



**ACTION FOR STAMMERING CHILDREN
CHAIR OF TRUSTEES
APPOINTMENT BRIEF
NOVEMBER 2020**

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in the role of Chair at Action for Stammering Children (ASC), this is a fantastic opportunity for the right candidate to join ASC having celebrated its 30th year and supporting almost 100,000 children.


Over 150,000 children in the UK stammer and suffer the frustration of being unable say what they want to, when they want to. Added to this, they are often mimicked, teased and bullied. They may be anxious, isolated and helpless. Their parents also feel powerless to help and desperately worried about what the future will hold. ASC is the leading charity of its kind in the UK. It supports these children and their families across the UK by funding expert assessment, therapy and training at the Michael Palin Centre in London – opened by Michael 27 years ago. It also supports outdoor adventure residentials for children who stammer which combine speech and language therapy, group work with thrilling physical challenges. Our strategy is informed by a brilliant Youth Panel made up of young people who stammer, and our work is supported by an inspiring group of ‘Stambassadors’ – adults who stammer in successful careers. We are also an enthusiastic supporter of research into stammering and new therapeutic approaches.

Thanks to our work, the lives of the children and their parents are transformed – they are empowered, resilient and able to fulfil their potential at school, at home, socially and in life. As such, the Charity really does have the power to change lives forever.

I have been privileged to work with the Charity for more than twelve years and am enormously proud of everything we have achieved, generously supported by our Vice Presidents Michael Palin, Colin Firth, Ed Balls and many others. I have seen the charity grow and develop but there is so much more to be done and I am hoping to hand over the reins to someone with passion and enthusiasm to change the lives of children and young people who stammer. My fellow Trustees are looking forward to working with the new Chair to develop and execute the strategy that will take the Charity on the next phase of its remarkable journey.

Throughout this pack you will learn more about our story, our work and our passion. You will also find out more about the role as well as the skills and the qualities we are looking for in our next Chair. If you feel you have the experience, commitment and desire to lead our organisation, we would very much like to hear from you.

Yours sincerely,



Joanna Hunter, OBE
Chair, Action for Stammering Children

ABOUT ACTION FOR STAMMERING CHILDREN

Action for Stammering Children (ASC) commissions the delivery of specialist services that transform the lives of children and young people who stammer. We do this by working with the Michael Palin Centre for Stammering Children in London and by running residential courses in the North of England.

We are the charity which created and continues to support the Michael Palin Centre for Stammering Children in London. This internationally-recognised Centre runs the UK's largest specialist service exclusively dedicated to the assessment and treatment of children who stammer from across the UK. We also support projects aimed at boosting the confidence of young people who stammer and, through our inspirational Youth Panel, we make sure young people who stammer have a voice in the direction of our Charity.

Stammering is a severe communication disability which impairs social, emotional and educational development. Estimates suggest that 8% of children will stammer at some point and approximately 1% continue to stammer into adulthood. Stammering is more common in boys than in girls. It is characterised by repetitions, prolongations and blocking of sounds, and can be accompanied by feelings of isolation, frustration and embarrassment.

Stammering crosses all races, cultures, religions and social groups. It can conceal intellectual ability, affect educational choices and achievement, result in impaired communication skills and it frequently becomes a focus for teasing and bullying. In severe cases, it may significantly affect a young person's ability to achieve their potential and to make a full contribution to society as an adult.

ASC was the inspiration of the late Travers Reid, a successful businessman and a person who stammered, who was determined to help children who stammer throughout the UK. Travers founded the Charity, along with the late Dr Lena Rustin, an inspirational speech and language therapist. Following his appearance in *A Fish Called Wanda*, Michael became Vice President of the Charity and opened the Michael Palin Centre in 1993.

