

**Safeguarding Trustee**

**Job Pack**

**November 2022**

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1. **About AFK**

**Our vision is a world where all disabled young people get to lead the life they choose.**

**Our mission is to give as many young people with disabilities or autism the opportunity to lead fulfilling lives.**

AFK supports disabled children and young people to live independent and fulfilling lives.

There are two main themes to our work: employment and mobility. We help disabled and autistic young people aged 18-25 to develop important life and work skills so they can live more independently and move into paid employment or self-employment. On the mobility side we provide specialist mobility equipment not available on the NHS to disabled children and young people up to their 25th birthday, across the UK.

This is an exciting time to be joining AFK as we have recently completed a strategic review across our services and fundraising portfolio. There are 14 million disabled people in the UK and we know disabled people suffer unemployment disproportionately. As we come out of the pandemic our work is more vital than ever to ensure that disabled and autistic young people have the support they need to live a fulfilling life.

1. **Summary of the Role**

Trustees play a crucial role in setting and supporting AFK’s strategy. Most of our Trustees have served on the Board for a long time - increased due to pandemic restrictions. Earlier this year, we instituted Board rotation terms and recruited seven Trustees. However, we are still looking for a Trustee with Safeguarding expertise to join our board.

Previous Board/Trustee experience is not necessary, and we welcome applications from all ages and backgrounds. These positions could therefore suit individuals taking their first steps to develop wider Board level and governance experience. If you don’t have these skills but you believe that your background could be useful to us and you are interested in joining our Board, please do still get in touch. We are committed to ensuring the diversity of our Board and therefore would particularly like to hear from women, ethnic minorities, younger people, disabled people, those with autism, neurodiversity, and marginalised groups.

“Trustees have overall control of a charity and are responsible for making sure it’s doing what it was set up to do. They may be known by other titles, such as: directors; Board members; governors; committee members. Whatever cthey are called, Trustees are the people who lead the charity and decide how it is run.” (The Charity Commission)

1. **Introduction from Chair**

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“Being a Trustee at AFK is wonderful because you will be making the World a better place one person at a time. At AFK we help disadvantaged young people with moderate to severe learning difficulties to live more independently and to reach their full potential, including permanent or part-time employment.”

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Trustee at AFK. It is an inspirational and enterprising Charity having grown and expanded from the original site in North London and from providing mobility equipment for young people. This Charity changes people’s lives and has now been running for 30 years. Being a Trustee is a rewarding, interesting and challenging role. As a Trustee you play an important part in the development of the Charity working with the Chief Executive and management team to deliver high quality and innovative services and projects to people across the UK. As a Trustee I find the role both interesting and rewarding and have very much enjoyed being part of the Charity’s growth. With a range of new developments planned and opportunities available this is a great time to become a Trustee and support the Charity in its further development. We are looking to bring on Board new Trustees with a passion for improving the opportunities for people with a disability or autism to be able to lead fulfilling and rewarding lives.

Mark Lewis

Chair

**4. Message from Chief Executive**



AFK was founded by Mike and Sally Bishop who, 30 years’ ago, identified a need for the provision of specialist mobility equipment not available on the NHS. From this starting point the Charity began its employment service helping people with a disability or autism gain meaningful employment or voluntary positions. I have had the privilege of being Chief Executive for just over a year and in this time we have stabilised the finances and agreed an exciting growth plan and three year financial framework. This financial year will see a small surplus with income projected to grow from a current £1.7m to £2.2m over the next three years. As well as serving more people through our current work we are planning to expand into providing help for our beneficiaries to become self-employed and opening a social enterprise training centre.

One of the great joys of my job is seeing first-hand how we transform lives. Often a student will come to us with little experience of or confidence for life outside the family home. By the time they leave us they will have learnt to be confident, to travel independently and to gain and hold down a job or voluntary position. By expanding into providing self-employment training, we can open up opportunities for people to work in more flexible ways from the support network of their home and families. It is similar on the mobility side: young people’s lives are transformed by the mobility equipment we provide which enables them to participate more fully in family, work and social life.

