Chair of Trustees – Role Description

Bracknell Forest

The Chair leads the board, ensuring that it governs the charity effectively, in service of the charity's vision and mission. The Chair leads in an inclusive way, supporting the board to work together well, and providing support and challenge to the Head of Services in the ensuring our strategy is implemented. The Chair and all Trustees are volunteers.

In addition to the general responsibilities of a trustee, duties of the Chair include the following.

- Providing strategic leadership to the charity and the Board, ensuring that Home-Start Bracknell Forest achieves its mission.
- Ensuring the Board conducts its business in accordance with Home-Start Bracknell Forest's Articles of Association.
- Working in partnership with the Head of Services and operational team to achieve our mission and quality assurance standards as set out in the Home Start Handbook.
- Leading the board in ensuring that it fulfils its responsibilities for the governance of the organisation.
- Setting agendas, chairing and facilitating board meetings and other general meetings.
- Giving direction to board's strategic planning and policymaking
- Ensuring that decisions taken at meetings are implemented
- Bringing impartiality and objectivity to decision-making
- Planning the annual cycle of board meetings and other general meetings where required, for example annual general meeting
- Developing the board of trustees including recruitment, induction, training, appraisal and succession planning
- Addressing any conflict within the board and within the organisation, and liaising with the Head of Services to achieve this
- Liaising with the Head of Services to keep an overview of operational matters and to provide support as appropriate
- Leading the process of supporting, developing and appraising the performance of the Head of Services

Chair's routine tasks include

- Planning agenda and chairing 5 Board meetings annually. Currently meetings are held in person at the Open Learning Centre Rectory Lane Bracknell at 7pm.
- Arranging and attending an annual half-day strategy meeting.
- Bi-Monthly scheduled meeting with the Head of Services
- Occasional meetings within HSBF or with external stakeholders or partner organisations (in person or on-line)
- Arranging and chairing the AGM

We are looking for the following qualities in our Chair

Essential

- Experience of being a trustee. You do not need to have been a Chair before, but you do need an understanding of charity regulations and governance responsibility.
- Commitment to Home Start values and mission and to the promotion of its charitable objectives.
- Willingness to lead according to Home-Start values and engage with the wider Home-Start federation.
- A keen sense of strategic purpose.
- An inclusive leadership style: able to inspire and support everyone to participate on an equal footing.
- The ability to listen and engage effectively.
- Comfortable with challenge and debate and are able to encourage that in others whilst fostering a collaborative board environment.
- A strong personal commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion.
- Available to be responsive to situations that arise unexpectedly that require advice, guidance, approval.
- Commitment to Nolan's seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

Desirable

- Understanding of business management, company reporting, charity accounting.

Terms of office

- Trustees are appointed for a 4-year term of office which can be renewed for 3 further terms to a maximum of 12 years.
- This is a voluntary position, but reasonable expenses will be reimbursed.

Chair of Trustees - Information for applicants

Who are Home-Start Bracknell Forest?

HSBF has been supporting local families for 33 years.

We are an early help, family support charity helping families with young children deal with whatever life throws at them. We support families affected by isolation, bereavement, illness, mental health, financial insecurities, and more.

We work closely and collaboratively with local agencies to ensure we are able to identify and reach families in need. Our trained and supervised volunteers visit families in their homes, building confidence and trust, to help them cope with the stresses and strains of life with small children. Our programme of family-based group activities helps us to reach more people and give them the skills and community they need to nurture their children. **Because childhood can't wait.**

Our mission is to provide practical and emotional support to local families with small children that helps them grow in confidence, strengthens their relationships with their children and widens their links with the local community.

Our aims are to

- Reduce isolation and loneliness of families and promote community involvement.
- Improve the wellbeing of parents and children.
- Increase the self-confidence and self-esteem of people, (including children), withing the local community.
- Work closely with local organisations.
- Empower families with the skills and resilience to implement and sustain positive parenting.

How does HSBF work?

HSBF is part of a network of 190 local Home-Starts across the UK. Each local Home-Start is independent but is affiliated to Home Start UK by way of a membership agreement which sets out the parameters of how local Home-Starts should operate and provides a variety of central resources.

Who are HSBF's people?

We currently have a small staff of 5 part-time employees led by our excellent Head of Service, Sharon. Working closely as a team, our staff manage and co-ordinate our 39

family-based volunteers and group activities. We have a part-time Fundraising and Engagement Officer whose role it is to maximise our income through community engagement and managing grant applications.

We currently have 10 Trustees with a range of experience and diverse expertise. We regularly review our skills and succession plan to ensure we can continue to govern effectively and respond to any changes. Most Trustees take on a lead role to ensure we all benefit from our combined skills and experience.

How are we funded?

The value of HSBF in the local community is demonstrated in the vital funding provided by Bracknell Forest Council which constitutes 27% of our annual income. We are currently in year 3 of a 5-year Service Level Agreement to deliver our core 1-2-1 volunteer home visiting service.

Our other income sources include Parish Councils, Big Lottery Fund and grants and income from a variety of grant-awarding organisations, local supporters and foundations.

We are proud to report a strong financial position for 2026-27 and the successful implementation of key initiatives that will support the charity's long-term sustainability. However, with expenditure projected to increase, we continue to rely heavily on our fundraising ability which, in common with all charities, becomes more challenging each year.

Full details of our financial position and further information about the support we provide to local families can be found in our annual report for 2025-26 here

A copy of our latest annual accounts can be accessed via the Charity Commission website (registered charity number 1160447, Company number 9389303) and further information about our activities can be found on our own website www.hsbf.org.uk

What We Offer

- A meaningful leadership role making a tangible difference in people's lives
- A collaborative, experienced board and dedicated staff team
- A robust induction process and ongoing peer support
- A supported transition into the role, with flexibility around start model
- The support of the national Home-Start organisation, including access to training, resources and peer support

Updated November 2026

Time commitment

This is a voluntary role, with reasonable expenses reimbursed. The time commitment is approximately equivalent to 1 day per week, although this varies over the course of each year, including, in addition to bi-monthly Trustee meetings, regular meetings with the Head of Service, preparation time, and ad hoc stakeholder engagement. Outside of meetings, the Chair will often work on strategy, policies and procedures and other governance related matters and flexibility is needed to be able to respond to situations that arise unexpectedly that need advice, guidance, approval or resolution.

Recruitment process

Stage 1: Applications will be reviewed on receipt on a rolling basis. Selected candidates will be contacted with details (dates/times/locations) for a first stage interview with a small selection of our current trustees.

Stage 2: Candidates who are successful at stage 1 will have a further interview and will also have an opportunity to meet with the Head of Service and with some staff and volunteers.

All applicants will be notified of the progress and outcome of their application throughout the process.