At the core of the Michael Palin Centre's work is the specialist assessment service for any child or young person in the UK, aged 2-18, who stammers. Both parents attend with their child where possible, so that the stammering problem can be fully assessed in the context of each individual family. Families are seen by two specialist therapists who spend a morning or afternoon with the child and their parents during which they can identify and fully understand the factors underlying the child's stammer. The assessment has been developed and refined over the last 30 years, and more recently has evolved to be able to offer the service online, ensuring that we could continue delivering our service through these difficult times. It is the cornerstone of each child's subsequent therapy and greatly increases the likelihood of a successful outcome.

As well as supporting specialist assessments and therapy, the Charity also funds training of speech and language therapists and a programme of research. The training increases the understanding, skills and confidence of speech and language therapists to be able to work with children who stammer. The research programme aims to provide evidence of the efficacy of the therapy as well as to develop understanding of the nature of stammering and we are funding a PhD looking at stammering and mental health.

Our Youth Panel is made up of young people who stammer and are keen to support the charity. They meet regularly as a group to work together on awareness raising projects and annually with the board to help shape our strategy. They have recently launched an online game which celebrates historic figures who stammered and regularly act as media spokespeople for the charity.

We have a group of 50 'Stambassadors' – adults, in successful careers, who stammer. These people have all filmed videos talking about their careers and their tips for success. They help to show young people who stammer that anything is possible and that their stammers need not hold them back. Last year we ran a careers evening with our 'Stambassadors' and we hope to develop a mentoring programme in the coming years.

Action for Stammering Children's Purpose and Activities

The Charity's vision is a society where children and young people who stammer have the same opportunities and quality of life as their peers.

The Charity's mission is to ensure that every child and young person across the United Kingdom who stammers has access to effective services and support to help them meet the challenges created by their stammer.

To achieve its mission, the Charity undertakes activities and services across the following six key strategic goals:

1. To increase access to effective therapy services for children and young people across the UK who stammer
2. To empower children and young people who stammer by giving them a voice within our organisation and in society
3. To assist the parents of children and young people who stammer, so that they are better able to support their child
4. To improve the ability of speech and language therapists to provide effective services to children and young people who stammer
5. To promote research into the most effective treatment of stammering in children and young people
6. To promote awareness of stammering and the impact it has on children and young people's lives, and to change public perceptions.

Our strategic aims in the coming year are:

1. To increase access to effective therapy services for young children and young people across the UK who stammer
 - We plan to review the lessons learnt from lockdown to identify new ways of delivering our services.
 - We would like to find ways to expand our residential programme across the UK.
2. To empower children and young people who stammer by giving them a voice within our organisation and in society
3. Our Youth Panel are embarking on a new volunteering project with Timebank UK.

- We plan to launch a career mentoring project with our Stambassadors.
- 4. To assist the parents of children and young people who stammer, so that they are better able to support their child
 - We are planning to launch a parent support group online over the coming months.
- 5. To improve the ability of speech and language therapists to provide effective services to children and young people who stammer
 - Online training numbers have been high during the lockdown period and we are looking to maintain this success over the whole year so that more children who stammer have access to the appropriate therapies.
- 6. To promote research into the most effective treatment of stammering in children and young people
 - We are actively fundraising for a research priority setting project, in collaboration with the James Lind Alliance in order to focus future research in the sector.
- 7. To promote awareness of stammering and the impact it has on children and young people's lives, and to change public perceptions
 - Our Youth Panel are planning to visit schools (online where necessary) to promote awareness using our new on-line game 'Stamback in Time'.
 - We will also be hoping to encourage more schools to become 'Stammer Aware'.

Chair of Trustees - The Role

Objective

The Chair will hold the Board and Executive Team to account for the Charity's mission and vision, providing inclusive leadership to the Board of Trustees, ensuring that each trustee fulfils their duties and responsibilities for the effective governance of the charity. The Chair will also support, and, where appropriate, challenge the Chief Executive and ensure that the Board functions as a unit and works closely with the entire Executive of the charity to achieve agreed objectives. He or she will act as an ambassador and the public face of the Charity in partnership with the Chief Executive.