Our Board has recently moved to fixed Board Terms and many of our existing Trustees have been with the organisation for a long time. Through this renewal and recruitment process we need to identify the talent and passion to guide us through our next years of expansion.

At AFK we have an excellent staff team and strong support from volunteers and the local community. Our beneficiaries are fully involved in shaping the projects and services we run through co-production.

I hope you find this information pack useful. Please do not hesitate to get in touch should you have any questions or would like to discuss the opportunities further.

David Coe

CEO

**5. Why work with AFK?**

AFK has been committed to supporting disabled and autistic children and young people for 30 years and we need the very best talent to keep our mission alive. We are a team of passionate individuals who are 100% committed to making a difference to disabled young people’s lives and to seeing the charity grow so we can support more young people. We take pride in our inclusive work culture and encourage team members to bring their whole self to work.

Our focus is on a young person’s potential and aspirations, not the apparent barriers they face. This is part of the social model of disability, which says that disability is caused by negative attitudes and exclusion within society, rather than the individual’s impairment.

Here at AFK we work to address and remove the social barriers that disable people, by providing mobility equipment, education support, skills training and helping young people secure work placements. We believe these services are an essential part of helping young people succeed.

We believe it’s our social and economic structures that stop disabled people from living an engaged and fulfilling life, not the impairment or disability. This is what we tell our students and trainees: you don’t need to change; society does.

**Our values**

We are **straightforward.** We share our experiences, knowledge and understanding about disability, and welcome honest and frank discussion on how to achieve our mission.

We **respect & value every individual**. We respect you and all our stakeholders. We value every opinion and put disabled people at the centre of what we do.

We are **passionate**. We were formed by someone who was passionate about ensuring a better future for disabled young people. This passion is still behind everything we do.

We are **approachable & supportive**. We are an open and outward looking organisation that makes it easy for disabled people and their families to seek help. We build long-term partnerships with those we help.

We are **committed**. We challenge situations where disabled people do not receive the help, support and understanding they need.

**6. Case Studies**

**6.1 Mobility Equipment Project**

**ELIZA**

Eliza is a 6-year-old girl from Cornwall. She likes going to school and mixing with

her classmates. She adores her family and has a very close bond with her brother

Charlie, as they both have wheelchairs. She also likes to go swimming and goes to

a heated pool once a week for classes.

Eliza suffered a Global Hypoxic Brain injury at the age of 17 months. She was taken

to Bristol Children’s Hospital and placed in an induced coma on life support. Her

family were advised to say goodbye to her, but when she was taken off life support,

she fought to get better. While in the hospital she lost her sight, hearing and was

having seizures. Over time she regained these, but as she’s grown she has had

increased difficultly with her mobility. She uses hinged splints to help with walking

short distances and uses a wheelchair to get around outside of her home. Her

family say that Eliza ‘simply starts each day the same, happy and full of joy and

love. She is an inspiration.’



Her family applied to my AFK for funding for

a specialist trike after Eliza’s

physiotherapist suggested the significant

physical, neurological, and psychological

benefits of having an adapted trike. When

she had her assessment, Eliza beamed and

loved the feeling of pedalling. Having a new

trike allowed her to join in on bike rides with

her friends and family, giving her a sense of

freedom and inclusion while building her

confidence and muscles.

When her trike was delivered her father got

in touch to say, “We just wanted to say

thank you and all the team at AFK for

helping Eliza achieve a dream. Her new trike

is absolutely fantastic and we have enjoyed

several bike rides as a family. Eliza has been

so happy on her new wheels. Several ‘cuddlies’ have been selected for the rides so far!!

A GREAT BIG THANK YOU from all of us to you and AFK.”

