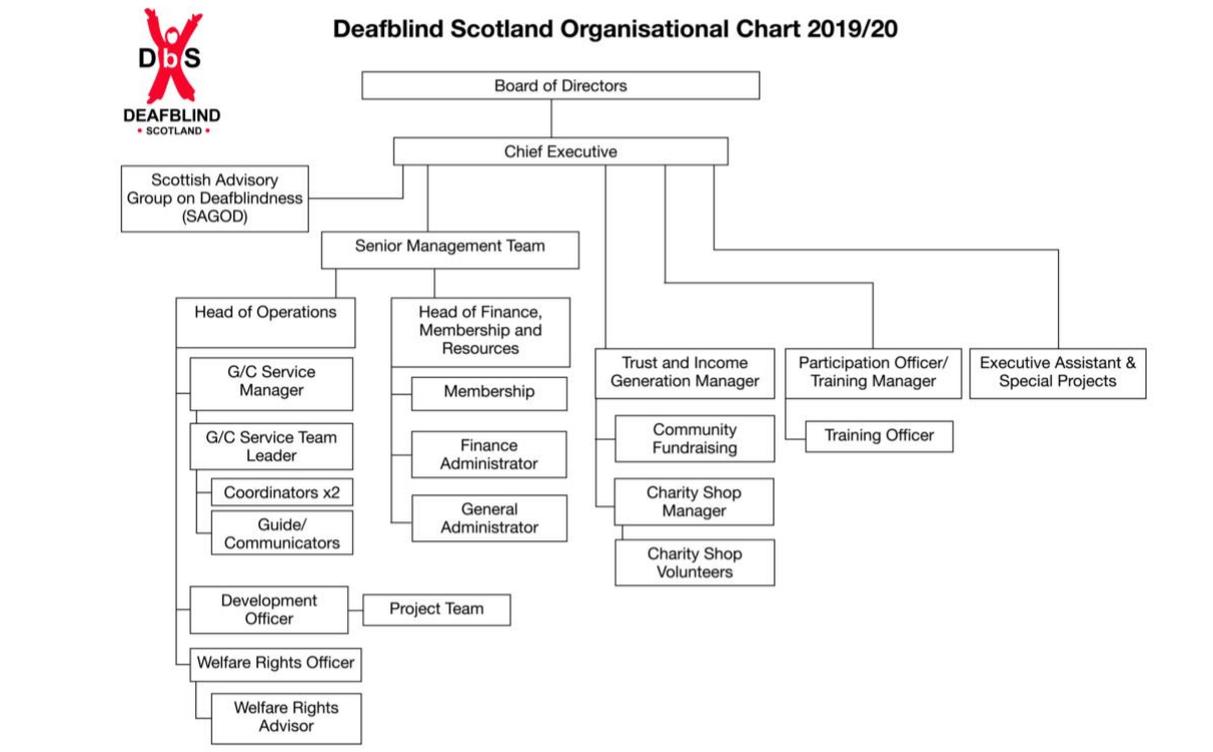
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Board documents are modified and provided in Braille, Moon, Large Print, Audiotape, and CD to meet the needs of individuals. The Board regularly considers all areas of governance at 6 Board meetings per year, including: strategic direction and planning; financial management and probity; personnel and health and safety issues; key policies focused on areas such as safeguarding, fundraising, contingency planning and infection control; and the risk register. In addition, a Finance Sub Committee meets Quarterly to consider management accounts. Minutes of the Finance Sub Committee meetings are distributed to all Board members.

During 2020, we had 68 active sessional Guide Communicators and 18 members of programme staff. All staff members including programme staff communicate with deafblind people on a regular basis and most are trained in deafblind communication and guiding through our Signature accredited training.