Principal responsibilities:

Strategic leadership

- Provide leadership to the charity and its Board, ensuring that the Charity has maximum impact for its beneficiaries
- Ensure that Trustees fulfil their duties and responsibilities for the effective governance of the Charity
- Ensure that the Board operates within its charitable objectives, and provides a clear strategic direction for the Charity
- Ensure that the Board is able to regularly review major risks and associated opportunities, and satisfy itself that systems are in place to take advantage of opportunities, and manage and mitigate the risks
- Ensure that the Board fulfils its duties to ensure sound financial health of the charity, with effective systems in place to ensure financial accountability

Governance

- Ensure that the governance arrangements are working in the most effective way for the Charity
- Develop the knowledge and capability of the Board of Trustees
- Encourage positive change and where appropriate address and resolve any conflicts within the Board
- Appraise the performance of the Trustees and the Board on an annual basis
- Ensure that the Board of Trustees is regularly refreshed and incorporates the right balance of skills, knowledge and experience needed to govern and lead the charity effectively, and which also reflects the wider population
- Work within any agreed policies adopted by the charity

External Relations

- Act as an ambassador for the cause and the charity
- Maintain close relationships with Vice Presidents and with key influencers
- Act as a spokesperson for the organisation when appropriate
- Represent the charity at external functions, meetings and events
- Facilitate change and address any potential conflict with external stakeholders

Efficiency and effectiveness

- Chair meetings of the Board of Trustees effectively and efficiently, bringing impartiality and objectivity to the decision-making process
- Ensure that Trustees are fully engaged and that decisions are taken in the best, long-term interests of the Charity and that the Board takes collective ownership
- Foster, maintain and ensure that constructive relationships exist with and between the Trustees
- Work closely with the Chief Executive to give direction to Board policymaking and to ensure that meetings are well planned, meaningful and reflect the responsibilities of trustees
- Monitor that decisions taken at meetings are implemented.

Relationship with the Chief Executive and the wider management team

- Establish and build a strong, effective and a constructive working relationship with the Chief Executive, ensuring they are held to account for achieving agreed strategic objectives
- Support the Chief Executive, whilst respecting the boundaries which exist between the two roles
- Ensure regular contact with the Chief Executive and develop and maintain an open and supportive relationship within which each can speak openly about concerns, worries and challenges
- Liaise with the Chief Executive to maintain an overview of the Charity's affairs, providing support as necessary
- Conduct an annual performance appraisal and remuneration review for the Chief Executive in consultation with other Trustees
- Ensure that the Chief Executive has the opportunity for professional development and has appropriate external professional support

The above list is indicative only and not exhaustive. The Chair will be expected to perform all such additional duties as are reasonably commensurate with the role.

Person Specification

In addition to the qualities needed by all trustees (see page 8), the Chair should possess:

Experience/ Qualifications - Essential

- Experience of operating at a senior strategic leadership level within an organisation
- Successful track record of achievement through their career
- Experience of charity governance and working with or as part of a board of trustees
- Experience of chairing meetings and events

Knowledge and understanding - Essential

- Strong leadership skills, ability to motivate staff and volunteers and bring people together
- Understanding of and ability to promote effective governance practices in the context of a registered charity and company limited by guarantee
- Knowledge of the Trustees Code of Conduct

Knowledge and understanding - Desirable

- An understanding of what it is like to have a stammer through personal experience
- An understanding of the regulatory and commissioning environment in the health sector
- Financial management expertise and a broad understanding of charity finance issues
- Experience of leading and managing change within organisations and/or the charity sector
- Experience of charity fundraising

