



Role Profile: CAPITAL Trustee

About CAPITAL

Founded in 1997, CAPITAL is led by its members, staff, trustees and supporters – all of whom have lived experience of mental distress.

We aim to work from a bottom-up approach, giving all a voice, using consultation and coproduction methods to encourage everyone to contribute their ideas and set the direction for the charity.

We were founded upon developing training for people with lived experience at a time when people had no voice, and we became the independent representation of the lived experience community in the county which influenced local mental health services.

We support a membership of about 300 people, offer training, support and a framework that ensures people can lead our work.

We also provide monthly peer led Patient ViewPoint forums.

Since 2022 CAPITAL has been contracted to lead coproduction for mental health transformation, and hosts the West Sussex Lived Experience Advisory Group (WSX LEAG), funded by BHT Sussex.

CAPITAL is part of an alliance of Voluntary Community & Social Enterprise organisations delivering services and working together as Pathfinder West Sussex, with a view to making local services accessible for anyone needing mental health support.

Introduction

Trustees must follow their role and responsibilities as set out in:

- CAPITAL Memorandum & Articles of Association
- CAPITAL Trustees Code of Conduct
- CAPITAL Policy for all elections and AGM
- Charity Commission: The Essential Trustee: What you need to know, what you need to do (CC3)
- Charity Commission: Charity Trustee: What's involved (CC3a)
- Charity Commission: The Essential Trustee: 6 main duties

Trustee support plan

Trustees should have a signed support plan which includes:

- preferred and appropriate communication methods
- training needs analysis
- bespoke support to access documents, rehearse contributions to board meetings and review how the role is going
- regular checks that all parties are content with the trustee role and support in place

Main Duties and Responsibilities

Ensure your charity is carrying out its purpose for members and the public benefit

This is about knowing what the purpose of CAPITAL is so the organisation stays on track.

Documents to read: The Strategic Vision and the governing document.

Act in the charity's best interests

This is about acting in CAPITAL's best interests and growing in confidence to do so.

1. Bring your lived experience to support decision making.
2. Ask questions until you are sure you understand the answers.
3. Understand that you may need to agree to disagree.
4. Check that decisions are guided by the best interests of CAPITAL at all times.

Document to read: Communication Plan (internal).

Manage your charity's resources responsibly

This is about understanding risks and making sure money and resources are well looked after.

1. Health and safety matters are known about and followed by everyone.
2. Staff are valued and supported.
3. Management is effective.
4. The knowledge and experience of people across CAPITAL are valued to identify what works and what causes harm, both within CAPITAL and in services outside it.

Documents to read: CAPITAL structure diagram, budgets and accounts.

Act with reasonable care and skill

This is about being prepared and asking for help when needed.

1. Ask for help when you need support to understand papers or issues.
2. Use your lived experience of services to give your view on what worked and what caused harm.
3. Stay in touch with the views of people who still use services.

The experience of using mental health services is one of the most important parts of this role.

Ensure your charity is accountable

This is about helping each other inside CAPITAL and being accountable outside the organisation as well.

1. Be clear about what you do know and what you do not know.
2. Be accountable to each other and to others outside CAPITAL.
3. Support people to be heard.
4. Treat others respectfully.

Documents to read: The Business Plan and the Essential Trustee Governance Jigsaw.

Qualities for a Trustee

- Knowledge of CAPITAL's business, ethos and mission.
- Responsibility for your own development needs.
- Ability to read and understand documents.
- Ability to work with fellow trustees as a team.
- Good communication skills.

- Ability to participate in Board meetings and the AGM by following the agenda, keeping to the subject, waiting your turn to speak, speaking clearly and briefly, keeping to the agreed timing, and respecting different points of view.
- Basic IT skills such as using email.

Overall Trustees Must

- Read, understand and follow all of the documents listed in this role profile.
- Take appropriate responsibility for the trustee position.
- Undertake activities that fall within the remit of a CAPITAL trustee.
- Attend training and refresher sessions provided by CAPITAL or requested by the Chair from external charity or voluntary sector organisations.
- Research and obtain specialist advice when needed.
- Support the Chair, Vice Chair and Treasurer in their additional responsibilities.
- Communicate CAPITAL business and affairs through the Chair, who will liaise with the CEO or delegate.
- Uphold confidentiality until matters are no longer considered confidential.
- Be available to CAPITAL members who approach trustees with queries, concerns or feedback.
- Attend at least 75% of Board meetings and the AGM.

Trustees Must Not

- Treat the position as purely honorary or use CAPITAL for personal interests.
- Allow personal affairs to become entangled in CAPITAL business.
- Undertake matters on their own without accountability.
- Communicate about CAPITAL business or affairs with staff, members or volunteers outside agreed routes.
- Communicate distressing, contentious or confidential material to staff, members or volunteers for any reason.
- Work on trustee activities outside agreed CAPITAL activity without the written consent of the Chair and CEO.
- Express only a personal opinion where they are expected to present the collective opinion of the Board.
- Identify themselves in the media as a trustee and publish private activities as an individual trustee without written consent of the Chair and CEO.

If a trustee deliberately breaches this role description or the related documents, this will be taken seriously and may result in removal from the Board.

On Leaving the Board

- If a trustee resigns, they must inform the Chair in writing at least one month in advance and state the reason for resigning.