



Policy document	
Title	Trustee Board – Trustee Role Description and Person Specification
Approved by	Trustee Board
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Executive director owner	Chief Executive
Where to be published (website/intranet)	Website

SURF ACTION TRUSTEE ROLE DESCRIPTION AND PERSON SPECIFICATION

1. TRUSTEE ROLE DESCRIPTION

The statutory duties of a trustee:

Main duty

Under charity law Surf Action Trustees have the ultimate responsibility for directing the affairs of Surf Action, and ensuring that it is solvent, well-run and delivering the charitable outcomes for which it has been set up. In law trustees of Surf Action have three particular duties – compliance, care and prudence – which are set out below using the wording given by the Charity Commission.

Duty of compliance – Trustees must:

- Ensure that Surf Action complies with charity law, and with the requirements of the Charity Commission as regulator; in particular ensure that the charity prepares reports on what it has achieved and Annual Returns and accounts as required by law.
- Ensure that Surf Action does not breach any of the requirements or rules set out in its governing document and that it remains true to the charitable purpose and objects set out there.
- Comply with the requirements of other legislation and other regulators which govern the activities of Surf Action.

- Act with integrity, and avoid any personal conflicts of interest or misuse of Surf Action funds or assets.

Duty of care – Trustees must:

1. Use reasonable care and skill in their work as trustees, using their personal skills and experience as needed to ensure that Surf Action is well-run and efficient.
2. Consider getting external professional advice on all matters where there may be material risk to Surf Action, or where the trustees may be in breach of their duties.

Duty of Prudence – Trustees must:

- Ensure that Surf Action is, and will remain, solvent.
- Use Surf Action’s funds and assets reasonably, and only in furtherance of Surf Action’s objects.
- Avoid undertaking activities that might place Surf Action’s endowment, funds, assets or reputation at undue risk.
- Take special care when investing Surf Action’s funds, or borrowing funds for Surf Action to use.

Specific duties of Trustees of Surf Action (linked to the Trustee Board terms of reference):

1. Strategic Direction

Trustees must ensure that the Surf Action has a clear vision, mission and strategic direction and is focused on achieving these. Trustees must work in partnership with the Chief Executive and other senior staff to ensure that:

- a) Surf Action has a clear vision, mission, set of values and strategy, and that there is a common understanding of these by trustees, staff and volunteers.
- b) Operational plans and budgets and the fundraising strategy support the vision, mission and strategy.
- c) The views of users are regularly sought and considered, and that efforts are made to identify possible future users.
- d) There is regular review of the external environment for changes that might affect Surf Action (environmental, political, financial, competitive, partnerships, alliances).
- e) There is regular review of the need for Surf Action and for the services it provides or could provide, and regular review of strategic plans and priorities.

2. Performance management

Trustees are responsible for the performance of Surf Action, for its impact upon stakeholders and for its corporate behaviour:

- a) To ensure that Surf Action measures its impact and progress towards its strategic objectives and to regularly consider reports on Surf Action's performance.
- b) To ensure that there are policies to direct key areas of the charity's business.
- c) To ensure that there are quality and service standards for major areas of delivery and that these are met.
- d) To ensure that Surf Action's values are understood and put into practice, by trustees, staff and volunteers.
- e) To ensure that there are complaint systems in place, for users and supporters.
- f) To ensure that there are processes for trustees, staff and volunteers to report activity which might compromise the effectiveness of Surf Action?
- g) To recruit the Chief Executive and to hold him or her to account for the management and administration of the charity.
- h) To ensure that the Chief Executive receives regular, constructive feedback on his/her performance in managing the charity and in meeting his/her annual and longer term objectives.
- i) To ensure that Surf Action has effective employment policies and processes in place, to recruit, train and develop staff and volunteers.

3. Compliance

Trustees must ensure that Surf Action complies with all legal and regulatory requirements:

- a) To ensure, with professional advice as appropriate, that Surf Action complies with all constitutional, legal, regulatory and statutory requirements.
- b) To understand and comply with the constitution and rules that govern Surf Action, and to review the constitution regularly (at least every three years) to ensure it is fit for purpose.

4. Prudent management of assets

Trustees must be stewards of Surf Action's assets, both tangible and intangible, taking care over their security, and how they are used:

- a) To ensure that Surf Action's financial obligations are met and that there are adequate financial controls in place to ensure all money due is received and properly applied, and that all assets and liabilities are recorded.
- b) To act reasonably and prudently in all matters relating to Surf Action and always in the interests of Surf Action.
- c) To ensure that trustees take professional advice when needed, and record the advice received.
- d) To ensure that there is an effective fundraising strategy in place.
- e) To be accountable for the solvency of Surf Action.

