

**ACTION FOR STAMMERING CHILDREN
TRUSTEE APPOINTMENT BRIEF
APRIL 2021**



Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in the role of Trustee at Action for Stammering Children (ASC), this is a great 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 residential 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.

We have a great group of Trustees with a wide range of skills and experiences. However, we are keen to add to our number someone with a strong understanding of charity fundraising and the corporate sector. This is a wonderful opportunity to join a great and inspiring team and one that makes a real and proven difference to the lives of many children and young people.

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. If you feel you have the experience and commitment to be our next Trustee, we would very much like to hear from you.

Yours sincerely,

Dame Jane Roberts, DBE, FRCPsych
Chair, Action for Stammering Children

ABOUT ACTION FOR STAMMERING CHILDREN

Action for Stammering Children's (ASC) 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.

The Charity 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. In 2019 we ran a careers evening with our 'Stambassadors' and we are currently running a mentoring programme for 11 young people who stammer and are at the beginning of their careers.

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 (there are currently 8)

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:

Comply with your charity's governing document and the law

You and your co-trustees must:

- make sure that the charity complies with its governing document
- comply with charity law requirements and other laws that apply to your charity
- You should take reasonable steps to find out about legal requirements, for example by reading relevant guidance or taking appropriate advice when you need to.

Act in your charity's best interests

You must:

- do what you and your co-trustees (and no one else) decide will best enable the charity to carry out its purposes
- with your co-trustees, make balanced and adequately informed decisions, thinking about the long term as well as the short term
- avoid putting yourself in a position where your duty to your charity conflicts with your personal interests or loyalty to any other person or body
- not receive any benefit from the charity unless it is properly authorised and is clearly in the charity's interests; this also includes anyone who is financially connected to you, such as a partner, dependent child or business partner

Manage your charity's resources responsibly

You must act responsibly, reasonably and honestly. This is sometimes called the duty of prudence. Prudence is about exercising sound judgement. You and your co-trustees must:

- make sure the charity's assets are only used to support or carry out its purposes
- avoid exposing the charity's assets, beneficiaries or reputation to undue risk
- not over-commit the charity
- take special care when investing or borrowing
- comply with any restrictions on spending funds or selling land
- You and your co-trustees should put appropriate procedures and safeguards in place and take reasonable steps to ensure that these are followed. Otherwise you risk making the charity vulnerable to fraud or theft, or other kinds of abuse, and being in breach of your duty.

Act with reasonable care and skill

As someone responsible for governing a charity, you:

- must use reasonable care and skill, making use of your skills and experience and taking appropriate advice when necessary
- should give enough time, thought and energy to your role, for example by preparing for, attending and actively participating in all trustees' meetings
- See section 8 for more information.

Ensure your charity is accountable

You and your co-trustees must comply with statutory accounting and reporting requirements. You should also:

- be able to demonstrate that your charity is complying with the law, well run and effective
- ensure appropriate accountability to members, if your charity has a membership separate from the trustees
- ensure accountability within the charity, particularly where you delegate responsibility for particular tasks or decisions to staff or volunteers

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 of 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.

- Trustees are expected to attend all board meetings.
- 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.

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

All trustees are DBS checked.

New trustees will receive a full induction.

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.

How to apply

To apply to become a Trustee 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 roberjane@gmail.com.

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

Recruitment Timetable

Deadline for applications: 31st May 2021

Please contact roberjane@gmail.com should you have any questions.