

Role Description & Person Specification

Chair of the General Committee

## Background

The Society is a Royal Charter company founded in 1847. It operates throughout Scotland and provides direct financial support to single women over the age of 50 who struggle with financial hardship. A small management and administration staff team is based in Edinburgh and Caseworkers based around Scotland who visit and assess new applications and keep in touch with existing beneficiaries. The Society places significant emphasis on promoting a sense of personal connection and engagement with the Society’s work amongst its beneficiaries and we have overwhelmingly positive feedback from them.

## Organisational Structure and Trustee Meetings

There are currently 12 Trustees who are members of the General Committee. The Society also has two Sub-Committees which focus on (a) oversight of the management of our investments and (b) our policies and procedures for making grants to beneficiaries. Additionally, occasional Working Groups of Trustees are established to have oversight on specific issues (for example the planning for the renovation of the Society’s property in Rutland Square, Edinburgh).

## Purpose

We are looking for an outstanding individual who is respectful of the Society’s past, committed to our objective of providing impactful support to women in Scotland, and who has the skills to lead us into the future.

## Main Responsibilities

* Leading the Society’s Trustees and Management Team in the development of the Society’s strategic planning.
* Providing leadership, support and, where appropriate, challenge to the Chief Executive to ensure that the Society is run in accordance the Society’s objectives and Royal Charter, the decisions of the Trustees, and appropriate legislation.
* Liaising with the Chief Executive with the setting of agendas for General Committee meetings and ensuring that the business is covered efficiently and effectively at those meetings.
* Maintaining an overview of all aspects of the Society’s work including through attendance at Sub Committee and Working Group meetings as appropriate.
* Ensuring appropriate oversight of decisions being taken on a delegated basis about the provision of support to women in need.
* With assistance of the Chief Executive, leading on the selection, induction, development and appraisal of Trustees.
* Acting as a figurehead and spokesperson for the Society when required

## Main Duties

Currently the main duties include but are not limited to;

* Planning and preparing for General Committee meetings and the AGM in conjunction with the Chief Executive and others.
* Supporting and appraising the performance of the Chief Executive
* The current Chair meets with the management team to make some delegated decisions on which women the Society will support (with the remaining applications being consider by the General Committee). However, this role could be taken up by other Trustees and more generally, how the Society makes such decisions may evolve further.
* Chairing the General Committee meetings ensuring:
  + A balance is struck between time-keeping and space for discussions.
  + Business is dealt with and decisions made.
  + Decisions, actions and deliberations are adequately minuted.
  + The implementation of decisions is clearly assigned and monitored.
* Attending Sub Committees meetings at least once per year and Working Groups as appropriate

## Person Specification

The successful candidate will

* Have a strategic approach
* Be committed to the aims, objectives and values of the Society
* Have an ability and willingness to provide leadership to the organisation
* Possess knowledge, understanding and empathy with the challenges that (a) single older women, and (b) people living in poverty, face in 21st Century Scotland
* Be tactful, diplomatic and have good powers of persuasion.
* Have a minimum of 5 years’ experience as a Trustee in a similar sized organisation
* Have proven experience of chairing large decision making meetings
* Have an understanding of the governance, legal, and financial aspects of operating a charity
* Meet the “Fit and Proper Persons” criteria for being a Charity Trustee.

## Commitment

# The General Committee of Trustees meets four times per year (alternating between Glasgow and Edinburgh) and both Sub Committees meet approximately twice yearly (normally in Edinburgh but with facilities for virtual attendance). The total time commitment averages at approximately 2 days per month.

# We ask prospective candidates to serve for at least 3 years in the role, ideally more although we of course understand that unexpected issues may arise. Tenure can be extended to a maximum of 7 years.

Remuneration

The role is not remunerated but all expenses incurred on the Society’s business will be reimbursed.