



**GREAT
WESTERN**
Air Ambulance Charity

Chair of Trustees

Information Pack 2024



www.gwaac.com

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Welcome



Thank you for your interest in becoming a Trustee of Great Western Air Ambulance Charity (GWAAC), and our next Chair of Trustees.

I became involved with GWAAC after my son was helped by an air ambulance after a skiing accident, and I have now been a Trustee for nearly seven years, and Chair for five years. As I look towards the end of my maximum term, of nine years, the time is right for GWAAC to find a new Chair to lead us into the future.

With GWAAC I am always learning something new, even at this stage in my career! Whilst many of the issues that face the charity are common to many organisations, such as balancing income and expenditure and dealing with people, the specialist nature of what our operational team do, the breadth of our fundraising activity and the constant evolution of the charity means there is always something fresh and interesting going on. However, our Board is focused on governance – thanks to a professional management team our Trustees are not expected to be 'hands on'.

As a Trustee I get an insight into the world of pre-hospital emergency care, which I would not be able to experience otherwise. I meet people who inspire and challenge me, who I would not usually come across, and I have the satisfaction of knowing that I am helping to save lives in my local community.

GWAAC attends five or six incidents a day on average; all of which are expected to be life threatening or life-changing for the person involved. Our team brings critical care skills to the scene of an accident or medical incident, and with our specialist equipment and drugs, we improve outcomes for patients. Sometimes this means saving a life, sometimes it means preventing further harm or disability for the patient, but sadly sometimes we cannot save the person's life. This is the reality of what our teams deal with, day in, day out.





To support them in their roles, they need a charity which funds their salaries and the training, equipment and drugs they need. They need a helicopter and critical care cars. They need managers who support them and develop their practice. They need good working relationships with other organisations. They need a safe base from which to operate, and ideally one that supports their wellbeing. And they need a strong Board of Trustees who ensure that GWAAC is working effectively, maintaining high standards in everything it does and striving to improve.

During the course of this year the GWAAC Board will decrease to six Trustees with a breadth of skills including finance, aviation, legal, public sector, medical and commercial, as well as first hand experience of our service.

Our Trustees and the whole GWAAC family deserve a new Chair who is ambitious for our patients, adds value to our charity and demonstrates our values in action.

We hope to hear from you soon.

Martyn Drake, outgoing Chair of Trustees



Our new Chair needs to help us achieve our 2024 – 2028 Strategy...

Our Purpose

Why do we exist?

Because a life-changing illness or injury could happen to you, anywhere, any time, and you deserve the best care, as soon as possible.

Why are we the ones to help?

Because we have amazing people with extraordinary skills, all committed to saving lives in our local communities, who can help you when you need us.

Why can we do what we do?

Because, just as GWAAC's people care for our communities, you care for them - your generosity keeps GWAAC flying, and keeps us saving lives.

Our Values



Compassionate



Dedicated



Curious



Collaborative



Our Ambitions, 2024 to 2028

1. Deliver clinical and operational excellence

This is the core of what we do, but we know we can do even better. We plan to invest in the development of our clinicians and the people they work with to provide the best care for patients. We want to make sure we are dispatched to the patients who can benefit most from our expertise, get more involved in research and become more evidence and data driven, so we know what we do really makes an impact. We want to be there for anyone who needs us, and make sure that everyone can benefit equitably from our expertise.

2. Our team is the best it can be

Our people are our greatest resource – we rely on them to deliver our service, raise the funds we need and run the charity, and we need to support them to do this. We want to improve the wellbeing support available to our team, formalise development pathways so people can enhance their skills and help our doctors to balance working with GWAAC with their other commitments. We also want to review our recruitment processes and develop our culture so we can attract and retain the best people, be genuinely inclusive and remove the barriers between our clinical and non-clinical teams.