- f) To ensure that intangible assets such as organisational knowledge and expertise, intellectual property, Surf Action's brand, good name and reputation are recognized, used and safeguarded.
- g) To review the condition and use of the properties and land owned by Surf Action.
- h) To ensure that the major risks to Surf Action are regularly identified and reviewed and that systems are in place to mitigate or minimise these risks.

5. Good governance

Trustees must ensure that Surf Action's governance is of the highest possible standard:

- a) To ensure that Surf Action has governance structure that is appropriate to a charity of its size/complexity, stage of development, and its charitable objects, and reflects the diversity of its users.
- b) To ensure that Board decisions are recorded in writing by means of minutes.
- c) To ensure that the Board's delegated authority is recorded by terms of reference for board committees, job descriptions for honorary officers, trustees and key staff, and that reporting procedures back to the Board are recorded in writing and complied with.
- d) To ensure that the responsibilities delegated to the Chief Executive are clearly expressed and understood, and directions given to her come from the Board as a whole.
- e) To ensure the Board regularly reviews Surf Action's governance structure and its own performance, to an agreed programme.
- f) To ensure that major decisions and policies are made by the trustees acting collectively.
- g) In consultation with the Chief Executive, to ensure that the Board has on it the skills it requires to govern Surf Action well, and that the Board has access to, and considers, relevant external professional advice and expertise.
- h) To ensure that there is a systematic, open and fair procedure for recruitment of trustees and of the Chief Executive.
- i) To ensure that all members of the Board receive appropriate induction on their appointment and that they continue to receive appropriate advice, information and training (both individual and collective).
- j) To ensure that trustees have a code of conduct and comply with it, and that there are mechanisms for the removal of trustees who do not abide by the trustee code of conduct.

2. TRUSTEE PERSON SPECIFICATION

Surf Action works actively to ensure that its Trustee Board has the right skills and experience to lead the charity effectively. Surf Action Trustee vacancies are normally advertised. Application is normally by written application, followed by interview. The application form and interview are evidence based and we will look for **clear examples** of how candidates meet the essential and desirable criteria below.

2.1 Personal competencies

Surf Action Trustees are expected to demonstrate all of the following personal competencies and the capacity to apply these to the direction of a large and complex organisation:

ESSENTIAL

Commitment

1. Ability to understand and accept the duties and liabilities of being a charity Trustee
2. Empathy with the vision, mission and aims of Surf Action
3. A willingness and ability to devote the necessary time and effort

Focus

4. Ability to think and apply knowledge strategically,
5. Ability to think creatively
6. Ability to keep mission-focused
7. Ability to analyse and evaluate management information and other evidence
8. Willingness to listen and learn

Communication and team working

9. Ability to communicate clearly and sensitively and to take an active part in discussions
10. Ability to influence and engage
11. Ability to work effectively in a group
12. Willing to express their own opinion in a reasoned way, while also listening to the views of others
13. Ability to challenge constructively and ask questions appropriately

Accountability

14. Ability to exercise sound and independent judgement
15. Willingness to make and stand by collective decisions, including those which may be unpopular
16. Ability to manage difficult and/or challenging situations
17. Ability to maintain confidentiality on confidential and/or sensitive information

2.2 Skills and experience

DESIRABLE

The knowledge, skills and experience in the list below are relevant to Surf Action's main areas of activity, and they are represented across Surf Action's executive and staff, who apply them at operational level.

Surf Action is looking for Trustees who have the knowledge and understanding to maintain an oversight of these activities at a strategic level in a large and complex charity, and who can contribute well informed views, constructive challenge and a commitment to best practice. Surf Action would normally expect each Trustee to be able to do this in at least one of the areas below. A Trustee's ability to contribute in this way will often, but not always, draw on professional and/or practitioner experience at a senior level.

Management

1. Strategic leadership and management within a medium sized or large organisation (budget or annual turnover above £10 million pa).

Stewardship and governance

2. Trusteeship in a similar size or larger organisation, together with implementation of best practice in UK and/or international corporate governance.

Specialist expertise

3. An area of expertise relevant to Surf Action such as accountancy/financial management, law, project or programme management, human resources or organisational development.
4. Public policy formulation and influencing techniques across parliaments and national assemblies.
5. Fundraising.
6. Marketing, communications or public relations.
7. Developing and delivering services to ex-service personnel, which promote inclusion, equal opportunities and diversity.

International

8. International development at strategic level, particularly planning and delivery of services, governance and structures, and financial management.