

# Join our board

**Trustee recruitment information pack**

**Closing date for applications:  
9 March 2026**

The Association of Chairs (AoC) exists to support chairs and the boards of charities and non-profits across the UK. We help these volunteers to understand their responsibilities, to develop good governance and run an effective trustee board. Our resources and events are designed specifically to help those who lead non-profit boards. We are a membership organisation.



For me, Association of Chairs embodies the spirit of the charity sector. It's full of utter generosity.  
AoC Member

**We now need new trustees with the skills, expertise and personal qualities to develop and add value to our work.**

Charity chairs and trustee boards play a key role in the governance and strategic approach of their organisations. With good leadership, organisations in the voluntary sector can survive and thrive, even in these difficult times. Yet their contributions are often unrecognised, undervalued and unsupported. We want to change this.

AoC is the only organisation dedicated to all non-profit boards, their development and skills. We see every day the efforts and abilities of our 1500+ members, who serve a wide range of causes – local, national, and international. We support and speak up for them, with policy makers and people of influence. We offer practical guidance, around 70 events each year, as well as opportunities to meet and learn from each other. We provide insightful briefings on topical matters that are important to chairs and trustees, as well as high-quality training.

We seek to work with others to shape our culture, strengthen our capacity and increase the diversity of the charity sector. This is why we need to refresh our board.

We are keen to receive applications from young people, those under 50, people from Black and Asian backgrounds, the LGBTQ+ community, and people with disabilities, all of whom we know are significantly under-represented on trustee boards (compared to the UK population as a whole). We are also keen to recruit people with experience and understanding of the challenges faced by charity chairs and boards, and who share our values.

In this briefing, we talk about what we do, what these roles involve and how you can apply. When you've read this, and if you'd like an informal chat about these opportunities, contact Joe Saxton ([joe.saxton@associationofchairs.co.uk](mailto:joe.saxton@associationofchairs.co.uk)), our chair. And if you know anyone else who might be interested, please pass this on – we'd be happy to hear from them.

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## An introduction from our chair, Joe Saxton

I'm delighted that you are considering our Board of Trustees. I joined as chair in 2023. Since then, I have been delighted, and shocked, by how much there is to tackle – so much potential and so much need. Every charity has to have a chair and a board of trustees.

At the Association of Chairs, we are committed to the principles and delivery of good governance in charities, non-profit organisations, and social enterprises. Governance is “the system by which an organisation or charity is controlled and operates and by which it, and its people, are held to account.” In other words, it's important to us that charities are well run. Governance keeps the charity healthy, so it can achieve its ambitions, grow, and improve – effectively, with a good reputation.

Recognising the complexities and challenges facing every chair and board, in whatever size of organisation, we:

- Offer support, advice, and guidance, drawing on practical experience.
- Create training and resources that start with the basics, building up with contributions on topical issues and specialist concerns, delivered in all sorts of different ways.
- Delight in sharing concerns, good practice, and learning from others.

As we develop our strategy and seek to grow, we plan to:

- Extend our reach, and increase our membership – there is considerable scope to do this within the 170,000 charities in England and Wales alone.
- Focus on diversity and inclusiveness – chairing and trusteeship has to be for all parts of society.
- Build our provision of relevant support and services.
- Look how we can develop more targeted services, such as mentoring, geographical and special interest groups.

You can read our current strategy [here](#). A key element is that we now aim to support not only chairs, but the rest of the board through our new and exciting Board Membership scheme, launched in 2025. We are also planning a governance review for later in 2026.

For detailed information, check our [website](#) for our latest [Annual Reports](#) and more about us and the values we aspire to. I hope you are motivated to find out more about joining us as a trustee. Drop me an email and we can have a chat.

# Being an Association of Chairs trustee

Our trustees have a shared responsibility for governing the Association. We do our best to ensure AoC is led, managed, and run responsibly, based on our vision, our mission, our values, and ambitions. We also oversee our legal obligations.

Trustees have a key role in maintaining our health as an organisation, as well as shaping our future. Work on the board includes:

- Preparing for, attending, and contributing to six board meetings each year.
- Providing feedback on AoC's ambitions, strategic thinking and objectives, and their financial implications.
- Regularly reviewing risks to the organisation, and planning how we mitigate them, if needed.
- Developing our understanding and delivery of the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion. Checking that these underpin all our work.
- Contributing to reviews of systems, policies, and procedures to ensure these are efficient, effective, and based on best practice.
- Drawing on personal experience to make the best decisions for the long-term interests of AoC.
- Proactively using your professional and personal networks to promote and build the work of AoC.
- Supporting and building strong and effective relationships with the small staff team and volunteers.
- Taking a leadership role and not relying on the chair alone to lead and direct the board's activities.
- Not holding back from expressing views which might be at odds with others on the board.

Being a trustee brings with it responsibilities. All trustees have a personal obligation to exercise good stewardship by making good use of their skills and experience, whilst listening to and learning from colleagues. They also need to commit to giving sufficient time, energy and thought to the role.

