



Trustee Pack

1. Foreword/welcome from Annabel Gittins

Dear Applicant,

I'm delighted that you are interested in helping to grow and lead our new charity, which has just received funding from Arts Council England to act as an Investment Principles Support Organisation with a focus on children, young people, families and libraries.

Our vision is that the imagination and aspirations of all children and young people can soar through exciting, vibrant and dynamic library services which promote inclusion and diversity, where their voices are heard, valued and reflected.

Our mission is to inspire all children and young people to reach their full potential by championing excellence, diversity and equality in libraries.

The Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians (ASCEL) has been a membership organisation for library staff for over 20 years, but it has only recently become a charity. We have appointed a dynamic new Chief Executive who will work with the Board of Trustees to lead and grow ASCEL and have set up a new head office in Wolverhampton Library.

We currently have a small board of 6 trustees, made up of ASCEL members and are now looking to expand our board to 15 people, including young people and independent trustees with the skills and experience to help our organisation grow sustainably and achieve its strategic objectives.

As we are a new organisation, we have a lot of work to do. Becoming a trustee at this time will give you the opportunity to help shape ASCEL's culture, strategy and ways of working. We need help to plan strategically and create a strong, diverse, financially sustainable and caring organisation with a high national profile.

Our trustees must have a passion for expanding the life chances and opportunities of children, young people and families, for the future of libraries, and for equality, diversity and inclusion. We are looking for a range of skills and experience among our trustees.

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 actively encourage applications from people who do not have a professional background in libraries and from experts by experience. We want everyone who believes they can contribute to ASCEL'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 annabel.gittins@ascel.org.uk

This is an exciting time for ASCEL and I look forward to hearing from applicants who share our passion for inspiring children and young people to achieve their full potential.



Annabel Gittins

ASCEL President and Chair of the Board of Trustees

2. Introduction to ASCEL

ASCEL is the national network of senior managers in Children's, Public and Schools Library Services. We were founded by library staff to provide the specialist skills, partnerships and programmes needed to deliver excellent services for children and young people in public and school library services. We provide training, peer support, best practice and initiatives that develop and improve services. We have 166 individual members from 140 library services. We have 9 active regional committees which support place-based partnership working across the country.

We reach all 151 library services in England through the Children and Young People's Promise, a Universal Library Offer. We also support those leading and delivering School Library Services. Our primary audience is staff and volunteers working with and delivering services for children and young people in libraries. All of our work is designed to ensure that all children and young people in England are able to experience exciting, vibrant and dynamic library services which promote inclusion and diversity.

In August 2021 we worked with members to begin a process of transformation and have invested in developing our organisation between 2021-23. We are now a registered charity, with a new CEO who has a strong track record in growing a small and new charity.

We were successful in gaining funding from Arts Council England to become an Investment Principles Support Organisation from 2023-2026. This means we will have £200,000 per year core

funding for this time to develop our support services for libraries and embed quality children's and young people's engagement across the library sector.

All of the above will enable us to build on our track record of delivering high quality programmes and initiatives and to provide a strong voice for children and young people in libraries.

Our strategic priorities for the next three years are:

1. **Children and young people feel that libraries are safe, welcoming places where their voices are heard and valued**, particularly the voices of those who do not currently use libraries, children and young people from all ethnic and cultural backgrounds, who identify as LGBTQIA+ and neurodivergent, disabled and D/deaf children and young people.
2. **The offer for Children and Young People is vibrant, dynamic and joined up** across public and school library services and through the Universal Library Offers and this in turn is integrated with other Arts Council England strategic investments in Children and Young people, especially Music Education Hubs and Local Cultural Education Partnerships
3. **Staff and volunteers working with children and young people in libraries have access to talent development and career pathways** and the value of specialist skills in this area is recognised and rewarded by employers
4. **The role of libraries in providing support and learning opportunities for children and young people is recognised and libraries are seen as first-call partners** for organisations delivering activities and interventions to support children and young people.
5. **ASCEL is a diverse, inclusive and effective organisation** that supports libraries to provide an excellent offer for children and young people through direct engagement with their audiences, and open and collaborative working with partners and which provides staff and volunteers with access to high quality training, support and national partnerships

Our website will provide you with more information about our programmes and what we do: www.ascel.org.uk and you can obtain a copy of our business plan by emailing Adam Tulloch our Chief Executive at adam.tulloch@ascel.org.uk.

3. Trustee role

We are looking for a number of 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, SORP submissions and/or experience of finance management in a charity of arts organisation would be ideal.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion expertise:** equality, diversity and inclusion is a central value of ASCEL and key to our strategic objectives. We are particularly interested in hearing from candidates with lived experience of equalities issues and who have a track record in community engagement and amplifying children and young people's voices.
- **Research and evaluation:** ASCEL will be undertaking a number of major research projects over the next two to three years and we are looking for someone with a strong professional

background in research and evaluation to help guide and advise on the development of these projects.

- **Communications skills:** we are looking for at least one trustee with knowledge and experience of strategic communication and charity brand development. 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).
- **Commercial development experience:** we are looking for a trustee with experience of developing commercial relationships, including contracts, growing and building ethical revenue and, if possible, membership expertise.
- **Strategic planning skills:** we are looking for trustees with any professional background who have experience of strategic planning and organisational development to help us grow strategically and sustainably.
- **Creative thinking skills and practice:** you may be a children's author or another artistic practitioner with experience of involving children and young people in your work, you may be a youth worker or member of a community who has developed innovative new services for children and young people. We'd love to have your experience and creativity on the board to challenge, engage and develop our understanding of what ASCEL can achieve.

You will be required to provide a clean enhanced DBS certificate if you become a trustee. ASCEL will be able to pay for you to get a new certificate if you do not have one.

Member Trustees

We are looking for one new member trustee, who may have some of the above skills and experience. We are particularly interested in hearing from member trustees working in library services based in London or Wales, where we have identified a gap in representation, and from members with experience of running school library services.

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 meetings of the Board per year:
 - 2 meetings per year will be face-to-face meetings in library services across the country, they will last up to 1 day and will include a presentation from the library service and a library visit. These will usually be on a weekday.
 - 2 meetings per year will be held online/virtually and will last from 3-6 pm on a weekday.
 - Trustees are required to attend a minimum of 3 meetings and a minimum of 1 face-to-face meeting per year

- In addition you may be asked to be a member of a board Committee which generally meet 3 times each year.
- We are looking for trustees from across England and Wales
- 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 children, young people and families through your skills and experience
- You will learn about library services for children and young people and get to visit them as a trustee to observe their activities and impact on the lives of the communities they serve
- 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

Trustee responsibilities

Board members of ASCEL 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 ASCEL complies with our articles of association and carries out our charitable objectives for the public benefit
- Share responsibility for ensuring that ASCEL 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 ASCEL
- Ensure the effective and efficient administration of ASCEL
- Ensure the financial stability of ASCEL
- 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 ASCEL 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 children's and young people's library services and for ASCEL.
- Maximise your networks and identify opportunities that will benefit ASCEL and children's and young people's library services

4. 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 Katie Pekacar at katie.pekacar@independentmind.co.uk by **17th April 2023**.

- All applications will be assessed against the criteria in this brief by the Chair and a committee of Trustees
- Shortlisted applicants will be asked to attend an interview in Wolverhampton on 4th May or 16th May. You will be asked to indicate your preferred date 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 Katie Pekacar **by 10th April 2023** to arrange to speak to a current trustee before making an application.