



Libraries Connected Trustee Pack

1. Foreword/welcome from Ayub Khan

Dear Applicant,

I'm delighted that you are interested in helping to shape, grow and lead the future for Libraries Connected. Libraries Connected is an independent charity that supports, promotes and represents public library services in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Crown Dependencies.

Public libraries help tackle some of society's biggest challenges by providing community infrastructure, access to culture, literacy and the written word, learning opportunities and the essential digital resources for modern life.

Our vision is an inclusive, modern, sustainable and high quality public library service at the heart of every community in the UK.

The core mission and purpose of Libraries Connected is to act as a connector and catalyst to enable public libraries to have greater collective impact on big societal challenges.

The Board of Trustees is made up of 13 people responsible for Libraries Connected's strategic direction and governance.

Since becoming a charity in 2018, Libraries Connected has grown rapidly and delivered a wide range of national programmes, training and support to public libraries. We are pleased to have received a new funding settlement from Arts Council England as an Investment Priorities Support Organisation for the public libraries sector, and this will help us to deliver an ambitious strategy between 2023-27.

However, we have a lot of work to do. The organisation needs more opportunities to plan strategically and diversify our funding base; we need help to manage growth sustainably; and we need to make the case for libraries at a national level in an unprecedentedly tough public funding environment.



We are looking for both independent trustees and trustees from among our membership to help ensure we have a high performing board in this time. Our trustees must have a passion for the future of libraries, along with the vision, expertise and creativity to help us as we develop and grow. We are looking for a range of skills and experience among our trustees. You do not need to have a background in public libraries, but you must have a passion for our mission and purpose.

This information pack will provide you with information about the organisation's mission, core purposes and future plans and details about the key skills and attributes we are looking for in a trustee.

We want everyone who believes they can contribute to Libraries Connected's board of trustees to feel welcome to apply and we particularly welcome applications from people aged under 35, Black, Asian and ethnic minority candidates and D/deaf and disabled people.

It is our responsibility to make the application process accessible, and to give you the information you need to decide whether you might be suitable. If you require the pack or any further information in a different format, or have any questions before you apply, please get in touch with info@librariesconnected.org.uk

This is an exciting time for Libraries Connected and I look forward to hearing from applicants who share our passion for the public library sector.

Ayub Khan MBE

Libraries Connected President and Chair of the Board of Trustees



2. Introduction to Libraries Connected

We became Libraries Connected in 2018 and our current work builds on 20 years' experience as the Society of Chief Librarians. Our programmes and support now extend beyond heads of public library services to all library workers. We generate income from membership subscriptions, commissioned services, events and grants, including from Arts Council England as an Investment Principles Support Organisation for the public library sector.

Across the areas we serve there are 176 individual library services, with around 3,000 branches, serving over 61 million people. Each has a unique local offer that reflects the needs of its communities, but by connecting and working together, libraries can act with greater impact.

We will focus on the following four core areas of action over the next four years:

- **Drive** innovation at scale
- **Grow** and empower the sector through skills and diversity
- **Connect** individual library services to realise ambitions for the sector
- **Engage** and influence decision-makers to invest in the sector so that it can reach its potential

Through everything we do we seek to:

- Support climate responsibility and sustainability
- Promote equality, diversity and inclusion
- Harness connection and collaboration
- Support sustainable financial models
- Operate at national and regional scale

Our website will provide you with more information about our programmes and what we do: www.librariesconnected.org.uk.

You can also find a link to our new strategic plan here: [Libraries Connected publishes new strategic plan | Libraries Connected](#).



1. Trustee role

Independent Trustees

We are looking for a number of independent trustees to join our board. We are looking for a range of skills and experience, especially:

- **Finance skills:** we need at least one trustee with strong finance skills and experience to be both a trustee and a member of the Finance Committee. This could be someone with a good understanding of finance from any sector, but understanding of charity finance and/or experience of finance management in a charity or arts organisation would be ideal.
- **Communications skills:** we are looking for at least one trustee with knowledge and experience of managing campaigns and communicating sensitive issues. Political influencing skills would also be desirable. You may have gained this experience working in a charity or corporate environment or through campaigning for change in your local community.
- **Charity management skills:** ideally we would like to include someone on the board who has experience managing and/or leading a small or medium-sized charity (this could overlap with other skills).
- **Creative thinkers** who can challenge and suggest new ideas, to help us drive innovation.
- **Experience of working with national partner** organisations in the library and cultural sector would be great, but not essential for all trustees.

