



Free to Be Kids

Growing children's emotional health

Trustee Recruitment Pack

Thank you for your interest in the role of trustee at Free to Be Kids (colloquially known as 'Free to Be' by our staff, children and volunteers).

Our mission is to help some of the most disadvantaged children and young people in London to increase their sense of their own capacity, ultimately helping them to change their stories about who they are and who they can be.

Our main "Thrive Outside" programme takes particularly disadvantaged children on week-long countryside breaks, helping them to feel special, valued, brave and successful. For those most in need, we provide follow-on support through further small group residentials, one to one mentoring and our youth leadership programme.

Following the pandemic, in 2022 and 2023, we increased the number of residential breaks for disadvantaged children from 235 in 2019 to 343 in 2023. Also in 2023, we secured an ongoing partnership with the Woodcraft Folk charity, providing us with access to a dedicated residential facility in Kent, enabling us to reduce hire and facilities related costs.

Our aim over the next 5 years is to continue increasing the number of residential places and other support offered to both our existing children as well as those who have not previously benefited from our programmes. Our ambitious strategy will be supported by a small growth in our core staff team (currently 7 FTE) and fantastic 200 strong volunteer base, together with the broadening of our fundraising and supporter networks, as well as time investment in our digital and operational systems. A key element of our future success in delivering our strategy will be in having an engaged and committed Board, ensuring we recruit key skills at the right time of our development journey and ensuring a sustainable programme of recruitment as current trustees reach the end of their term.

Free to Be is a charity built around the core idea that people coming together with passion and commitment can achieve incredible things for vulnerable children. We are proud of our determination and can-do approach - our staff and volunteers go the extra mile, whether it's sticking with a young person through the wind and rain as they figure out a problem or learning new skills ourselves to respond to challenges as they arise. If this approach resonates with you too, we look forward to receiving your application to join our board of trustees.

Emma Kendall, Chair of Trustees

We believe in childhood, muddy trainers, new challenges, self-expression, and real human relationships. Our aim is to open up a sense of adventure, freedom and possibility for children who are struggling, whatever life's circumstances.

- From our Website



Role Description

Free to Be Kids is a small charity with core values centered around a can-do attitude, resilience to overcome challenges, a kind heart and an eye for detail. We have an ambitious strategy for growth aiming to significantly increase both numbers and longevity of the support we offer to very vulnerable children. We are seeking trustees who bring drive, passion and commitment to support us in these endeavours, bringing their expertise and thinking, and their time and availability, to help us make the step change to the next level.

We are seeking applications from individuals who represent a wide range of backgrounds, and especially those with an interest in the children's sector and outdoor therapeutic residential programmes. We are also keen for our Board to reflect the communities we serve, and wish to encourage applications from those with relevant lived experience, and candidates from black and minority ethnic communities.

As we continue to evaluate our board skills and gaps we are currently seeking individuals with any of the following:

- Experience of leading/managing a small charity
- Lived experience (personally and/or as a carer/professional support-giver and/or as a volunteer with Free to Be) of a vulnerable or disadvantaged childhood
- A fundraising background, either as a grant giver or applicant
- Marketing or communications expertise, particularly on digital and social media platforms.

However, we are keen to hear from anyone who is motivated by our cause and values, with the time and energy to support our development.

Salary:	Unremunerated, but we want to be accessible to all so can reimburse reasonable travel expenses and make any other adjustments as required
Location:	Meetings are held virtually or in our offices in south London (Waterloo)
Time Commitment:	Minimum commitment of 4 board meetings (evenings), a half-day strategy day, quarterly committee meetings (virtually) and 1 visit to a project per year, but we are keen to attract trustees who are able to give additional time outside of board meetings.
Term:	Three years in the first instance, with the possibility of further terms

Role Purpose

Trustees are responsible for the overall governance and strategic direction of Free to Be, developing its aims, objectives and goals in accordance with charity guidelines, legal and regulatory requirements. Trustees are responsible for monitoring the performance of the senior leadership team against the charity's strategy and objectives, and the recruitment of CEOs where required. Trustees must ensure the charity's income is directed to its charitable purpose and to ensure the charity remains financially viable. Trustees will also be key in contributing to the thinking and supporting actions needed to build the charity and further develop our exciting strategic approach.

