



## Cockpit Trustee Role Description

March 2025

### ABOUT COCKPIT

[Cockpit](#) is a centre of excellence in contemporary craft. Home to 180 independent creative businesses practicing more than 20 different crafts – from ceramics to fine jewellery, handweaving to bespoke tailoring – we are the UK’s only business incubator for makers.

We equip makers with the tools to succeed: specialist studio space and equipment, in-house business coaching and public showcases. We work with hundreds more through careers programmes, training and consultancy in the UK and internationally.

With a mission to bridge the gap between talent and opportunity, we open pathways for new talent to grow thriving careers and succeed, creatively and commercially. Recognising that talent is everywhere but opportunity is not, we break down the economic and social barriers standing in the way of creative success. Each year we support 40 early-career practitioners with awards and bursaries, offering free studio space for 12 months, business training, and introductions to buyers and curators. Many who start out at Cockpit go on to enjoy a global reputation in their field.

For nearly 40 years, Cockpit has nurtured and supported craftspeople at the fragile early stages of their careers. We have been recognised as one of the UK’s 100 top-performing social enterprises on the NatWest Pioneers Post SE100 index, won the Provie It – Social Impact Award at the Social Enterprise Awards 2023 and were shortlisted for Charity Awards 2024 (Arts Culture & Heritage).

Our annual impact report, The Cockpit Effect, consistently shows above average economic and business outcomes for Cockpit makers, along with rich social and cultural impact. In 2023-24 makers’ total annual sales reached £8.3m, up 19% year on year and every £1 invested in



Cockpit generated £3.80 in gross added value. Over the same period Cockpit also reached beyond its studios supporting 274 makers nationally with 714 coaching sessions.

Creativity, innovation and business success are fuelled by diversity. At Cockpit we foster an inclusive, ambitious culture where all aspects of diversity are seen as fundamental to creative achievement and 25% of our makers have a Global Majority background. We like to think we shape things for the better: with skill, care and imagination.

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## OUR PEOPLE

### Our Board of Trustees

Cockpit has a strong and committed Board, led by the Chair of the Board. Our trustees bring experience in law, finance, communications, property, enterprise, design and craft.

Our Board usually meets four times a year (additional meetings may be required). Meetings are usually held in the early evening. Once a year, Trustees hold an awayday for in-depth strategic planning. Meeting dates are set a year in advance.

The main Board is supported by four committees, comprising Trustees and co-opted members: Finance, Audit and Risk, Commercial and Fundraising, Property and People. All Trustees are required to serve on at least one committee and, due to size of the Board, may be asked to serve on two.

Our meeting style is dynamic, collegiate and action-focused. The CEO attends Board meetings, and other staff join meetings as appropriate to support specific agenda topics.

Trustees are appointed for an initial three-year term, and, if they wish, can be re-elected for up to two further three-year terms.



All Trustees are also directors of the company, Cockpit Arts (trading as Cockpit) and required to fulfil the roles and responsibilities inherent in being a director of a company, as set out by Companies House.

The role of a Trustee is voluntary, with no remuneration. Travel and out of pocket expenses are reimbursed according to the charity's Expenses Policy.

## **Our Team**

Cockpit's day-to-day running is carried out by a permanent staff (currently 12), including a four-strong business incubation team, and communications, fundraising and studio management specialists. The staff team is supported by specialist freelancers.

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## **TRUSTEE AND DIRECTOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Duties**

The primary duties of a trustee, set out by the Charity Commission, are to:

1. Ensure that Cockpit is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit.
2. Comply with Cockpit's governing document and the law.
3. Act in the charity's best interests.
4. Manage the charity's resources responsibly.
5. Act with reasonable care and skill.
6. Ensure the charity is accountable.

### **Responsibilities**

1. As a member of the Board, contribute to Cockpit realising its aims, vision and goals, ensuring that appropriate strategies, plans, funding and governance arrangements are in place.
2. Contribute to a robust, positive, creative and constructive Board culture.
3. Serve on at least one Board Committee.

