

Equality Network Board member Guidance for applicants

January 2021

If you require this application pack in another format, for example in large print, please contact Kate Jenkins at the Equality Network, by email at kate@equality-network.org

Thank you for considering an application to become a Board member of the Equality Network. The documents that you need to apply are:

- The application pack, which consists of this guidance, the background information, and the person specification
- The application form
- The diversity monitoring form

Please check that you have everything, and if not, please contact Kate Jenkins at kate@equality-network.org

If you are disabled and require any adjustment to the application process in order to be able to submit an application, please contact Kate Jenkins as above.

Please send your completed application form to us, by email to kate@equality-network.org

Please also complete the diversity monitoring form and return it to us separately, by email to diversity@equality-network.org

This round of applications will close at 9am on Monday 22nd February 2021.

Diversity monitoring forms will be handled completely separately from application forms, and no information on the diversity form will be communicated to the Board recruitment panel.

On receipt of your application form, it will be allocated an identifying code, and the front two pages, including your name and address, will

then be removed, to anonymise the form before it is copied to the Board recruitment panel (which is a subcommittee of the Board).

The recruitment panel will shortlist applicants by matching the information given on the application form against the person specification for Board members. We will be looking for evidence that shows that your experience matches the person specification.

Only information that is clearly provided on the application form can be taken into account in the shortlisting process.

When completing the Knowledge, skills and experience section of the application form, you should address the various parts of the person specification. Please make clear what knowledge, skills and experience you have that is relevant to the person specification, citing whatever evidence you wish. We are interested in all relevant experience, not just in paid employment, for example relevant experience in voluntary or family roles.

Applicants who are shortlisted by the recruitment panel will be invited to an informal meeting via Zoom with two Board members for discussion. If you ask on the second page of the application form for any access adjustments for the meeting, we will contact you to discuss these.

Equality Network Board member Background information

January 2021

Introduction

The Equality Network is a leading national organisation working for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex (LGBTI) equality and human rights in Scotland. Our role is to work together with diverse LGBTI people across Scotland, and with our partners, to create real and lasting change for the better.

We were set up in 1997, and since then we have played a role in many advances for LGBTI equality and human rights in Scotland, from the repeal of section 28 to equal marriage, from the original Gender Recognition Act to the current campaign for non-binary legal recognition, from development of policy to address hate crime against LGBTI people to the introduction of the NHS Scotland gender reassignment protocol, and much more.

Within the Equality Network, the Scottish Trans Alliance project, which we established in 2007, is Scotland's centre of expertise on trans equality. We also have specific work focussing on intersex/VSC equality, and on equality for people with intersectional identities such as minority ethnic LGBTI people and disabled LGBTI people.

There have been major changes for the better in the past 20 years. Scotland currently ranks fourth in Europe on a combined score for the quality of national law and policy for LGB, trans and intersex people. But we lag behind some European countries in specific areas such as gender recognition law. There is still a lot more to do to provide full legal protection, especially for trans people and for intersex people, and trans people's rights in particular still face very vocal and organised opposition.

There has also been a big change in public attitudes. In 2000, 48% of people in Scotland thought that same-sex relationships were wrong. By 2015, that had dropped to 18%. Between 2010 and 2015, the proportion

of people who would be unhappy if a close relative married a trans person fell from 49% to 32%.

But these figures are still too high, and the results of continuing prejudice are stark. Our research shows that the majority of LGBTI people have experienced hate crime, much of it recent. Transphobic prejudice in particular is common on social media. And large numbers still experience discrimination or exclusion at work, or in the provision of services such as education, health and social care, and other services.

Sections of the LGBTI communities face particular disadvantages, which require specific attention to redress. These include trans people, bisexual people, intersex people, LGBTI people in rural areas, disabled LGBTI people, ethnic minority LGBTI people, LGBTI people of some religious faiths, and LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees.

All in all, there is much more still to be done to create a Scotland where all LGBTI people, alongside all others, are welcomed and valued.

Our role

The Equality Network's role is to work together with diverse LGBTI people across Scotland, and with our partners, to create real and lasting change for the better for LGBTI equality and human rights.

