

Merton Mencap

Trustee Information Pack

Mission Statement

To listen to and understand the needs of people with learning disabilities and autism and their families, empowering them to make their voices heard, actively representing and fighting for their interests, and creating and delivering the services they need.

Welcome to Merton Mencap

Formed in 1964, Merton Mencap is a registered charity providing support and services for children, young people and adults with a learning disability and/or autism and their parents and carers in the London Borough of Merton. We affiliate to the national charity, Royal Mencap Society, but we are not a branch. We are an independent organisation and responsible for raising all our own funds.

For people with learning disabilities and/or autism, our principal aim is to support them to be safer, healthier, to live as independently as possible and to take part in mainstream community life. Our services help people learn and develop skills, discover new leisure activities and enjoy life.

For parents and carers, our support helps them feel less isolated and more resilient, and to have a say about local services for them and the person they care for. We also support parents and carers to have a life of their own.

Our work includes raising awareness of the rights and needs of people with a learning disability and/or autism and their families. We work with local health and social services, the education authority, and other organisations to improve and develop services in Merton.

About our trustees

The Executive Committee, which comprises Trustees and the Chief Executive, is the governing body of Merton Mencap and responsible for the overall management of the charity. All our Trustees are volunteers.

Trustees provide the charity with the skills, knowledge and experience we need to manage the charity well. Any single Trustee does not need to know everything about the charity's work but, together, Trustees ensure the charity operates effectively.

In keeping with the principles of equality and diversity, we are keen to recruit Trustees from all sections of our community. We particularly welcome people with a learning disability and family carers.

If you are interested in becoming a Trustee, this pack may answer some of the questions you have about the role.

More information about Trusteeship can be found at Appendix 1 - The National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) '*12 essential roles of a trustee board*'.

Also see the Charity Commission's publication '*The Essential Trustee: What you need to know*', at www.charity-commission.gov.uk, a copy of which is available from the Merton Mencap office.

What are the responsibilities of Trustees?

It is the overall role of the Executive Committee to make sure our charity

- complies with the law and all regulatory requirements governing our work
- complies with its governing document
- pursues its objectives as defined in its governing document
- is run on a sound financial basis
- is efficiently and effectively run, providing the services it should

Trustees must do what is best for the charity and must avoid conflict with any personal interests. Trustees must not benefit financially from being a trustee (unless appropriate permissions are obtained) although necessary expenses can be reimbursed.

Trustees must use reasonable care and skill in their work. They need to know when to ask for advice from others who have specialist knowledge.

Please note that whilst a Trustee can be held personally liable if something goes wrong, as the Charity Commission says, “a conscientious and committed trustee need have few worries about personal liability”.

How do Trustees carry out their responsibilities?

Trustees meet about 6 times a year (as the Executive Committee) to review and take forward the business of the charity. Executive Committee Meetings take place during the evenings either online or in-person and last approximately 2 hours. Some trustees may wish to take on specific roles of the Executive Committee, such as Chair of Trustees or Treasurer.

Sub-committees of the Executive Committee are set up from time to time to carry out short-term tasks.

We require all our staff and volunteers, including Trustees, to undergo training in areas which are important to our work – Safeguarding, Health & Safety, and Equal Opportunities & Diversity. This can be completed via our on-line courses or by attending our training sessions at our offices, as preferred.

We feel it is very important that Trustees are familiar with the charity's services and the people we support. We therefore require Trustees to visit our services at least once a year. Trustees may also be requested to represent the charity at external meetings or high-profile public events, such as at our Fun Days and conferences. Trustees may wish to volunteer to be involved in other areas of the charity's work, such as being a member of a recruitment panel or helping to manage a complaint or grievance.

All Trustees are required to attend our Annual General Meeting.

Why become a Trustee of Merton Mencap?

Becoming a Trustee offers the opportunity for you to help the charity provide high quality services to our beneficiaries. You will support the charity to make a real difference to the lives of children, young people and adults with a learning disability and their family carers in Merton through excellent services (Appendix 2).