**6.2 Life & Work Project**

**RUBEN**

‘To find a job you like is not easy for anyone. It may take longer than a week or a month but if you keep trying and don’t give up and with help from places like AFK, even in this pandemic, you will have a chance’

Ruben is on the autistic spectrum and has a mild learning disability. He came to AFK after his Aunty referred him to the Life & Work team. Having worked as a cleaner for a few years Ruben was ready for his next step. After help from the team in improving his resume and setting out his goals, he was ready to start honing his interview technique, approaching employers and bolstering his skillset.

The team organised to record Ruben’s sessions, answering questions and then listening back to how he articulated himself. This enabled him to hear himself back and make improvements such as slowing down with his speech and taking his time in explaining different aspects of his experience and how these would help him in the role. Whilst he had successfully progressed to the second interview on a couple of occasions, he had not yet been in successful in securing a new position.

A noticeable change in Ruben’s approach to the process was when he completed three separate interviews with three different corporate partners that support AFK. Taking onBoard the advice and support given to him, Ruben was displaying a new air of confidence, coming back stronger and stronger for each session. During this time he passed his driving test and moved to his own flat independently. He was gaining traction in his search for a new role, however, Covid-19 put the breaks on this progress.

The first lockdown in March 2020 triggered an 8-month stint of furlough from the Southbank Centre for Ruben. Although grateful to receive government support - meaning he was just about able to maintain his independence – fears over imminent job losses meant he was in danger of losing his new home.

Unfortunately, like many in Ruben’s position, these fears were realised, as he was let go in the autumn due to wave of redundancies.

Not to be disheartened, Ruben had applied for a number of retail roles, yet he found the application process challenging due to the number of online tests before even being considered for an interview.

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**‘Ruben has displayed great staying power, despite feeling disappointed at not getting through, each time he would pick himself up and start working with AFK once more to apply for the next job role.’** explains Ruben’s Job Coach.



With rent payments looming and no foreseeable pay cheque, AFK helped Ruben with an application to ‘Aid for Asperger’s’, a small charity that helps and support young adults who have Asperger’s Syndrome to improve the condition of their lives. They very generously donated £500 – a large donation for a charity of their size - to cover rent and food as he awaited news of work, for which Ruben is so grateful.

Before long, Ruben had made a successful application to a major supermarket.

‘It all happened in quite a hurry’ he said. Reasonable adjustments were negotiated, meaning Ruben went straight through to an interview and he could concentrate on application details.

**‘Ruben mastered the art of making a good impression at an interview.**’

This was clearly the case, as within a week of being told of his redundancy, he had been offered a new position working in a supermarket warehouse. Now 24, Ruben’s hopes of changing his career path have come to fruition.

‘My confidence has grown significantly, and it has given me more knowledge in regards to what the job market is all about’ he exclaims.

**Appendix 1 - Safeguarding Trustee Role Description**

**Main tasks**

* To take part in formulating and regularly reviewing the strategic aims of the

organisation.

* With other Trustees to ensure that the policy and practices of the organization are in keeping with its aims, especially in relation to safeguarding AFK’s service users, staff team and volunteers.
* With other Trustees to ensure that the organisation functions within the legal and financial requirements of a charitable organisation and strives to achieve best practice.

**Main duties**

1. Formulating strategic aims
* Consider the organisation as a whole and its beneficiaries, whether as a

member of the Trustees or any of its committees, sub-committees, groups etc.

* Reflect the organisation's vision and principles, strategy and major policies
* Contribute specific skills, interests and contacts and support the organisation in fundraising activities.

2. Ensuring policies and practices are in keeping with aims

* Follow the Code of Conduct at all times, particularly when exercising the

functions of the Trustees, or any of its committees, sub-committees, groups.

* Attend meetings of the Trustees.
* Reflect the Trustees' policies and concerns on all its committees, subcommittees, groups.

3. Ensuring best practice

* Be an active member of the Trustee body in exercising its responsibilities and

functions.

