

**ACTION FOR STAMMERING CHILDREN  
TRUSTEE APPOINTMENT BRIEF**

**NOVEMBER 2022**

**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 that is now over 30 years old, during which time it has supported around 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. They may be mimicked, teased or bullied. They may feel anxious or isolated. Their parents may feel powerless to help and worried about what the future will hold.

ASC is the leading charity of its kind in the UK. We support children who stammer and their families across the UK by supporting and empowering children and young people who stammer, promoting research into stammering and seeking to influence policy. In partnership with our delivery partners, we run a number of projects that aim to support children and young people who stammer across the UK. We commission specialist assessments and therapy, which would not otherwise be available, delivered by the team of specialist speech and language therapists at the Michael Palin Centre for Stammering Children in London. We fund a speech and language therapy residential programme in North Yorkshire, which is delivered by a team of specialist Speech and Language Therapists and aims to build confidence, resilience and acceptance. Our mentoring programme offers an opportunity for young people who stammer (aged 18-25) entering the world of work or higher education to benefit from mentoring from adults who stammer. We keenly promote evidence-based research into stammering to ensure that children who stammer receive the most effective therapy and support. 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.

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. On this occasion we are seeking to recruit to the board two trustees with experience in the following areas:

- charitable fundraising
- the corporate sector
- digital strategy
- health commissioning.

A personal connection with stammering would also be helpful but this is not essential and we'd welcome candidates from a black and minority ethnic background. Experience of charity governance is not essential, just a willingness to learn. This is a wonderful opportunity to join a great team and one that makes a real difference to the lives of many children and young people.

Below 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 an ASC Trustee, we would very much like to hear from you.

**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.

We are the charity which created and continues to support the Michael Palin Centre for Stammering Children in London as well as now funding a range of other services and projects across the UK. The internationally-recognised Michael Palin 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 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.

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. We have partnered with the James Lind Alliance to identify key research priorities in stammering and we have recently funded a PhD student exploring 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. Two recent members of our Youth Panel are currently trustees.

We fund a range of other projects including residential programmes and mentoring. Our 'Stambassadors' – adults, in successful careers, who stammer – 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.

## 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 10)

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. The wider the range of backgrounds that trustees come from, the better the decisions that are made.

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 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 either in person or remotely.

- 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 expected to support and where possible, attend fundraising events.

Induction of trustees includes a meeting with the Chair and the CEO, and key documents to read together with encouragement to attend a course for new trustees at NCVO or similar. Trustee terms are for three years. Trustees can be reappointed up to three times, serving a total of nine years.

### 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
- a willingness to learn about effective charity governance
- an ability to work effectively as a member of a team and to take decisions for the good of ASC.

We would welcome candidates from a black and minority ethnic background.

### 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](mailto:roberjane@gmail.com).

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

### Recruitment Timetable

---

Deadline for applications: 12 January 2023

Interviews for short-listed candidates: morning of 17 January 2023

Please contact [roberjane@gmail.com](mailto:roberjane@gmail.com) should you have any questions and/ or you would like to discuss a possible application.