You can find out more about the role of a trustee on the Charity Commission's website (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/charity-trustee-whats-involved>)

# What we are looking for

Boards are at their most effective when they have a wide range of skills and experience. We are very open-minded about the skills we are looking for alongside some specific skills below. We'd like all our trustees to have:

- A belief in the value of good governance.
- Appreciation and understanding of the role of chair and board leadership.
- The ability to operate strategically whilst understanding the demands of delivery.
- The ability to work alongside a small staff team and a few volunteers.
- The ability to analyse risk and opportunities, and take a balanced approach to both.
- A willingness to learn about the finance of the organisation and to contribute to finance discussions.
- An ability to challenge effectively, reasonably and with sensitivity.
- Enthusiasm for working as a team, in partnership, with each other and the staff.
- The capacity for reflection, as well as a sense of humour.



The panel at our Better Boards event in November 2025, L-R: Joe Saxton (AoC), Liz Lowther (AoC), Malcolm John (Board Racial Diversity UK and AoC trustee), Holly Riley (Charity Commission), Penny Wilson (Inclusive Governance Consultant)

**And we are particularly keen to involve people who have experience in:**

### **Digital delivery and AI development**

As a board, we know we must develop our understanding of how we might use the digital space and the AI space efficiently, effectively, and sustainably. How can we be using digital, social media and AI to do this most effectively for us and our members?

### **Communications and marketing**

As a membership organisation, how we promote what we do is fundamental. What we communicate, and how we do it, matters. Given our limited resources, we must maximise, make best use of every opportunity, always tell an attractive story. Additionally, we are committed to speaking up for chairs and trustees as leaders in civic society, showing the positive impacts of their work. We need to tell these stories often, and well, using all the means at our disposal, including a trustee with this expertise.

### **Finance, grant-making and income development**

Like all charities, Association of Chairs operates in an increasingly complex world combined with a tough funding climate. We need to better understand the world of grant-making and income development. So we are looking for a trustee with expertise in grant-making and/or charity finances.

### **Representation and inclusion**

We're keen to hear from anyone who thinks they have some of the qualities and expertise we are looking for. And we want to broaden the representation on the board. As well as seeking younger trustees and trustees from Black, Asian and other ethnic minority backgrounds, we'd love to hear from people with lived experience of disability or different socio-economic backgrounds or geographies.

We are also interested to hear from people with lived experience and knowledge of governance who may bring something to our trustee board, that we hadn't thought of.



# Practicalities

The board meets six times each year. Currently three meetings are usually held on a weekday afternoon, between 2 and 5pm, in London. Three are held on Zoom between 5pm and 7pm. Preparation and follow up usually takes about half a day. We are very willing to reconsider these arrangements to accommodate the circumstances of new trustees.

We pay close attention to the development of individual trustees as well as the board itself. When you start, there will be a full induction. We have a buddy system which has proved invaluable to incoming trustees, since there is someone available to you, willing to discuss anything that puzzles you, any anxieties you might have, and to encourage your effective involvement.

The board undertakes a careful annual review of its performance. We do our best to constantly improve our practice, individually and collectively. There is also an annual discussion between the chair and each individual to check how everything is going, individually and within the board as a whole.

Trustees are expected to contribute, when possible, to work between meetings, perhaps participating in a working group or using their professional skills in some way. Expenses are provided for travel and other expenses incurred in the service of AoC.

The Association is run by a core staff team. Our CEO is Liz Lowther and Helen Eade runs our membership services and Helen Buckley our communications.

The term for trustees is four years, with a maximum of two terms, totalling eight years.

**That's it! Thanks for reading about us, we appreciate your interest and hope very much you might like to join us, helping charity boards support their organisations, to the best of their considerable abilities.**



## How to apply

If you'd like an informal chat about what the role of trustee involves or about any aspect of the selection process, contact Joe Saxton on [joe.saxton@associationofchairs.co.uk](mailto:joe.saxton@associationofchairs.co.uk). If there are any barriers preventing you applying, let us know and we'll do what we can to make sure the process is accessible.

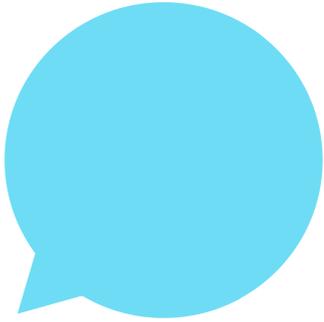
You can apply in writing: with a short email saying why you are interested in being a trustee and highlighting your relevant skills and experience, and your CV (please try and keep it to a couple of sides of A4). If you'd prefer, you can send us a short video or audio recording, no longer than five minutes. Please send your application to [joe.saxton@associationofchairs.co.uk](mailto:joe.saxton@associationofchairs.co.uk) by Monday 9 March. When you apply, your application must cover why you wish to be a trustee of Association of Chairs as well as what you would bring to the role.

### **Dates**

The closing date for applications is Monday 9 March. Interviews on Zoom/Teams will be held on a weekday in March. We will give you a number of dates to choose from. We will respond to every applicant, whether or not they are selected for interview. Successful applicants will be invited to join at a board meeting, either 24 March or 20 May.

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# Our members say:



I have found the Aoc as a life saver. I really got the urgent support I needed on a timely basis and really believed it saved the charity. I just wanted to say a massive thank to you. The advice and support has been amazing.



I love the WhatsApp group. I've really benefitted from other chairs' knowledge. Members of the AoC are so warm and ready to offer support and advice. I've so appreciated this.



I'm really impressed with the level of support and expertise that AoC provides, and it's been so helpful in building my confidence as a new chair, so thank you!



I can't overstate the impact that being able to work with an Association of Chairs mentor has made to me but also to the charity I chair. I'm now better able to protect and serve myself as well as the board and organisation I lead.