



Candidate Brief

Appointment of Trustees for the
Armed Forces Education Trust

FEBRUARY 2021

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1. Background

The Armed Forces Education Trust is the successor charity to The Royal School Hampstead Trust.

The Royal School was founded in 1855 as the Soldiers' Infant Home before becoming the Royal Soldiers' Daughters' School in 1856 under the patronage of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. It was the first school established "to nurse, board, clothe and educate the female children, orphans or not, of soldiers in Her Majesty's Army killed in the Crimean War".

It continued in its role through changing times and educational practices until the 1960s when the old school was demolished, and a new school built on Rosslyn Hill. In 1987 its charter was changed to include the children of all three Armed Services and it became The Royal School Hampstead Trust.

By the early twenty first century the number of Service children had dropped considerably and in 2011 the Charity Commission agreed that the Trust could fulfil its objects by other means than direct education. Accordingly, it divested itself of the management of the School which was leased in 2012 to the Cognita Group, thus providing the Trust with a well-covenanted long-term income from which grants can be made. Cognita now run North Bridge House Senior School on the site.

As well as providing the Trust with significant income (c£350k per annum), the arrangement with Cognita makes provision for discounted fees for the Trust's beneficiaries at Cognita schools, where appropriate. In addition to retaining ownership of its major asset, the School, the Trust also benefits from ample financial reserves, currently invested to provide additional income.

2. More Recent Changes

When the new arrangement was introduced, the Trust concentrated on grants for individual children whose education was adversely affected by the circumstances of their parents' service. In recent years, however, the Trust has begun to seek ways of making collective grants to single or groups of educational establishments in order to help the broadest possible range of service children.

This trend is particularly important as the current "re-basing" exercise concentrates large numbers of Service personnel in a smaller number of geographical areas in which schools have a high concentration of children with the potential to be affected by the turbulence of Service life.

In parallel with these developments, it was no longer appropriate for the Trust to be identified with a School that no longer existed. Accordingly, in 2017 the Charity Commission agreed that the Trust could be re-named as the Armed Forces Education Trust, with a new set of objects which more accurately reflected its aims. At the same time the Trust changed its status to become a charitable incorporated organisation.

The Trust's charitable objects are as follows:

For the public benefit the advancement of education (including social and physical training) of people under the age of 25 years who are or were dependents of serving or former members of the Armed Forces of the Crown in such ways as the charity trustees think fit, including by:

- (a) awarding to such persons scholarships, maintenance allowances or grants tenable at any school, university, college or institution of higher or further education;*
- (b) providing their education (including the study of music or other arts), to undertake travel in furtherance of that education or to prepare for entry to any occupation, trade or profession on leaving any educational establishment;*
- (c) providing to educational and training establishments secondary funding to enable additional resources (not otherwise available) to be made available to support the education of such persons.*

3. Management of the Trust

For several years after the School was handed over to Cognita, the affairs of the Trust were run entirely by the Trustees. However, it became clear that not only was professional support desirable, but also that the Trustees would benefit from the advice of a suitable individual who was able to develop more detailed knowledge of the educational "market" in which the Trust operates, as well as being more responsive and providing continuity in dealing with individual applicants and their families.

Accordingly, in 2016 the Trustees appointed a Chief Executive Officer. Although only part time, the appointment has been a great success and has transformed the professionalism of the Trust.

However, the Trustees retain a considerable role in not only fulfilling their duties of governance and oversight, but also in making informed decisions supported by the work of the CEO on the wide range of applications, both individual and collective, that the Trust receives.

A decision was taken in 2017 to improve and broaden the Trust's ability to reach its potential target audiences and make it easier for potential beneficiaries both to understand what the Trust offers and also to apply for help. Accordingly, a major re-branding and marketing exercise was undertaken resulting in a fresh brand, marketing strategy and website (armedforceseducation.org) Trustees are confident that this will increase the scope of applications.

4. Trustees Meetings

The Board of Trustees meets regularly as well as conducting considerable business electronically. There is an enthusiastic group of Trustees, led by our Chairman, Alan Behagg, who was an Army officer in his first career, held a senior position in higher education in his second and additionally has experience of school governance. Under Alan's Chairmanship, The Trust continues to broaden its remit and raise its profile.

Board meetings were held in London five times per year but since Covid they have been moved to Zoom. This has led to greater flexibility and responsiveness and there are sometimes more frequent, shorter, grants decision meetings. It is likely that in the future, meetings will be a mix of virtual and London based.

The Trust's financial affairs are overseen by a Treasurer who is a former finance director of a large charity, with previous experience with the London Stock Exchange and one of the major accountancy firms.

The other five current trustees all come from relevant backgrounds and bring a wide range of experience from the Services, education, health and social care. They are currently assisted in their decision-making by an experienced Head Teacher who acts as the Board's Education Advisor and a retired Estate Director who advises on property matters.

5. Future of the Trust

The Trust is thus well positioned to fulfil its role, with significant secure income and ample reserves, excellent managerial support and an enthusiastic and well-informed group of trustees and advisors. It is continually seeking to broaden its scope and networks and look for opportunities to form alliances with charities whose objects may enable them to work alongside the Trust in its grant giving.

