

BLESMA TRUSTEE VACANCIES

RECRUITMENT OF BLESMA TRUSTEES

Background

Our History

The First World War led to the birth of nearly 18,000 charities supporting veterans, of which around 10 exist today. Blesma is one.

Forty thousand Service men lost limbs or eyes during the First World War – and lived to return to a “land fit for heroes”. They were swiftly disillusioned. Amputation techniques were in their infancy, artificial limbs primitive and, with mass unemployment the order of the day, 90% of the nation’s war limbless could not find work.

During this period the limbless gathered together in groups determined if society would not help them, they would help themselves. So the Limbless Ex-Service Men’s Association was born and grew, finally achieving national status in 1932 as the British Limbless Ex-Service Men’s Association – Blesma.

Since its creation Blesma has lobbied successive governments to achieve improvements in pensions, in standards of artificial limbs and in the provision of suitable motor transport and employment opportunities. Residential care has been provided, wide ranging health and well-being services initiated, sporting activities undertaken and innovative research commissioned, all helped by the ceaseless fund-raising activities of devoted members and supporters.

Blesma has helped over 62,000 amputees since 1932 and we have been the only national Armed Forces Charity that supports limbless veterans for the duration of their lives. Modern medicine transforms the physical injury, but it is a complicated process to treat the emotional trauma and related lifelong health problems.

Our Mission

Blesma is here to assist its people to lead independent and fulfilling lives.

Our Ethos

Blesma is a specialist Service charity, an Association.

We work tirelessly to meet the challenges of injury, to bring comfort, and to help realise individual potential. We are not a charity provider that has beneficiaries in the normal sense; we are an Association with the Membership (contributors and beneficiaries) central to our existence and purpose.

Each year we support up to three thousand Members and Widows.

As a matter of principle and as far as practicable, Member is encouraged to help Member; this is applied from Board level where over half of the current trustees are amputee members for instance.

We seek to attract and employ the best people from the widest talent pool, as well as those who reflect the diverse nature of our society. Blesma encourages a culture where people can be themselves and be valued for their strengths. The Trust operates across the United Kingdom, and applications from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are particularly welcome.

A generic Job Description for the role of Trustee is below. This is followed by a more detailed Person Specification for a Member being a Trustee.

JOB DESCRIPTION – Blesma TRUSTEE

1. **General.** The Board of Trustees (the Board), must hold Blesma 'in trust' for current and future members and their dependants¹. It does this “variously and individually” by addressing five key responsibilities:
 - a. Maintenance of a clear strategic vision, underpinned by sound planning and programming.
 - b. Compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements.
 - c. Overseeing the performance and culture of Blesma.
 - d. Guardianship of Blesma’s total assets, maintaining a duty of prudence.
 - e. Ensuring the highest standards of governance.
2. **Individual.** Trustees will individually:
 - a. Act within the governing document of Blesma and the law; and abide by the policies and procedures of the Association.
 - b. Support the objects and the mission statement of Blesma, using the skills or knowledge they have to further that mission.
 - c. Develop and maintain a sound and up-to-date knowledge of Blesma, including an understanding of how the Association operates, the social, political and economic environment in which it operates and the nature and extent of its work within the Service charity sector.
 - d. Strive to be an active trustee, making their skills, experience and knowledge available to Blesma both within meetings of the Board and seeking additional work outside such meetings, including membership of sub-committees if so invited.
 - e. Respect organisational, Board and individual confidentiality, whilst never using confidentiality as an excuse not to disclose matters that should be transparent and open.
 - f. Accept their responsibility to ensure that Blesma is well managed and will raise issues and questions in an appropriate and sensitive manner to ensure that this is the case.
 - g. Act in the best interests of Blesma as a whole and not as a representative of any group - considering what is best for Blesma and its present and future beneficiaries and avoiding bringing Blesma into disrepute.
 - h. Attend all appropriate meetings, including the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and other appointments at Blesma.

¹ For more detail on the duties and responsibilities of a charity trustee see: [Charity Commission Guidance - The essential trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do\(CC3\)](#)

i. Actively engage in discussion, debate and voting in meetings; contributing in a considered and constructed way, listening carefully, challenging sensitively and participating in collective decision making.

3. **Collective.** The Board as a whole delivers the annual governance cycle which amounts to:

April. Finalising the report and accounts for the previous financial year, confirming strategic intentions, and confirming tasks for sub-committees.

June. Assessing in year performance and risks, confirming strategic direction and delivering the AGM to the membership.

September. Reviewing the strategy and setting ambition for the next financial year.

November. Endorsing the budget for the next financial year and adjusting plans.

PERSON SPECIFICATION – Blesma TRUSTEE

1. **Eligibility.** To be eligible for consideration as a Trustee you must:

- a. Be over 18.
- b. Not be an undischarged bankrupt.
- c. Have not previously been removed or disqualified, on the grounds of misconduct or mismanagement in the administration of a charity, from trusteeship of a charity by a court or the Charity Commission.
- d. Not be under a disqualification order under the Company Directors' Disqualification Act 1986.
- e. Not have been convicted of an offence involving deception or dishonesty (unless the conviction is spent).

2. **Practice.** The Governance Standing Instructions of the Association rule that Trustees personally:

- a. Will not put themselves in a position, unless authorized, where their personal and/or financial interests conflict with their duty to act in the interests of the Association. Where there is a conflict of interest, Trustees will ensure that this is managed effectively in line with Blesma's policies.
- b. Will prepare fully for all meetings and work for the Association. This will include reading papers, querying anything not understood, thinking through issues before meetings and completing any tasks assigned in the agreed time.
- c. Will actively contribute towards improving the governance of the Board, participating in induction and training and sharing ideas for improvement with the Board.
- d. Endeavour to work considerately and respectfully with all those they come into contact with at Blesma. They will respect diversity, different roles and boundaries and avoid giving offence. In the interests of the Association Trustees should be prepared to challenge on a matter in a constructive and respectful manner.

e. Recognize that the roles of trustees, volunteers and staff of Blesma are different and will seek to understand and respect the difference between these roles and support them all.

f. Maintain the separation of any role as a trustee and as a volunteer within the Association.

For more information

There is a wealth of information about what we do on our website: www.blesma.org. You may also wish to refer to our [Strategic Plan](#) and the latest [Trustees Annual Report](#).

Application Process

Application is by way of a CV and a Supporting Statement addressed to:

The Deputy National Chairman
Blesma, the Limbless Veterans
115 New London Road
Chelmsford
Essex
CM2 0QT

Email: officeandfacilities@blesma.org

The closing date for applications will be Tuesday 8th December 2020.