In return for your help, being a Trustee will offer you:

- the opportunity to learn something new
 - the chance to meet new people and have new responsibilities
 - recognition of your particular skills, knowledge or experience, and a chance to use them for a social good
 - a sense of achievement and satisfaction
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Trustee Role Description & Person Specification

Commitment:	Approximately 6 board meetings a year, plus the Annual General Meeting Visiting at least one of the charity's services at least once a year Undergoing basic training (renewed every 2 years) Occasional external meetings and/or public events, as agreed Occasional participation on internal panels, as agreed Additional hours on specific area of expertise/interest, as agreed
Period:	Minimum 1 year, plus subject to annual re-election at the charity's Annual General Meeting
Terms:	Voluntary role, necessary out of pocket expenses reimbursed
Location:	London Borough of Merton

Purpose of the role:

This is an opportunity to join the Executive Committee of a leading local charity. The purpose is to help Merton Mencap continue to provide the highest standards of professional, specialist support and care for the people who use our services and to help set a clear, ambitious direction for the charity's future.

Merton Mencap is a company limited by guarantee. Trustees have overall responsibility for ensuring the charity is well-run and meets legal requirements and those of good governance. Trustees are also company directors for the purposes of companies legislation.

Attributes

Merton Mencap wishes to recruit a team of Trustees who, together, have a balanced range of skills, knowledge and experience, including, in particular, in the following areas:

- marketing and publicity
- business and finance
- fundraising
- human resources
- health and social care
- governance and compliance
- social enterprise

Responsibilities

- ensure the charity acts within the law and all regulatory requirements
- ensure the charity delivers the outcomes it says it will
- ensure that the charity's finances are run properly
- contribute to the planning and development of the charity
- contribute to reviewing the charity's performance
- act with integrity and in the best interests of the charity
- use reasonable skill and care, seeking outside professional advice
- attend the charity's Executive Committee Meetings and Annual General Meeting
- ensure Trustee representation at public events
- help recruit and support new trustees
- support the Chief Executive and other staff in their roles
- observe the Trustees' Code of Practice & charity's general Code of Conduct

Trustee Person Specification

- A commitment to the work and values of Merton Mencap
- A willingness to devote the necessary time and effort
- A wish to understand and appreciate the needs of our beneficiaries
- Honesty, integrity and reliability
- Strategic vision
- Good attention to detail
- A willingness to speak their mind
- Good communication and interpersonal skills
- An ability to work effectively as a member of a team

How to apply

Read the Trustee Role Description & Person Specification (above)



If requested, attend an initial meeting with Merton Mencap's Chair of Trustees and/or another trustee, and Merton Mencap's Chief Executive



Complete the Trustee application form, providing contact details for two referees
Also, complete the equal opportunities Monitoring Form and DBS self disclosure form



If invited, attend a meeting with Merton Mencap's Chair of Trustees, and/or another trustee, and Merton Mencap's Chief Executive.

For more information, please contact:

Andrew Whittington, Chief Executive, on 07767 670 134 or
chief.executive@mertonmencap.org.uk

Richard Drummond, Chair of Trustees, on 07398 506338 or
or email richarddrummond968@btinternet.com

Merton Mencap Trustees' Code of Practice

This describes in more detail what we expect from our trustees. It also outlines how the Chief Executive will support trustees.