We summarise this as:

Creating change together – LGBTI equality in Scotland

Our **mission statement** gives more detail:

The Equality Network works to change Scotland to deliver equality and human rights for all LGBTI people. Our work is founded on engagement with and empowerment of diverse LGBTI people across Scotland. It is based on evidence and expertise, and involves working in partnership with many others.

Our approach to this is based on our **core values** of **listening**, **inclusivity** and **respect**.

We are a Scottish registered charity (number SC037852), and our legal form is a company limited by guarantee (number SC220213).

Our charitable purpose forms the legal basis for our work. It is:

- to promote the human rights of Scotland's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people,
- to promote fair and equal treatment for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people in the laws, institutions and society of Scotland, and
- to provide assistance to people and organisations working in other countries, to promote equality and human rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people in those countries.

(The third section was added relatively recently, to enable us to provide support to partners in other countries. We are at a very early stage in developing that work.)

We are based in Leith, Edinburgh.

How we work

The main **strands of our work** are:

Policy: This includes the development of policy positions to advance LGBTI equality, and providing expert advice, guidance and briefings on policy for policy makers and influencers.

Training and consultancy: We provide training and consultancy support, on a range of LGBTI equality matters, for the public, voluntary and private sectors.

Community engagement and development: This includes: our engagement with diverse LGBTI people across Scotland to continuously develop policy, facilitating direct engagement by LGBTI people with policy makers, and developing the capacity of and supporting networking of LGBTI organisations and people across Scotland.

Campaigns: This includes proactive public and media campaigning for specific LGBTI equality changes, for example the equal marriage

campaign, and the current equal recognition campaign for gender recognition law reform.

Research and knowledge: This includes research into the experiences and needs of LGBTI people, and attitudes and behaviours towards LGBTI people, for example through surveys, focus groups and opinion polls, to inform our work and to add to the wider knowledge base.

Publications: We publish a wide range of written materials, as well as online and video material, including for example, research reports, good practice guidance, and campaign materials.

Communications and media: We operate the largest email and online network of LGBTI people and supporters in Scotland, providing information, and supporting engagement through email, social media and websites, and we regularly engage with mainstream broadcast, print and online media.

Fundraising: Our work is funded from a variety of sources, including government, Big Lottery Fund, and other grants, fee income from training and consultancy, and community fundraising to pay for campaigns and other work that is not funded by grants.

The **Equality Network** is a 'strategic intermediary' for the Scottish Government Equality Unit, for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex equality. This work currently involves just under half our total resource.

Our **Scottish Trans Alliance** project, which has dedicated staff members, is similarly an Equality Unit strategic intermediary for trans equality. This currently involves just over one third of our total resource.

Most of the strands of work identified above run through both of these parts of the organisation.

We recently began a specific project on **intersex** equality, working with intersex people / people with variations of sex characteristics, in Scotland, and with UK intersex / VSC organisations.

In addition, all strands of our work are characterised by attention to:

LGBTI people's real life experiences: so that our work delivers effective changes that people want to see.

Intersectionality: LGBTI people with intersectional identities, including for example minority ethnic LGBTI people, LGBTI people of some religious faiths, disabled LGBTI people, and LGBTI people in rural areas, are particularly disadvantaged. We have a specific focus in our work to address this.

Diversity and inclusion: We work to ensure that all our activities are accessible to, and deliver for, all LGBTI people.

Partnership: We strongly value the benefits of delivering our work in partnership with others, including LGBTI organisations and other equality and human rights organisations, in Scotland and more widely.

Evaluation: We are committed to evaluating the impact of our work, both on progress towards specific identified targets, and on our strategic outcomes.

Our Board

Members of the Board of the Equality Network are also called the Trustees of the organisation. They are responsible for the governance of the Equality Network, including setting its strategic direction, overseeing its policies, employment practice, financial health and legal compliance, and promoting the organisation and its work.

New Board members are usually appointed by the Board, and are then confirmed in the post by the Annual General Meeting of the organisation, held towards the end of each calendar year.