3. Be socially and environmentally responsible

Our team and our supporters rightly expect that we behave ethically in everything we do. We pride ourselves on our Great Western Hearts CPR and Defib projects, but want to expand their reach, and we are making good progress towards being more environmentally sustainable, but there is still a long way to go. We want to engage all our people in helping us reach our aims in these areas, by removing barriers that diverse groups might experience when in contact with us and by enhancing the support we offer to former patients and bereaved families.



4. Be the charity that local people choose to support

Put simply, we need more money so we can be there for anyone experiencing a life-changing or life-threatening event, to train more people in CPR, to provide more defibrillators, to support former patients and bereaved families and to continue providing the best available clinical care. We need people to know who we are and why we need their support, to raise more funds through legacies, regular gifts and our lottery, and to benefit from time given by more volunteers. We will replace our database with a modern system to help us manage our external relationships, increase our visibility, review our fundraising activities, generate more money from commercial activities and make sure we are providing real value to local communities.



5. Be an excellent organisation

Our supporters trust us with their donations, and we need to make sure we continue to use them effectively and efficiently to provide our service and generate additional funds. We want to increase our focus on using evidence and evaluation to inform and improve our work, continue to professionalise our supporting systems and use new technology where appropriate. We also want to collaborate more with other air ambulances and relevant organisations, so we can use our resources jointly to have a bigger impact. We plan to recruit new Trustees to our Board, bringing in different experiences and skills to improve our governance.

6. Create a Mission Support Centre

Underpinning our Ambitions is the creation of a Mission Support Centre at our airbase. This will be crucial in helping us to improve our people's wellbeing, join our clinical and non-clinical teams together, enhance our support for former patients and bereaved families, deliver CPR and clinical training to the public and other stakeholders and provide a hub for our ever-increasing fundraising and engagement activities.



How GWAAC serves the community

In December 2020, our Critical Care Team were called to assist a land ambulance crew in Little Stoke, South Gloucestershire. Logan, a 12 year old boy, was suffering a life-threatening medical emergency. It was every parent's worst nightmare.

Mum, Sue, said: "Me, Logan and his sister Elayna were at home. I told them to get dressed so that we could take the dog out.

Then I heard my daughter calling for me saying that Logan had a headache. I thought he just didn't want to come for the walk, but when I got upstairs he was doubled over in pain."

Sue called 999 immediately.

Paramedics from South Western Ambulance Service arrived to find Sue and her friend giving CPR to Logan. The Paramedics called for more specialist help and GWAAC's Critical Care Doctor, Andy, and Specialist Paramedics, Fleur and Mark, were dispatched to assist.

On scene, our crew placed Logan into an induced coma to protect his brain from further damage. They performed a pre-hospital emergency anaesthesia and once stable, took Logan to Bristol Children's Hospital in a land ambulance. He was immediately taken for emergency surgery to relieve pressure on his brain.

Sue said: "I remember being scared to death, but the Paramedics and air ambulance crew were incredible. They helped my son, took care of me and even helped Elayna make her lunch. The crew went with Logan in the ambulance and when they left us with the team in the hospital, they said to bring Logan to GWAAC's airbase when he is better."

Logan has since had more surgery on his brain to remove abnormal veins, and nine months after the incident, he visited our airbase with his family.

Sue continues, "It was great to meet Fleur. She loved seeing Logan and how well he's doing and he got to talk to her about that day and how they helped him.

Logan is alive and well with no side effects thanks to the quick response of the Paramedics and the specialist skills that only your air ambulance team could bring. I am so thankful to everyone who helped us that day."



Who we are looking for

We are looking for someone with previous charity Board experience, who shares our Values and who will work with fellow Trustees and the CEO to make a positive difference to patients. The new Chair will need to take the time to understand the intricacies of our charity, which can be more complex than it first appears.

The new Chair will have the time needed to carry out the role, be willing to challenge, ask difficult questions and to learn from others. We want a Chair who is dedicated to our cause, curious about how we can do better, compassionate towards our people and collaborative in their approach. They will help us develop and maintain a culture of high performance which is genuinely inclusive.

We recently conducted a skills audit of our Board and identified the need to recruit Trustees with expertise in the following areas:

- Planning, construction and facilities management
- Fundraising
- Marketing and communications
- Aviation
- Clinical policy and research
- Gambling and lottery legislation and regulations

Whilst the key skills needed by a Chair of Trustees are leadership, the ability to connect people and organisations, collaboration and people skills, it would be useful if the successful applicant also had experience of one of the above.

In common with much of the charity sector, we lack diversity of experience, background, age and culture on our existing Board. We know this needs to change, and our new Chair will play a key role in this. For both the Chair and future Trustee roles we actively welcome applications from groups who are under-represented on Trustee Boards.

We also particularly welcome applicants who have had personal experience of our service, or potentially another air ambulance, as a patient or a friend or family member of a patient.

We expect that, once settled in, our new Chair will wish to recruit additional Trustees to complement the existing skills of the Board, and to add diversity of experience and thought.



Role description

This is an exciting opportunity to contribute at a strategic level to a charity dedicated to saving lives in our local communities.

Our new Chair of Trustees will:

- Provide leadership to the Board of Trustees
 - demonstrate excellent governance skills and high personal standards
 - hold Trustees to account for their contributions and performance
 - help Trustees to develop in their roles
 - ensure that Trustees remain focused on governance and appropriate matters rather than operational decisions
 - ensure that the Board operates as a collective rather than as individuals
 - ensure that the Board acts within appropriate policies, procedures, laws, regulations and guidelines at all times, taking appropriate specialist advice if necessary
- Help set the culture of the charity, explicitly demonstrating our Values in action
- Be an ambassador and the public face of GWAAC in partnership with the CEO and other senior staff
- Develop and maintain productive relationships with Trustees, the CEO and other senior managers and key stakeholders
- Build, maintain and utilise external networks to further GWAAC's interests
- Provide support, and where appropriate, challenge the CEO
- Be guided by the Nolan Principles and our Values in all they do



The duties of all Trustees of Great Western Air Ambulance Charity are to:

- Ensure that the charity applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of the objectives in its Memorandum of Association
- Ensure that the charity complies with all aspects of its Memorandum of Association, Articles of Association, charity law and all other relevant legislation and statutory guidance
- Keep informed about the charity's activities and relevant local and national issues
- Contribute to the role of the Board, which is to give clear strategic direction, set overall policy, approve and monitor the annual budget, set targets and evaluate performance
- Support, question and monitor the performance of senior staff
- Ensure that the charity conducts its business in accordance with its values
- Safeguard the reputation of the charity
- Declare any conflict of interest at Board meetings or at any other time if they become apparent while carrying out Trustee duties
- Be collectively responsible for Board decisions and all aspects of the charity's business
- Ensure the efficient and effective administration of the charity's affairs
- Ensure the financial stability of the charity
- Protect and properly manage the charity's assets and ensure prudent investment of its funds
- Ensure that the charity is adequately insured against all reasonably foreseeable liabilities
- Use any specific knowledge or experience to help the Board reach sound decisions
- Make every effort to attend Board meetings and come prepared to contribute effectively
- Participate in other tasks from time to time, e.g. promoting the charity's public profile and helping with corporate fundraising



Person specification

Successful applicants will be able to demonstrate the following experience, skills and attributes:

- Significant Board level experience in one or more UK charities
- Excellent understanding of charity governance principles and practices
- Collaborative working in formal groups and with partner organisations
- Skill in planning and chairing meetings effectively
- Significant experience of strategic planning and major projects
- Sound commercial acumen, including ability to understand and interpret accounts
- Ability to absorb complex information, including financial information, assimilate this with other knowledge and critically analyse it
- Understanding of the boundaries between Trustees and management teams
- Ability to build effective relationships with Trustees, the CEO and other key stakeholders
- Ability to build, maintain and utilise contacts and networks for the benefit of GWAAC
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Ability to attend regular Board meetings, usually quarterly, and other ad hoc events