* Maintain good relations with senior managerial staff
1. Act as AFK’s Safeguarding Trustee
* Act as a point of contact between the Board and AFK's professional Safeguarding Team on matters pertaining to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults using AFK’s services, in addition to safeguarding staff and volunteers, and ensuring best practice is upheld.
* Provide insight to Board discussions, based on a greater understanding of safeguarding priorities and approach.
* Contribute to the development and maintenance of a leadership culture which reflects AFK's commitment to safeguarding as a critical priority.
* Help ensure that AFK continues to maintain the highest safeguarding standards in line with legislation, statutory guidance and best practice, and organisation policy and procedure.
* Ensure that safeguarding remains embedded in the culture of AFK encouraging a safer environment for our service users, staff, and volunteers.

**Safeguarding Trustee Person Specification**

The following characteristics, knowledge and experiences (or commitment to gaining them) would be advantageous to the role of charity Trustee:

a high level of understanding and interest in the issues the charity seeks to address/represent;

* a commitment to the values and principles of the charity;
* strong business and financial acumen;
* experience of committee work;
* highly developed interpersonal and communication skills;
* ability to understand complex strategic issues, critically assess, analyse and resolve difficult problems;
* sound, independent judgement, courage, common sense and diplomacy;
* politically astute, with the ability to grasp relevant issues and understand relationships between interested parties;
* clear understanding, and acceptance, of the legal duties, liabilities and responsibilities of Trustees; · sound knowledge of charity governance;
* sufficient time and commitment to fulfil the role
* ability to listen to and welcome alternative opinions and experiences;
* flexibility in thinking;
* a desire to implement the highest standards of governance.
* expertise and experience of Safeguarding matters; a clear understanding and/or willingness to familiarise themself with best practice safeguarding strategies, the safeguarding framework surrounding AFK's programmes and operations, best practice, the expectations of our donors and the regulatory requirements of the Charity Commission;
* A strong understanding of the safeguarding duties, liabilities and responsibilities of Trustees, and of the difference between governance and management functions;
* Experience of working or volunteering within the health, education, police, social services or the charity sector to improve practices and raise standards of safeguarding.

**Appendix 2 The Application and Appointment Process**

Please send your CV and a short statement about why you are interested in becoming AFK’s Safeguarding Trustee to **david.coe@afkcharity.org**

We will invite shortlisted candidates to an interview with the CEO and some members of the Trustee Board.

AFK will take up two references for successful candidates and also undertake a

DBS criminal records check.

We anticipate closing all applications by **Monday 5th December 2022**, with a view to having a Safeguarding Trustee in post by the end of January 2023

Appointment is subject to agreement of the existing Trustees and vote by the Board.

We will endeavour to arrange meetings around your existing commitments wherever possible.

**Appendix 3 -** **What the Role Will Entail**

The Trustee role is unpaid pro bono, but reasonable expenses can be claimed. Trustees are required to attend Board meetings, which are currently held quarterly on a Tuesday afternoon. The meetings are held in our North London offices so Trustees can see the work in operation and meet staff. A full day Awayday is held in January each year. We expect Trustees to read all of the papers for the Board, which are circulated the week before meetings. We hope Trustees will share their skills and experience appropriately, through communication with staff and other Trustees.

Trustees are expected to make a proportionate contribution to the Charity and to provide access to their networks and contacts.

In return, new Trustees will be given a full induction, access to training opportunities and the chance to contribute to an exciting, innovative and growing charity. You can read about the role of Trustees on the Charity Commission’s website:

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/charity-Trustee-whats-involved

Trusteeship is a wonderful way of gaining new skills and experiences, and a powerful sense of giving something back, as you can see from this research by Getting on Board:

We are also looking to improve representation or balance on our Board of ethnic minorities, gender, SEND, neurodiversity and lived experience of disability or autism

Previous experience of being a Trustee is not required for the Trustee positions but evidence of safeguarding experience will be essential for the Safeguarding Trustee role.