Because we are a charity, Board membership is voluntary and unpaid. However, the Equality Network pays all expenses associated with being a Board member, including travel expenses from any part of Scotland, accommodation expenses where needed, child-care and other caring expenses, and any other expenses necessary for the post.

New Board members are provided with induction and other support by existing members. There are development opportunities associated with being a Board member, such as training days.

There are six standard Board meetings per year, currently held via Zoom on weekday evenings (although these arrangements are subject to review). In addition, there is usually one Board training/strategy day per year, and one joint staff/Board day; these are usually on a Saturday.

There are also opportunities for Board members to participate in subgroups with staff, on key aspects of our work such as fundraising, and to meet socially (COVID permitting) as Board and staff.

The responsibilities and role of a Board member

Board members are legally responsible for how the organisation is run, and what it does, and they each share equally in that responsibility. Specific responsibilities of a charity Board member are set out in law. The main responsibilities are:

- To act in the interests of the organisation and our beneficiaries, putting our needs before the needs of any other organisation you are involved with.
- To run the organisation in a manner consistent with our purpose (see page 3).
- To act with care and diligence, for example in safeguarding the financial position of the organisation, ensuring our staff are treated properly and fairly, and overseeing our compliance with legal requirements such as health and safety, equality, employment and data protection law, and with our grant agreements and contracts.
- To comply with specific requirements of charity and company law, for example making sure that we supply the required information about the organisation to the charity regulator OSCR and to Companies House.

The day to day job of implementing these things is done by our paid staff, but the Board have overall responsibility for ensuring they happen.

OSCR can suspend charity Board members who do not comply with these duties, but this is unlikely if the Board member has acted reasonably and honestly. Board members are not personally liable for

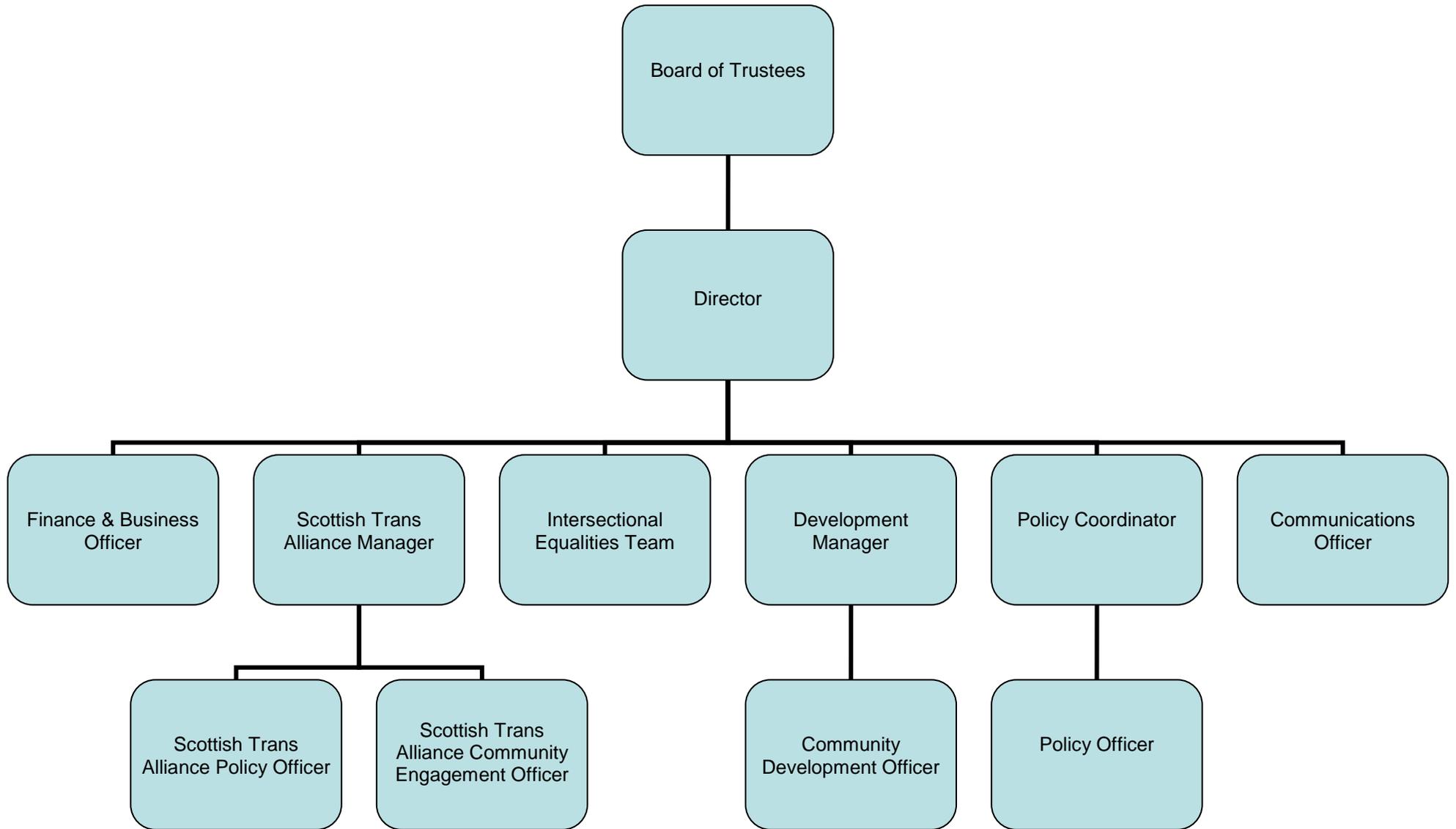
debts incurred by the organisation (except that a Board member could become liable if the debt was due to their deliberate dishonesty, or if the Board knew or should have known that the organisation was going bust and failed to take reasonable steps like ceasing activities, to minimise further loss). We are insured to cover any liability of Board members for claims of breaches of the laws applying to the organisation, so long as the Board member acted honestly and in the interests of the organisation.