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5. Application Process

Applications should be sent to ce@dbscotland.org.uk no later than 6th January 2021. The application should consist of an up to date CV and a Vision Statement no longer than two A4 pages in Arial 11, point font. Those candidates selected for interview will be offered an interview on the week commencing the 11th January 2021. Following interview successful candidates will be asked to write a short 1 page biography which will be put forward to Deafblind members at the Annual General Meeting on the 28th of January 2021. At this meeting members will be asked to vote for nominated candidates. Only after successfully being voted onto the Board will candidates be invited to join the Board of Directors. It should be noted that the appointment will be for an initial 3 years and following rotation at that point Trustees who wish to may be nominated for up to another 2 terms of 3 years. On initial appointment a 6 month trial period will be required to allow time for both parties, to consider requirements of the role and fit with the culture and values of the Board and organisation as a whole. This trial period will be supported by a Trustee Mentor who will work with the appointed Trustee(s) to ensure that they fully understand Trustee Code of Conduct and other key procedural matters.

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Deafblind Scotland Trustee Role Description

Purpose of Role

To oversee the strategic and general management of Deafblind Scotland in line with DbS registration with Companies House and the Office of the Scottish Charities Regulator, the Trustee code of conduct and agreed policies and procedures of the organisation. Trustees are expected to accept responsibility for the corporate decisions of the Board of Trustees which normally meets 6 times a year, or as and when needed. Currently there are 2 sub-committees with delegated authority of the Board addressing Finance and Risk and Fundraising and Development. Other forms of forums may be established to undertake a specified piece of work as agreed by the Board.

Trustees are expected to undertake duties in a manner that reflects DbS values and ethos; and which is open, non-oppressive, respectful, member-centred and committed to equality of opportunity.

Duties of Trustees

1. To ensure that Deafblind Scotland complies with our governing document(s), charity law, company law and other relevant legislations, regulations and registration including with SSSC and the Care Inspectorate.
2. To ensure that all activities, income generation and expenditure are in pursuit of DbS's charitable objectives as laid out in the governing documents.
3. To agree the organisation's strategic objectives and direction and targets for achieving these.
4. To evaluate the performance of the organisation in relation to the agreed objectives and work programme and external evaluation and monitoring requirements including those laid out through registration with bodies such as SQA and SSSC and service commissioners and funding bodies.
5. To safeguard the reputation and values of the organisation and take steps to address any infringement of these.
6. To appoint the Chief Operating Officer and monitor his/her performance.
7. To contribute to the establishment of clear boundaries between Trustees and the Executive team and staff team, including creating clear lines of accountability and delegated authority.
8. To ensure the effective administration of the organisation.
9. To oversee DbS's financial affairs to ensure financial stability. To oversee the management and protection of DbS's assets and to ensure that annual accounts are produced together with a report for the Annual General Meeting and submission to Companies House.
10. To have responsibility overall for the staff employed by DbS.

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Person Specification

Essential Attributes

1. An understanding of and a commitment to DbS's aims, objectives and values.
2. Personal experience or knowledge, understanding and/or interest in sensory impairment.
3. Understanding of the social model of disability and person centred approaches.
4. Understanding of the inequalities that people with disabilities often encounter.
5. A willingness and ability to devote the necessary time and effort to the organisation.
6. An ability to think strategically, creatively and to put the needs of the organisation first.
7. Good independent judgement.
8. An understanding of and compliance with DbS policies and procedures including the confidentiality, data protection, safeguarding and equality policies.
9. An understanding of and compliance with the boundaries of the role of the Board of Trustees.
10. Ability to communicate sensitively and to take part in discussions in a positive manner.
11. An understanding or a willingness to assimilate and accept the legal responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship.
12. A willingness to take on agreed specific tasks, projects or rules outside of the meetings.

Desirable Attributes

Skills or experience in one or more of the following areas:

1. Sensory impairment policy, service and practice.
2. Management of performance.
3. Financial management.
4. Legal matters.
5. Human resources management.
6. Public relations and marketing.
7. Information technology.
8. Premises/facilities management.
9. Work within the context of disability or inequalities.

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