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**TRUSTEE ROLE INFORMATION & PERSON SPECIFICATION**

**The Organisation**

The Martin James Foundation (MJF) is a global network of organisations working in alternative care for children. We believe that children should grow up in families, not in orphanages, and we are working to deliver, empower and influence work to make this a reality. The Foundation includes independent fostering agencies in Australia, Canada, Japan and New Zealand (Key Assets), support to foster carers in the UK (FosterTalk), and projects that contribute to the global efforts in deinstitutionalisation.

**ROLE INFORMATION**

**The Role of the Martin James Foundation Board**

The Board of Trustees has strategic oversight of the charity, ensuring that ambitious strategic goals are set and worked towards effectively. The Board of Trustees works in collaboration with the CEO and Executive team to make decisions on key issues, offering support and challenge on a range of matters. The Board of Trustees acts as a point of escalation for internal and external stakeholders, for example any complaints or grievances, in line with agreed processes. The Board of Trustees also has legal oversight of the charity, including responsibility for ensuring that statutory and reporting requirements to the Charity Commission are met by the charity’s team. Full information about the Foundation’s activities can be found on the [Martin James Foundation website](https://martinjames.foundation/).

**Board Statement of Values and Decision Making**

Board Members embrace the entrepreneurial ethos of the Martin James Foundation and the vision of its Founder. The Board is open to taking innovative approaches to delivering the Foundation’s work. The Board commits to working collaboratively and effectively, as a collective decision-making body, to ensure the success of the charity. In doing so, board members commit to upholding the [seven principles of public life](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life/the-7-principles-of-public-life--2): selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

The Board of Trustees helps to make objective, long-term decisions on key issues in order to advance the charity’s mission and goals. Typically, such key issues will include but may not be limited to: strategy, goal-setting, programme or project design, relationships with key stakeholders (e.g. government), public relations, finance, safeguarding, or any other legal matters.

**Trustee Responsibilities**

All trustees are asked to meet the following responsibilities:

* To adhere to the Board Statement of Values and Decision-Making Principles and support the charity’s entrepreneurial ethos and vision
* To fulfil responsibilities outlined in the Martin James Foundation Trustee Code of Conduct
* To ensure that the Foundation focuses on achieving its social mission
* To comply with all applicable terms of reference and laws
* To act in the charity’s best interests
* To manage the charity’s resources responsibly
* To act with reasonable care and skill
* To ensure that the charity and its leadership are accountable
* To make sufficient time available to exercise their duties
* To follow up promptly on all actions and requests
* To offer support and challenge to the Chief Executive and Executive team
* To support and challenge on the charity’s approach to risk management, safeguarding and data protection
* To use appropriate channels for communication and data sharing
* To promote and support the Foundation externally

**PERSON SPECIFICATION**

**Trustee Skills and Experience**

It is intended that trustees should collectively provide the experience, knowledge and skills required to govern effectively. All trustees are expected to demonstrate the following:

* Clear commitment to the vision, mission and ethos of the Martin James Foundation (essential)
* Willingness to actively participate in discussions concerning needs of Martin James Foundation’s beneficiaries and staff
* Experience of the charity sector and/or other relevant sectors (desirable)
* Balance of operational experience, strategic oversight and knowledge of emerging policy debates
* Ability to contribute to analysis and decision-making
* Sound, independent judgement and ability to think creatively and take an entrepreneurial approach to finding solutions
* Excellent interpersonal and relationship skills
* Ability and willingness to promote the Foundation externally
* Willingness to work within the governance frameworks agreed by the Foundation

The Foundation is committed to recruiting Trustees to the Board with skill sets and experience in the following areas:

* International development and NGO/charity sector
* Governance and legal
* Fundraising
* Advocacy and campaigning
* Marketing

**Commitment and Conduct**

The average time commitment is six days per year (approximately 1.5 days per quarter), encompassing the following activities:

* Attendance at four quarterly Board meetings including review of all relevant papers and policies in advance of meetings. Meetings are held at the Foundation’s head office in Birmingham but can be attended remotely. Papers for these meetings are circulated one week in advance with clear notes on actions required by trustees (e.g. review, approval). Meetings will focus on new projects, annual report and accounts, and the annual review at relevant strategic points during the year.
* Occasional exceptional Board meetings may be convened as required and are often held by video call. Additional Board Committees are under consideration to which new Trustees would be invited to join in accordance with relevant skill sets.
* Meetings with executive leadership team members in relation to specific policies and projects, linking to relevant skills and specialisms brought by Trustees.

The Martin James Foundation strives to enable a diverse range of participation and contributions to the Board, and we welcome applications from all ages and backgrounds. People with lived experience of alternative care, and from people outside of the UK are encouraged to apply. All Board positions are voluntary, but reasonable expenses will be reimbursed, and any training costs will be fully covered.

New Trustees will be provided with a structured induction and ongoing training and one-to-one support as appropriate.

As part of the appointment process, all Board members are required to adhere to the Martin James Foundation Code of Conduct and complete the Declaration of Eligibility and Interest form. The content of the Declaration of Interest form may require you to withdraw from specific discussions where you, a partner or close relative stands to gain or where you are so close to a matter being discussed that it will be difficult for you to be impartial.