The role of a Board member includes attending Board meetings and occasional Board days, and working with the other Board members and the Director and other staff (and with professional advice as required), to:

1. set the strategic direction of the organisation and its short, medium and long term objectives
2. review organisational policies and procedures and ensure that these are implemented and monitored
3. keep up to date with the organisation's activities
4. promote the organisation
5. ensure that there are systems for regular monitoring and evaluation of the organisation's work
6. ensure that the organisation meets its objectives, complies with its constitution (the "memorandum and articles"), and acts legally
7. ensure that the organisation is a good employer
8. supervise and support the Director and ensure that other staff and volunteers are properly supervised and supported
9. ensure that the organisation's assets and resources are well-managed and used to pursue its objectives
10. ensure that proper accounts of the organisation's activities are provided to its members, funders, other stakeholders, and to regulatory bodies (Companies House and the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator)

11. ensure that the organisation meets its contractual and other obligations
12. ensure that the organisation has and operates effective health and safety policies
13. ensure that the organisation has, and keeps under review, suitable insurance
14. keep abreast of legislation that may affect the organisation's work.

Organisational chart of Board and staff, January 2021



Equality Network Board member Person specification

January 2021

Essential criteria

Applicants to join our Board should:

1. be committed to and share the purpose, mission and values of the organisation (see background information)
2. have a personal or professional understanding of equality issues faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or intersex people in Scotland
3. be committed to collaborative decision-making.

Desirable criteria

It is desirable that applicants have **one or more** of the following:

- experience of media / communications / campaigning
- experience of fundraising
- experience of marketing
- experience of the needs of rural or island communities
- legal expertise
- experience of trans or intersex equality issues
- experience of intersectional discrimination issues (where people face discrimination that is multiplied because it involves more than one protected characteristic or aspect of their identity).

Legal requirements

Because we are a charity, the law imposes some requirements on us. Board members must be at least 18 years of age, and must not be disqualified from acting as a charity trustee in Scotland. People who are disqualified include anyone who:

- has a conviction either for an offence involving dishonesty or an offence under charity law, that is not spent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974;
- is an undischarged bankrupt;
- has been removed as a charity trustee under Scottish or English law or by the courts; or
- is disqualified from being a company director.