Key Responsibilities

- Ensuring Free to Be complies with guidelines, legislation and regulations relevant to the organisation, with a particular focus on safeguarding children.
- Contributing to the board of trustees' role of providing strategic direction and supporting the development of policies, goals and targets.
- Ensuring Free to Be pursues defined goals in line with its stated strategy and objectives.
- Monitoring the financial position, ensuring that Free to Be operates within its means and remains financially stable and there is clear accountability for financial management.
- Maintaining Free to Be's reputation, and ensuring risks are effectively defined, mitigated and managed appropriately.
- Making sure that the administration of the charity is carried out efficiently.
- Using specific expertise to assist in certain areas to further the aims of Free to Be, leading discussions and providing guidance, based on trustee's own skills and experience and the requirements of Free to Be.
- Participating in working groups as necessary, attending development and networking events as required to build own skills and further the aims of Free to Be.

- Maintaining confidentiality about any sensitive or confidential information received in the course of duties as a trustee
- Regularly attending and taking a full part in meetings

Person Specification - qualifications, skills and experience

- An understanding of the role of a trustee and the importance of carrying out required legal duties.
- Passion for and commitment to the goals and aims of the organisation, and willingness to reflect the values and behaviours of Free to Be.
- Knowledge of, and strong interest in, issues impacting the adversity faced by the families Free to Be supports and the children's charity sector more broadly.
- Drive, energy, flexibility and commitment to the role, including capacity to devote meaningful time outside of board meetings to supporting the charity's growth and development.
- Ability to build and maintain positive relationships with Free to Be leadership team and engage with staff and volunteers when appropriate as positive role models for Free to Be.
- Ability to make good independent judgements, being able to voice concerns and alternative opinions, to reach a consensus agreement.
- Able to contribute specific skills, key contacts and knowledge to add value to the charity's financial and strategic development.
- Able to think creatively, be open-minded, and with the ability to contribute to discussions and decision making.
- Proven strategic abilities, ideally with experience in helping smaller organisations grow, and capacity to help create solutions towards growth.
- Proven experience working as a member of successful teams.
- Integrity and objectivity which can be applied to all aspects of the role.



How to Apply

Please complete our [application form](#). The deadline is midnight on Sunday 25 February 2024

Initial interviews will be taking place during early March 2024.

The role requires an Enhanced DBS check. Whilst a previous conviction will not necessarily prevent you from joining our team, we would expect you to disclose any convictions or cautions as part of your application. The appointment is subject to references (taken up after offer).

If you have any questions about the role, you can contact us by emailing emma@freetobekids.org.uk and we'd be happy to arrange a chat over the phone. We look forward to hearing from you!



Further Information about our work

Thrive Outside is Free to Be's main programme for children and young people. It uses therapeutically structured residentials to support children and young people to develop self-confidence, build capacity to overcome challenges and create a sense of belonging. Gateway residential projects, based in countryside settings, engage and build relationships with children and young people at the start of their involvement with Free to Be. Nature based activities, time spent with animals, cooking and the arts are used as vehicles to engage children in relational work alongside high ratios of adult volunteers. The intensity, sense of immersion and belonging built through these projects allow Free to Be to assess children's core needs, whilst also building trust and positive relationships, creating a valuable opportunity to understand and begin to work alongside children who may struggle to engage with more traditional, clinic-based interventions.

Having engaged children and young people through a Gateway residential, longer term Journey Plans are then created for the highest need children who need ongoing support. These are tailored to need and may consist of recurring respite, individual mentoring, or follow on more specialised, residential work through sequenced series of Journey Projects across the year. Journey Projects have a focus on developing confidence, relational skills and self-belief in young people who schools or other referrers see as particularly at risk. They have an adult to child ratio approaching one to one.

The majority of children we work with are aged 8 - 14. Most are referred to us by schools, local authority social workers, other family support organisations or parents/carers who self-refer. Most children and young people we support are in mainstream school, though many are struggling to manage and some may be at risk of exclusion. All have experienced hardship including severe poverty, housing instability, parental difficulties with drugs or alcohol, historical trauma or abuse. As a result, some display a level of behavioural difficulty, but never at a level of requiring specialist knowledge or skills, and training and support in responding to such challenges will be provided. Familiarity in working with disadvantaged children will provide a good foundation for this role.

You may also like to have a look at...

Our website: www.freetobekids.org.uk

Our latest Impact Report which is available [here](#)

Our Code of Conduct, Safeguarding and behaviour policies: extracted from our Policy Handbook [here](#).

Our 2 minute overview video: available via [Youtube](#).





www.freetobekids.org.uk