General responsibilities

1. Trustees must ensure the charity complies with the law and all regulatory requirements relating to its work
2. Trustees must ensure that the charity remains solvent and that its finances are run properly
3. Trustees must plan the future development of the charity, with help from the Chief Executive, setting its strategic aims, and objectives and identifying risks
4. Trustees must ensure the charity's performance, including its charitable outcomes, making sure all necessary policies, procedures and systems are in place
5. Trustees must take joint responsibility for decisions taken by the Executive Committee (or any sub committee)
6. Trustees must act with reasonable skill and care, taking into account their own personal skills and experience, making sure they take outside professional advice where necessary
7. Trustees must make sure there are clear procedures for recruitment, induction and support of trustees
8. Trustees should act fairly and in accordance with good practice principles in making decisions affecting the recruitment, professional development, appraisal, remuneration and discipline of the Chief Executive and other staff

Specific Responsibilities

9. Trustees must be familiar with the charity's Memorandum and Articles of Association, and have an understanding of the environment in which the charity works
10. Trustees must act with integrity and reasonably at all times, bearing in mind their prime concern is the charity's interests, and must behave in a way which does not damage the charity's reputation
11. Trustees must keep the Executive Committee informed of any work they are doing on behalf of the charity
12. Trustees must not make any financial or material gain from the charity, for themselves, their families or their friends (unless permission has been obtained)
13. Trustees must try to foresee and avoid any conflict of interest. Where one arises, the trustee must advise the Chair of Trustees
14. Trustees must attend Executive Committee meetings regularly, and the Annual General Meeting
15. Trustees must comply with the charity's confidentiality policy in relation to all information (oral and written) given to them as trustees
16. Trustees should understand the difference between the role of Trustee and the Chief Executive's operational management responsibilities

17. Trustees must not undermine the Chief Executive or any member of the charity's staff. Any concerns about a member of staff should be raised with the Chair of Trustees or Chief Executive, as appropriate
18. If a trustee is concerned about any irregularities, financial or otherwise, these should be raised with the Chair of Trustees
19. Trustees must complete the mandatory training, as required
20. Trustees must visit a service at least once a year

It should be noted that a Trustee can be held personally liable if something goes wrong, for example, if money is wrongly applied, or if the charity fails to comply with the law or if trustees act dishonestly or imprudently.

Role of the Chief Executive

The Chief Executive has overall operational responsibility for the charity and helps trustees to carry out their role by:

- providing trustees with up to date information about the charity's business and activities and about its performance
- working with the board to ensure that the charity fulfils all its legal and regulatory responsibilities
- ensuring the investment of time and other resources in order to help support and further develop good governance
- ensuring the reimbursement of trustee's necessary out of pocket expenses, when these are claimed

Merton Mencap

Staff Code of Conduct (for employees, bank workers and volunteers)

A. General

1. I will act in accordance with all legislation and all statutory and/or regulatory requirements relating to Merton Mencap's work.
2. I will be loyal to and promote the aims and objectives of Merton Mencap.
3. I will act in accordance with all statements, standards, policies and procedures and codes, of Merton Mencap, with particular regard to Merton Mencap's practice relating to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and health and safety and equal opportunities.
4. I will deal fairly and honestly with my employer, my work colleagues, our service users, their parents/carers, our members and the public.
5. I will treat all service users, their parent/carers, our members and my work colleagues with appropriate respect and sensitivity, having regard to their diversity.
6. I will keep confidential all personal information relating to service users or any parent / carers or their respective needs in accordance with *Merton Mencap's Data Protection, Confidentiality and Security of Information Policy and Procedure*
7. I am committed to the principle of equal opportunity, in all areas of Merton Mencap's activities, irrespective of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or religious beliefs, marital status, gender, gender reassignment or sexual orientation, age or disability.

B. Financial or other benefit

8. I will declare any personal interest which might conflict with or be seen by others to affect my ability to perform my duties fairly, honestly and impartially.
9. I will decline, or surrender to Merton Mencap, any gift of any kind offered or given to me as a result of my position in Merton Mencap, unless, because of its token nature, Merton Mencap expressly consents to its being retained by me.
10. I will not enter into any contract, whether oral or written, with any service user or any parent/carer with whom I come into contact through my work with Merton Mencap, whether in the course of or outside my work.

11. I will not enter into any financial transaction of any kind with any service user or any parent/carer of such user with whom I come into contact through my work with Merton Mencap, whether in the course of or outside my work.
12. I will not be a signatory to or beneficiary of any will or other legally binding document (including any cheque) of any such user or parent/carer with whom I come into contact through my work with Merton Mencap, whether in the course of or outside my work, without permission of the Chief Executive or Chair of Trustees

C. *Specific Conduct*

13. I will behave appropriately at all times whilst working for Merton Mencap. In particular, I will not smoke or drink alcohol or take any prohibited substance, or be under the influence of alcohol or any prohibited substance, during my working hours.
14. I will ensure that all language and communication used by me in the course of my working with Merton Mencap, whether oral, written or non-verbal, is appropriate to the situation and does not cause embarrassment to or reflect badly on Merton Mencap.
15. I will not make or take personal calls on telephones or mobile phones made available to me through my working with Merton Mencap, save for brief essential calls, which cannot readily be otherwise made or taken.
16. I will not use any computer equipment or facilities (and in particular any e-mail or internet facilities) made available to me through my working with Merton Mencap for any personal matters, save for brief essential communications or uses, relating to an urgent matter which cannot otherwise readily be dealt with.
17. I will not use any car to transport any service user without the prior consent of Merton Mencap. In any event, I will ensure that any such use is permitted by the relevant insurers.

Appendix 1 – 12 Essential Roles of a Trustee Board

The National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) regards the following as the 12 essential roles of a trustee board:

1. Set and maintain vision, mission and values

2. Develop strategy

The trustee board is responsible for establishing the essential purpose or mission of the organisation. They are also responsible for guarding its vision and values. Together, the charity board and chief executive officer develop long-term strategy. Meeting agendas reflect the key points of the strategy to keep the organisation on track.

3. Establish and monitor policies

The trustee board creates policies to govern organisational activity. These cover:

- Guidance for staff
- Systems for reporting and monitoring
- An ethical framework for everyone connected with the organisation
- Conduct of trustees and board business

4. Set up employment procedures

The charity trustee board creates comprehensive, fair and legal personnel policies. These protect the organisation and those who work for it. They cover:

- Recruitment
- Support
- Appraisal
- Remuneration
- Discipline

5. Ensure compliance with governing document

The governing document is the rulebook for the organisation. The board makes sure it is followed. In particular, the organisation's activities must comply with its charitable objectives.

6. Ensure accountability

The board should ensure that the organisation is accountable as required by law to:

- the Charity Commission
- the Inland Revenue
- Customs and Excise

- the Registrar of Companies (if it is a company limited by guarantee).

The board also needs to make certain that the organisation is accountable to donors, beneficiaries, staff, volunteer, and the general public. This means publishing annual reports and accounts and communicating effectively.

7. Ensure compliance with the law

The board is responsible for making sure that all the organisation's activities are legal.

8. Maintain proper fiscal oversight

The board is responsible for effectively managing the organisation's resources so it can meet its charitable objects. It:

- Secures sufficient resources to fulfil the mission
- Monitors spending
- Approves the annual financial statement and budget
- Provides insurance to protect the organisation from liability
- Seeks to minimise risk
- Participates in fundraising (in some organisations)
- Ensures legal compliance

9. Select, manage and support the Chief Executive

The board creates policy covering the employment of the Chief Executive. It selects and supports the Chief executive and reviews his or her performance.

10. Respect the role of staff

The board recognises and respects the domain of staff responsibility. At the same time, it creates policy to guide staff activities and safeguard the interests of the organisation.

11. Maintain effective board performance

The board keeps its own house in order. It takes steps to establish:

- Productive meetings
- High standards of trustee conduct
- Effective committees with adequate resources
- Development activities
- Recruitment and induction processes
- Regular performance reviews
- Partnership with consultants where necessary

12. Promote the organisation

Through its own behaviour, governance oversight and activities on behalf of the organisation the governing Board enhances and protects the reputation of its organisation. Board members are good ambassadors for the organisation.