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4. Attend Cockpit events, including The Cockpit Effect launch and Cockpit Open Studios.
5. Be an advocate and champion of Cockpit to internal and external stakeholders, including Cockpit's maker community and funders.
6. Along with all other Trustees, accept legal responsibility for, and act as employers of, Cockpit staff.

To carry out these duties and responsibilities, you should:

- Be committed to Cockpit's purpose, objectives and values.
- Be constructive about other trustees' opinions in discussions, and in response to staff members' contributions at meetings.
- Act reasonably and responsibly when undertaking duties and performing tasks.
- Maintain confidentiality on sensitive and confidential information.
- Be supportive of the values (and ethics) of the organisation.
- Understand the importance and purpose of meetings and be committed to preparing for them adequately and attending them regularly.
- Analyse information and, when necessary, challenge constructively.
- Be able to make collective decisions and stand by them.
- Uphold all Cockpit's policies in particular, the charity's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, our Sustainability Policy, and the Safeguarding Policy.
- Adhere to The Seven Principles of Public Life (known as the Nolan Principles): selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership.

## Eligibility

You must affirm that you not [disqualified to serve as a Trustee](#).

## Charity Commission Guidance

You must familiarise yourself with the duties of Charity Trustees which are set out in full in the Charity Commission guidance [The Essential Trustee](#). A summary follows.

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## STATUTORY DUTIES

The statutory duties of a trustee, set out by the Charity Commission are to:

### 1. Make sure your charity is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit

You and your co-trustees must make sure the charity is carrying out the purposes for which it is set up, and no other purpose. This means you should:

- Make sure you understand the charity's purposes as set out in its governing document
- Plan what your charity will do and what you want it to achieve
- Be able to explain how all of the charity's activities are intended to further or support its purposes
- Understand how the charity benefits the public by carrying out its purposes.

Spending charity funds on the wrong purposes is a serious matter. In some cases trustees may have to reimburse the charity personally.

### 2. Comply with your charity's governing document and the law

You and your co-trustees must:

- Make sure that the charity complies with its governing document
- Comply with charity law requirements and other laws that apply to your charity

You should take reasonable steps to find out about legal requirements, for example by reading relevant guidance or taking appropriate advice when you need to.

### 3. Act in your charity's best interests

You must:

- Do what you and your co-trustees (and no one else) decide will best enable the charity to carry out its purposes
- With your co-trustees, make balanced and adequately informed decisions, thinking about the long term as well as the short term
- Avoid putting yourself in a position where your duty to your charity conflicts with your personal interests or loyalty to any other person or body

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- Not receive any benefit from the charity unless it is properly authorised and is clearly in the charity's interests; this also includes anyone who is financially connected to you, such as a partner, dependent child or business partner

## 4. Manage your charity's resources responsibly

You must act responsibly, reasonably and honestly. This is sometimes called the duty of prudence. Prudence is about exercising sound judgement.

You and your co-trustees must:

- Make sure the charity's assets are only used to support or carry out its purposes
- Avoid exposing the charity's assets, beneficiaries or reputation to undue risk
- Not over-commit the charity
- Take special care when investing or borrowing
- Comply with any restrictions on spending funds or selling land

## 5. Act with reasonable care and skill

As someone responsible for governing a charity, you:

- Must use reasonable care and skill, making use of your skills and experience and taking appropriate advice when necessary
- Should give enough time, thought and energy to your role, for example by preparing for, attending and actively participating in all trustees' meetings

## 6. Ensure your charity is accountable

You and your co-trustees must comply with statutory accounting and reporting requirements.

You should also:

- Be able to demonstrate that your charity is complying with the law, well run and effective
- Ensure accountability within the charity, particularly where you delegate responsibility for particular tasks or decisions to staff or volunteers

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This Trustee Role Description is reviewed annually and is subject to updates from time to time in line with changes in Charity Commission guidance and requirements.

Last updated March 2025