As part of your trustee role, you should aim to visit at least 2 library services per year, together with a Libraries Connected member of staff and to attend up to two networking or launch events per year.

Member Trustees

We are looking for a number of member trustees, who may have some of the above skills and experience. We are also looking for a mix of:

- **Sizes of library service** (both network and population)



- **Types** of library service constitution (e.g. mutual/charitable status, contracted services, Local Authority run and managed)
- Services working within different budget parameters and **financial situations**.

Time commitment

- **This role will take approximately 12 days per year**
- You will need to attend approximately 3 days of trustee training per year, this could be face-to-face or online.
- You will need to attend 4 to 5 meetings of the Board per year, with 4 meetings on average lasting half a day and 1 meeting likely to stretch over 2 days.
- In addition you may be asked to be a member of a board Committee which generally meet 3 times each year.
- Trustees generally meet at Islington Library, in London but since COVID-19 we have met online. In future we are planning at least 2 face-to-face meetings a year which may be in London or other locations around the country.
- Whilst this is a volunteer role, reasonable travel expenses will be reimbursed.
- The term of appointment will be three years initially with a review of performance for renewal for a further three years and again after this period for a maximum of nine years.

Benefits of being a trustee

- You will have the chance to make a real and positive difference to public library staff and communities across the country through your skills and experience
- You will gain an insight into how the public library sector is innovating and delivering impact by visiting library services and attending events launching new programmes and initiatives
- You will gain new skills and experience that could help you develop professionally and in your personal life
- You will hone and develop your critical thinking and strategic skills
- Previous trustees say that experience as a Libraries Connected trustee has given them confidence to go on to take other governance positions



'I have really felt that by being a trustee I have made a valuable contribution to the sector. I am able to share my skills, but have also learnt a great deal and gained strategic experience. I think sitting on the board helped me to develop and grow, but also gave me an opportunity to help and support others in the library world' (Carol Stump, Trustee)

Trustee responsibilities

Board members of the Society of Chief Librarians will be both directors of a company and trustees of a charity. They will therefore, have duties and responsibilities under company law and charity law.

As a trustee you will need to:

- Uphold and adhere to standards of charity governance as set out by the Charity Commission <https://www.charitygovernancecode.org/en/front-page>
- Ensure Libraries Connected complies with our articles of association and carries out our charitable objectives for the public benefit
- Share responsibility for ensuring that Libraries Connected complies with all legal and regulatory requirements
- Contribute to the strategic direction of the charity
- Monitor the performance of the executive against the organisation's strategic and operational plans
- Contribute to the identification and monitoring of risk
- Safeguard the good name and values of Libraries Connected
- Ensure the effective and efficient administration of Libraries Connected
- Ensure the financial stability of Libraries Connected
- Ensure equality and diversity is prioritised in all aspects of the organisation's business and operation

Formal guidance on the responsibilities of trustees is issued by the Charity Commission: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-cc3>



Trustee behaviours

In addition to the legal responsibilities of a trustee, we expect all Libraries Connected trustees to:

- Attend all four board meetings a year, with a minimum attendance of three.
- Read all board papers in advance and arrive at Board meetings prepared.
- Participate in meaningful discussions at Board (and committees) with your expertise, skills, knowledge and experience.
- Scrutinise Board papers and challenge the Board, Executive and Board's advisers constructively, ask questions, be inquisitive and welcome challenge back.
- Active input into discussions, apply good judgement and contribute to the decision-making process.
- Be prepared to support the charity outside of board meetings.
- Build constructive, positive relationships with other Trustees and staff with a willingness to listen and understand.
- Seek and increase knowledge, understanding and be willing to learn and improve.
- Have courage to make difficult decisions when required.
- Be an ambassador and an advocate at all levels for the future of public libraries and for Libraries Connected.
- Maximise your networks and identify opportunities that will benefit Libraries Connected and public libraries.



3. How to apply

To apply to be a trustee, please send a Curriculum Vitae (CV) and covering letter setting out how you feel you meet the person specification above to info@librariesconnected.org.uk

- All applications will be assessed against the criteria in this brief by the Board Nominations Committee
- **Please apply by 8 January.** Shortlisted applicants will be asked to attend an interview in London on 27th January or in Manchester on 3rd February. You will be asked to indicate your preferred location when contacted for interview.
- Reasonable travel expenses will be paid for those invited to attend interviews
- If you have any questions or queries, please email info@librariesconnected.org.uk by 3 January 2023 to arrange to speak to a current trustee before making an application.