However, there is consensus among the Trustees that their role could be enhanced by increasing the expertise available as the decisions they are called on to make become more complex and, on occasion, difficult. This is particularly the case as the Trust seeks to make collective grants within an education system that is complex itself, but even more so when it overlaps with the spheres of social care, deprivation, mental health and other issues, as it increasingly does.

6. Trustee Recruitment

The Trust is now seeking to recruit at least two additional trustees to broaden the expertise of its board and support its deliberations and decision-making, as well of course as helping with the routine governance that any charity needs.

7. Trustee Responsibilities

7.1 Information available

There is a great deal of published information available on the role and duties of trustees. The Charity Commission publish "The Essential Trustee: What you need to know, what you need to do"

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

"The Essential Trustee" is also a useful aide memoire for the 6 main duties of a trustee.

(https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/544220/Jigsaw.pdf)

The Charity Commission's "Charity Trustee Welcome Pack" is also a useful guide to what is required (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charity-trustee-welcome-pack/charity-trustee-welcome-pack>)

7.2 Specific responsibilities for Trustees

Specific responsibilities for Trustees with the Trust include the following:

- Serve on the Board of the Trust, taking responsibility for directing the affairs of the Trust, ensuring that it is solvent, well-run and delivering the charitable outcomes for which it has been set up.
- Use their skills, knowledge and experience to help shape the development of the Trust and enabling it to reach sound decisions and providing guidance where appropriate on new initiatives.
- Act as an ambassador for the Trust, safeguard its good name and values, and use their networks where possible to inform and promote its work.
- Contribute to the strategic direction of the Trust, setting overall policies, defining goals, setting targets and evaluating progress.
- Scrutinise Board and other relevant papers and applications and contribute positively to all discussions.
- Ensuring that the organisation complies with its governing document (ie its constitution or memorandum and articles of association), charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations.
- Protecting and managing the property of the charity and ensuring the proper investment of the charity's funds.
- Ensure the continuing relevance of the Trusts' strategy and compliance with objectives, purposes and values of the organisation.
- Approve policies, plans and budgets to achieve these objectives, and monitor performance against them.
- Work in partnership with other trustees to oversee and monitor the effective and efficient management and administration of the Trust.
- Following proper and formal arrangements for the appointment, supervision, support, appraisal and remuneration of the any employees.

8. Person Specification

8.1 Essential attributes

The following are considered to be attributes essential for any Trustee of the Trust:

- Commitment to the Trust, and its strategic vision;
- Empathy for the Armed Services and commitment to the cause of helping children whose education may be disadvantaged as a result of the circumstance of their parents' service.
- Integrity, strategic vision, good independent judgement and a willingness to contribute
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship
- An ability to work effectively as a member of a team

8.2 Desirable attributes

The following attributes are considered desirable in any applicant for the role of Trustee with the Trust

- While a specific Service background is not essential, some understanding of the Services' life and ethos, and in particular the experiences of service children in education, would be an advantage.
- Up to date experience or knowledge of one or both of the primary or secondary education sector.
- Knowledge of funding in both the educational sphere and also how MOD funding interacts with it.

However, it is emphasised that these attributes are desirable only. The Trustees wish to invite applications from the widest range possible of applicants: the primary requirements are wise judgement, broad experience and common sense.

9. Personal Commitment

The Board holds Trustees' meetings five times per year, one of which includes the AGM. In addition, there may be extra grants' decision meetings held online as and when required, these meetings are normally held on weekdays, during school term times. In addition, comments are from time to time sought by telephone or email on applications and other business in between meetings. The amount of time spent on Trust business will vary from month to month as the workload from evaluating applications reflects the academic year but never exceeds a few hours.

Face to face meetings are normally held at the Union Jack Club in London, two minutes' walk from Waterloo Station. However, while it is our aim to return to face to face meetings, it is likely that some meetings will continue to be held virtually.

Trustees are encouraged to find ways to improve their knowledge of the Education Sector as it affects Service children and also to spread the word regarding the Trust, by attending the occasional conference or other event for example or by visiting one of the schools we give grants to.

10. Remuneration and Tenure

The position of trustee is unremunerated. Reasonable expenses will be paid for any expenditure incurred on the Trust's business, including travel to and from meetings.

The initial appointment will be for a term of three years, with potential for renewal for a further three years.

11. Recruitment Process

During February, the Trust is advertising in a broad range of media in a desire to attract a diverse range of interest.



Interested individuals are asked to submit, by email to the Trust Chair, Alan Behagg, a CV with a covering letter explaining why they wish to be a trustee and how they consider they might contribute to the work of the Trust.

The email address for applications is admin@armedforceseducation.org.

The deadline for applications is **Friday 26th February**.

Interviews will be held via Zoom on the afternoon of Thursday 11th March and morning of Friday 12th March 2021.

The first board meetings for successful candidates will be Monday 26th April 2021. It is expected that this will be on Zoom. Prior to this, successful applicants will be given an induction pack and will have an opportunity to meet all the trustees.