Personal skills - Essential

- Demonstrate a strong and visible passion and commitment to the Charity, its strategic objectives and cause
- Exhibit strong inter-personal and relationship building abilities and be comfortable in an ambassadorial role
- Demonstrate tact and diplomacy, with the ability to listen and engage effectively
- Strong networking capabilities that can be utilised for the benefit of the charity
- Ability to foster and promote a collaborative team environment, and facilitate conflict resolution where required
- Time and enthusiasm to dedicate to the role of Chair over a three-year term, including attending meetings and events out of office hours
- A commitment to maintaining diversity on the board

The role of Chair is not accompanied by any financial remuneration, although expenses for travel may be claimed

Time commitment:

Five Board meetings per year, including a strategy day and at least one meeting with the Youth Panel. The Chair is also expected to have regular meetings with the Chief Executive, Treasurer and represent the Charity at various events and meetings with key stakeholders.

Trustee Term

Trustee term is for three years. Trustees can be reappointed up to three times, serving a total of nine years.

Chair term is two years and can be reappointed up to three times, serving a total of six years.

How to apply

To apply to become the Chair of Action for Stammering Children please send a copy of your CV together with a supporting statement addressing the skills required in the person specification, maximum two sides of A4 to ChairRecruitment@stammeringchildren.org.

Please ensure that your application fully addresses the requirements for the role.

Recruitment Timetable

Deadline for applications: 30th November 2020

Please contact ChairRecruitment@stammeringchildren.org should you have any questions.

Trustee Job Description

ASC is governed by a Board of Trustees, which comprises:

- the Chair
- the Treasurer
- the Company Secretary
- and up to a maximum of 15 elected trustees

The Charities Act 2011 defines charity trustees as those responsible under the charity's governing document for controlling the administration and management of the charity. The role of the trustee board is to receive assets from donors, safeguard them and apply them to the charitable purposes of ASC. The Trustee Board must always act in the best interests of ASC, exercising the same standard of duty of care that a prudent person would apply if looking after the affairs of someone for whom they have responsibility. The Trustee Board must act as a group and not as individuals. In addition to being a registered charity, ASC is a company limited by guarantee, and ASC's trustees are registered as directors at Companies House.

The duties of a trustee board member

ASC takes good governance seriously. The statutory duties of a trustee board member are to:

- ensure that ASC complies with its governing document, its Articles of Association, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations
- ensure that ASC pursues its objects (purposes) as defined in its governing document
- ensure ASC applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objects
- contribute actively to the board of trustees by giving firm strategic direction to ASC, setting overall policy, defining goals, setting targets, and evaluating performance against agreed targets
- safeguard the good name and values of ASC
- ensure the financial stability of ASC.

In addition to the above statutory duties, each trustee should use any specific skills, knowledge or experience they have to help the board of trustees reach sound decisions. This may involve leading

discussions, identifying key issues, providing advice and guidance on new initiatives, and evaluating or offering advice on other areas in which the trustee has particular expertise.

Trustees are expected to read the Charity Commission's Guide CC3, The Essential Trustee, and have knowledge of the Charity Governance Code.

This is a voluntary role and trustees receive no remuneration. Reasonable expenses can be claimed, in line with ASC's expense policy, for attendance at board meetings and other ASC events necessary for the fulfilment the trustee's duties.

Minimum time commitment

We would normally expect trustees to commit at least five board meetings a year, with additional time for reading papers and other communications. The meetings are currently being held on a Saturday morning via Zoom.

New trustees will receive a full induction.

Trustees are expected to attend all board meetings, in addition:

- Trustees may be asked to join a sub-committee, which may meet two to three times a year as needed, for approximately two hours.
- Trustees are encouraged to attend an intensive course in London or across the country.
- Trustees are expected to support and attend fundraising events.

Person specification

Each trustee must have:

- a commitment to the mission and vision of ASC
- a willingness to meet the minimum time requirement
- integrity
- strategic vision
- good, independent judgement
- an ability to think creatively
- a willingness to speak their mind
- an understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship
- an ability to work effectively as a member of a team and to take decisions for the good of ASC.