- Understanding of the health sector and/or emergency services
- Knowledge of the area and communities covered by GWAAC (Bristol, Bath and North East Somerset, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire, Gloucestershire and parts of Wiltshire)
- Good team working and communication skills, including the ability to ask questions and challenge others appropriately
- A commitment to safeguarding, equality, diversity, sustainability and social responsibility
- Sound ICT skills, including email and common Microsoft Office applications
- Understanding of the obligations and responsibilities of a Trustee
- Legally eligible to become a Trustee, and free from conflicts of interest which would prevent you carrying out this role objectively



Guidance and Support

All new Trustees are expected to attend orientation meetings, which will likely include:

- A visit to the charity's main office, meeting staff
- A visit and tour of the airbase, meeting the Operations Officer, Medical Director, clinical crew and pilot
- Individual meeting with the CEO
- Meeting with the outgoing Chair
- Meeting with the charity's other senior managers
- Meeting with the Supporter Engagement Coordinator for the Trustee's home area

If you are appointed you will be provided with a series of documents which will give context and explanation regarding the charity's current position, live issues and future plans. You will also be asked to confirm that you have read and understood key policies.

You will be provided with links to general resources for Trustees, such as those available on the Charity Commission website. Voscur provide guidance, support and training for the voluntary sector in our area. They run regular training courses for Trustees and GWAAC Trustees are encouraged to take advantage of these. Further information can be found at:

<https://www.voscur.org/>

However, as an experienced Trustee and our incoming Chair, we expect you to be relatively self-directed in identifying what you need to know and either finding it out or asking for support in doing so.





Frequently asked questions

Am I eligible to be a Trustee?

You must be at least 16 years old to be a Trustee of GWAAC.

You must not act as a Trustee if you are disqualified under the Charities Act, including if you:

- Have an unspent conviction for an offence involving dishonesty or deception (such as fraud)
- Are bankrupt or have entered into a formal arrangement (e.g. an individual voluntary arrangement) with a creditor
- Have been removed as a company director or charity Trustee because of wrongdoing

How much time is required?

The Board meets quarterly, usually on a weekday afternoon for two to three hours. There will be papers to be read in advance of these meetings, which could be anything from 30 to 100 pages, depending on the agenda. These are usually circulated five to seven days in advance. The Chair usually approves all papers in advance of Board papers being issued.

GWAAC is a member of the national charity, Air Ambulances UK, which runs various events throughout the year which you will be expected to attend. This would likely amount to two full days a year.



As Chair, you will be expected to attend some key events, or to meet significant stakeholders. You will also play a key role in recruiting new Trustees, and depending on how long you stay in post, potentially a new CEO.

In addition, you will be expected to keep up to date with changes in the expectations for Trustees and maintain a general awareness of what is happening in our sector and local area.

Each Chair will approach their duties in a different way, but in general you can expect to fulfil everything asked of you in an average of two hours per week, although this will be very variable through the year.

How long do I need to commit to the role for?

Each appointment term is three years, and we believe that a Trustee should commit to a full term when they apply. However, we know that things might change, and you can resign anytime. The maximum length of time you can serve as a Trustee is nine years.

What skills do I need?

You need to be able to absorb information that is presented in writing, electronically and in person. You must be able to combine this new information with any existing knowledge you have of the topic, do any further research you feel you need, weigh up the information critically and ask searching questions.

You must be able to think strategically, and consider the longer term aims of the charity, the environment we work in, how we impact on stakeholders and how they could impact on us. When working at Board level not everything is clear cut – decisions may need to be made without full information, there may be differences of opinion, and you will need to trust the charity's employees to make operational and pragmatic decisions in accordance with our Scheme of Delegation.

