

Chair of Trustees, Surrey Family & Mediation Services

Introduction

Surrey Family & Mediation Services is seeking to appoint a new Chair of Trustees to work in partnership with the CEO, to provide a range of successful not for profit family mediation services to help families through the process of separation.

SFMS has over 30 years' experience dealing with family breakdown and its consequences. We are a registered Charity and the only not for profit family mediation service in Surrey.

All our mediators have been trained to the highest standards available within the industry and are required to undertake annual continued professional development training to ensure that their knowledge remains up to date. They are FMCA qualified, which is the standard required by the government to be able to deliver government funded mediation. Additionally, all our mediators are qualified to provide child inclusive mediation, as required by the Ministry of Justice and the Family Mediation Council.

The regular staff of the Charity includes the CEO, 1 service manager and 2 administrators. The mediators are self-employed. The Board consists of 5 Trustees, and the Chair, and meet on a quarterly basis. Finance and Operations sub committees meet on a more frequent basis. The Charity's office is in Epsom and meetings of the Board of Trustees are held in Surrey.

The Charity is funded by the provision of mediation services, from both private payment and Legal Aid, and from ad hoc grants. New training courses are being rolled out which will provide new income streams and widen the impact of the Charity. The long term ambition of the Charity also includes re-opening a contact centre for separated parents to meet their children in a safe and supervised setting.

We are seeking to appoint a Chair who is motivated to lead the team to ensure the sustainability of the business, with previous experience in the voluntary sector as a Trustee or a Chair, and with specific knowledge of, or experience in, the family mediation sector.

Chair

Remuneration: The role of Chair is not accompanied by any financial remuneration.

Location: Surrey, or neighbouring counties.

Time commitment: 4 Board meetings per year, as well as time required for the management of the Board and the CEO. The Chair is also expected to have regular meetings with the CEO, to build their knowledge of the environment in which the Charity operates, and occasionally to represent the Charity externally.

Role Description

Objective

The Chair will hold the Board and CEO to account for delivering the Charity's objectives, providing inclusive leadership of 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 the CEO and ensure that the Board works closely with the CEO to achieve agreed objectives. He or she will act as an ambassador and the public face of the Charity, in partnership with the CEO.

Principal Responsibilities

Strategic leadership

- Provide leadership of 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 regularly reviews major risks and associated opportunities, and satisfies 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 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
- Appraise the performance of the CEO, the Trustees and the Board as a whole 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
- Work within any agreed policies adopted by the Charity

External Relations

- Act as an ambassador for the cause and the Charity
- Act as a spokesperson for the Charity when appropriate
- Represent the Charity at external functions, meetings and events as required

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 CEO to give direction to Board policy-making 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 CEO

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

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

Chair

Person Specification

In addition to the qualities required of a Trustee of the charity, the Chair must also meet the following requirements:-

Personal Qualities

- 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
- Ability to commit time to conduct the role well, approximately 10 hours per month, some of which will be to attend Board meetings or meetings with the CEO, some of which are held in working hours

Experience

- 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 on a Board of Trustees
- Experience of external representation and managing stakeholders
- Experience of chairing meetings and events

Knowledge and skills

- Broad knowledge and understanding of the Civil Society sector and current issues affecting it
- Specific knowledge of, or experience in, the family mediation sector
- Strong leadership skills, ability to motivate staff and volunteers and bring people together
- Financial management expertise and a broad understanding of Charity finance issues
- Good understanding of Charity governance issues

Terms

The Charity's Chair (and Board members) serve an initial three-year term.

In addition to chairing the main Board meetings, the Chair has the right to attend the Finance and the Operations sub-committees, which meet on a more frequent basis.