

Chair of Trustee Role Description

Leadership and Governance

- Lead the Board of Trustees by example, acting with integrity and promoting good governance.
- Work with the CEO to plan the AGM, presenting a summary of the previous year and the charity's achievements.
- Preparation and submission of the annual report to the Charity Commission.
- Keep policies up to date, ensure they are approved by the relevant trustee, and make them easily accessible to staff and trustees.
- Check that safeguarding procedures are followed, including DBS checks for staff and volunteers, in coordination with the safeguarding officer.
- Lead trustee recruitment, including advertising and interviews.

Strategic Direction

- Bring strategic proposals to the Board, ensuring they align with the Foodbank's objectives and improve services.
- Be involved in staffing decisions, including identifying new roles, reviewing CVs, and interviewing potential candidates.
- Keep an eye on financial sustainability, including staff and funding for fundraising, grant applications, and maintaining 3–6 months' reserves.
- Support long-term planning and ensure the charity is prepared for future challenges.

Board Management

- Organise regular trustee meetings, keeping discussions focused on progress and strategy rather than day-to-day tasks.
- Offer online attendance options to enable all trustees to participate.
- Ensure quarterly staff reports are shared before meetings and discuss any issues, positive or negative.
- Complete compliance checks, including Trussell health checks every couple of years, and adherence to Charity Commission requirements.
- Make sure the Secretary records accurate minutes and distributes them promptly to all trustees.

Relationship with Staff and Volunteers

- Maintain regular communication with the CEO, ideally through fortnightly catch-up meetings, to stay informed about developments across the foodbank and its centres.
- Provide support, encouragement, and constructive challenge to the CEO. While building a strong working relationship, always remember that the best interests of the foodbank and its beneficiaries must remain the priority.
- Act as a trusted sounding board for the CEO. Effective leadership requires open discussion and differing perspectives; the Chair should be willing to question, challenge, and contribute ideas in a constructive and respectful manner.
- Develop a good understanding of how the foodbank warehouse and distribution centres operate, while recognising that the role of Trustee is one of governance rather than day-to-day management.
- Gain an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of staff members and how they contribute to the organisation's mission.
- Champion learning and development opportunities for both staff and volunteers, encouraging a culture of continuous improvement.
- Be visible, approachable, and available to staff and volunteers, fostering positive relationships and demonstrating support for the wider foodbank team.

Trustee Development

- Welcome and support new Trustees.
- Introduce new Trustees to the Board and encourage them to visit the warehouse and centres to gain an understanding of the foodbank's work and meet staff and volunteers.
- Ensure all new Trustees receive an induction pack containing key governance documents, including the Charity Governance Code, governing document, strategic plan, and other relevant policies.
- Regularly share information about training courses, governance updates, and development opportunities with the Board.
- Encourage Trustees to participate in external Trustee networks and development opportunities, such as those offered by WCVA, Interlink, and other relevant organisations and lead by example through your own attendance and ongoing development.

External Representation

- Act as a positive ambassador for the foodbank within personal, professional, and community networks.
- Promote the foodbank's values, mission and impact, helping to address common misconceptions about how food is sourced and distributed, and who is supported through the service.
- Organise fundraising events and community engagement activities that both raise funds and increase awareness of the foodbank's work.

Time Commitment

The Chair is expected to attend all Board meetings and key foodbank events, including the Annual General Meeting (AGM), Strategy Days and other significant meetings as required.

The Chair should prepare adequately for meetings, facilitate effective Board discussions, contribute to strategic leadership, and undertake additional responsibilities associated with leading the Board and representing the charity.

While the time commitment will vary depending on organisational needs and specific circumstances, Trustees should anticipate that the Chair role will typically require approximately 2–3 hours per week on average.