Team working skills are important. The Board acts collectively and in general will discuss issues until there is an agreement on the best way forward – as Chair you will be responsible for making sure this happens. You must have good listening skills, value the contributions of other members of the Board and wider team, and behave appropriately,

according to the situation. In general, we describe our approach at GWAAC as being highly professional, but very warm, and you will be able to model this.

GWAAC is there for everyone in our communities, whatever their age, gender identity, income, health needs, ethnicity, background or sexual orientation. We actively seek to become part of our local communities, part of the fabric of people's lives, thought about in the same way as people think of the NHS and hospices – worthy of their support and in turn there to support them. We need to get better at ensuring we have people in our staff team, our crew, our Board and volunteer ground crew who are representative of these communities. As a Trustee and Chair you will need to be cognisant of this, champion diversity and inclusion and challenge us to do things differently in order to do things better. We believe the key attributes you will need for these are self-awareness, humility, curiosity and dedication to improving things.

You will also be expected to act as an ambassador for GWAAC. The charity depends on local networks of individuals and organisations to support us and fundraise for us. As Chair you will be expected to speak positively about the charity and the work we do with your networks, making appropriate introductions and helping charity staff to make new contacts. You will need to meet key stakeholders and help us communicate how much we value their support.



What are the risks to me personally?

GWAAC is a professional organisation and takes its responsibilities seriously. We are registered with such bodies as the Information Commissioners Office and the Fundraising Regulator.

It's extremely rare, but not impossible, for charity Trustees to be held personally liable:

- to their charity, if they cause a financial loss by acting improperly
- to a third party that has a legal claim against the charity which the charity can't meet

Understanding potential liabilities will help you to protect yourself and our charity by taking action to reduce the risk. This includes complying with your duties.

GWAAC is a limited company, and therefore the liability of each individual Trustee cannot exceed £1.

Do I need insurance?

GWAAC takes out Legal Liability, Employment Practices Liability and Directors Liability insurance coverage for all Trustees. This protects the Trustee and charity as a whole against liability arising from a wrongful act by a Trustee.

Can I claim expenses?

If you wish to you can claim certain out of pocket expenses that you may incur when carrying out your Trustee role, such as mileage or car parking. We will fund certain training courses. Trustees are not paid; this is a voluntary role.



Where can I find out more about GWAAC?

You can find general information about our charity on our website:
www.gwaac.com

You can also read our annual reports here: [Register of Charities – The Charity Commission](#)

We are active on social media, so please find and Like or Follow us at:

- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [Linkedin](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [YouTube](#)

Where can I find out more about being a Trustee?

We suggest that anyone interested in becoming a Trustee spends some time examining the guidance on the following websites:

- [Home — Charity Governance Code](#)
- [The essential trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do \(CC3\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission
- www.voscur.org/



What happens next?

If you are interested in the role of Chair of Trustees, then you are invited to email jobs@gwaac.com with some brief details about yourself, and our Chief Executive, Anna Perry, will get in touch.

To apply, we require a CV along with a covering letter, combined no more than eight sides of A4. These should be returned to jobs@gwaac.com by 09:00 on Monday 8 July.

Two existing Trustees and the Chief Executive will shortlist the applicants, based on the Person Specification. Checks will be carried out on shortlisted applicants to ascertain whether the person is barred from becoming a Director. The Board of Trustees will be invited to comment on the recommended shortlist.

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to an interview with two Trustees, the Chief Executive and a senior manager.

Candidates who are successful at interview will be invited to attend a relevant event or location, such as a visit to our airbase, to meet more of our team.

If there are no concerns and we consider you that you will be a good fit for our Board and be able to contribute to our work, you will be invited to the next Board meeting. This is an opportunity for you to meet the full Board of Trustees and to demonstrate how you contribute to a Board meeting.

If you are successful at the end of this process, we will ask you to confirm your willingness to serve in writing and to complete a declaration of interests.

Following your successful attendance at the next Board meeting, you will be formally appointed as a GWAAC Trustee, and subsequently take over the Chair role.





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