

The London Library Trustee Placement Scheme

Background

As an independent organisation The London Library has always been self-governing. Today the Library is a registered charity with a general annual turnover of £4 million. Its long-term strategic governance is in the hands of a body of committed volunteer Trustees drawn from the membership. All members are welcome to volunteer for trusteeship.

The Trustees are legally responsible under the Charter & Byelaws for the government and control of the Library. They must work collectively:

- to ensure the long-term well-being and effectiveness of the Library for present and future generations of users;
- to ensure that the Library's assets are safeguarded, its financial responsibilities met and its resources applied appropriately in pursuance of its declared charitable aim; and
- to ensure that the Library functions within the legal and financial requirements of a registered charity.

What is the Trustee Placement Scheme?

The scheme represents an exciting development opportunity for our younger members and may be particularly interesting to those seeking employment or trusteeship in the charity sector now or in the future. The scheme is open to members of the Library aged up to 30 and benefits the Library by bringing to the board the perspectives of younger members.

Although the Trustee Placements are not trustees under the Library's Charter and Byelaws and therefore do not have fiduciary responsibility, for all other intents and purposes they are treated as Trustees. They are expected to attend and contribute at all Board meetings, and any specific committees to which they are attached, as well as supporting and representing the Library at member events.

The Trustee Placements are given a thorough induction into the working of the Library by Library staff and additional support and training on any aspects of the role that may be unfamiliar eg how to read financial papers is available. Each placement is given a trustee mentor, who takes responsibility for helping develop them into and fulfil their role.

What are the main tasks facing the Trustee Board?

The issues concerning Trustees vary from year to year but the key tasks are always:

- to approve strategies, policies, plans and budgets to achieve the Library's aims and monitor performance against them
- to appoint the Director (Chief Executive), monitor his or her performance and provide appropriate support;
- to agree or ratify decisions on matters which might create significant risk to the Library, financial or otherwise;

What sort of commitment is involved?

Trustee Placements will serve a two-year term. They will be expected:

- to attend trustee meetings regularly and contribute appropriate skills, interests and knowledge;
- to reflect the Trustees' agreed policies and concerns whenever acting as a representative of the Trustees; and,
- to champion the cause and reputation of the Library, identifying and engaging potential new supporters.

The Trustees hold **four routine board meetings a year** (usually February, May, July, and October) and others may be called if needed. Board meetings are held at the Library or an adjacent venue on a weekday at 4.30 pm and last about two hours. Trustee Placements are usually also asked to join one or two of the standing committees (Buildings & Facilities, Development, Finance, Membership, Collections and Nominations). Each committee generally meets four times per year. Trustees (and Trustee Placements) are expected to attend the AGM each autumn and are strongly encouraged to attend fundraising and membership recruitment events.

What sort of expertise is needed?

Experience as a Trustee is not a pre-requisite for these positions. All sorts of people make good trustees and a wide variety of knowledge and experience can be put to the service of the Library. First and foremost, as a Trustee Placement, it is important that you should be able and willing to:

- think strategically about the long-term interests of the Library;
- listen to others' views and contribute your own to help reach decisions collectively;
- collaborate effectively with the Library's professional staff; and,
- promote the Library and help find new members and supporters

We are keen to achieve greater diversity among our Board of Trustees so we welcome applications regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation or age. While we are interested in some particular skills and experiences that are sometimes associated with professional qualifications, no specific educational or professional qualification is required in order to become a London Library Trustee Placement.

How do I volunteer?

An application form and further information are available from our website (please click on 'Work for us') or by emailing the Director's PA, Sarah Farthing at sarah.farthing@londonlibrary.co.uk.

Deadline

Applications need to be submitted by

Selection process

The Nominations Committee reviews all of the submissions and creates a shortlist of applicants who seem to match the Library's particular needs most closely and will benefit most from this scheme. Informal interviews will be held for these applicants to discuss the responsibilities of the scheme and what they have to offer in more detail. Following interviews the Nominations Committee will recommend two candidates to the Board of Trustees for approval.

Interview dates: