

Chair of Trustees Role Descriptor

Purpose of the Role

The Chair of Trustees provides values-led leadership to the Board of Youth Connect South West (YCSW), ensuring the organisation is well governed, strategically focused and able to deliver its charitable purpose.

The Chair embeds YCSW's Vision, Mission and Values in directing the Board to lead, make decisions and operate. The Chair supports and holds the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to account, enables trustees to work collectively, transparently and effectively, and represents YCSW externally as a trusted ambassador.

About Youth Connect South West

Vision

Inspiring young people.

We aim to inspire young people, and we are inspired by them. Their ideas, strengths and experiences drive what we do.

Mission

Creating opportunities with young people so they can be safe, be heard, belong and grow.

We work alongside young people, creating the space for change while recognising that the change belongs to them.

Values

Our values guide our culture, leadership and decision-making:

- Inclusivity
- Collaboration
- Accountability
- Creativity
- Trustworthiness

The Chair is expected to actively demonstrate and promote these values through their leadership of the Board.

How the Role Operates at YCSW

At YCSW, the Chair role is defined by *how* leadership is exercised as much as *what* is done.

- Vision-led: keeping the Board focused on long-term impact for young people and staying curious about lived experience.
- Mission-driven: ensuring governance supports work *with* young people, not *to* them.
- Values-based: modelling inclusive, collaborative, accountable and transparent leadership at Board level.

Key Responsibilities

Board Leadership and Governance

- Lead the Board of Trustees to operate effectively, collectively and in line with its legal responsibilities.
- Chair Board meetings, ensuring good preparation, inclusive participation and constructive challenge.
- Ensure trustees understand their roles, responsibilities and boundaries.
- Support ongoing board development and good governance practice.

Strategic Leadership

- Lead the Board in setting, owning and reviewing YCSW's strategic direction.
- Ensure strategy remains aligned with the Vision, Mission and Values and responsive to changing need.
- Support long-term sustainability, resilience and impact.

Relationship with the Chief Executive Officer

- Build a strong, open and trusting working relationship with the CEO.
- Meet monthly with the CEO to provide support, challenge and strategic oversight.
- Act as a sounding board on complex, sensitive or high-risk issues.
- Lead the CEO's appraisal on behalf of the Board.

Oversight and Decision-Making

- Ensure appropriate Board-level oversight of safeguarding, risk, finance and organisational performance.
- Support timely decision-making between Board meetings where required, in line with the Articles.
- Help the Board respond calmly and proportionately to emerging issues.

External Representation

- Act as an ambassador for Youth Connect South West.
- Represent YCSW at meetings, events and functions where appropriate.
- Support positive relationships with partners, funders and stakeholders, working alongside the CEO.

Time Commitment

The Chair role requires an active and responsive commitment, including:

- Monthly meetings with the CEO (approx. 1 hour per month with preparation)
- Quarterly Board of Trustees meetings (approx. 3 hours per quarter with preparation)
- Availability to deal with issues as they arise between meetings

- Occasional attendance at external events or meetings

This role suits someone able to give consistent time and attention, rather than a purely advisory or ceremonial Chair.

Induction and Development

YCSW is committed to ensuring trustees are well supported in their role. All trustees will receive a structured induction, including an introduction to YCSW's services and governance arrangements, along with access to appropriate training and development relevant to their responsibilities as a trustee.

Other information

- Due to YCSW's work with children and young people, the role requires an enhanced DBS and reference check.
- YCSW will arrange and cover the cost of the DBS check.
- Trustees are entitled to reimbursement of reasonable travel and subsistence expenses, in line with YCSW's expenses policy.
- The role is unpaid.

Appointment and Recruitment

- YCSW is recruiting openly and nationally via its website and an online application form.
- Applicants complete a standard application form outlining motivation, experience, availability and alignment with YCSW's values.
- Shortlisted candidates are invited to a structured interview focused on governance, values and leadership approach.
- Interviews are two-way governance conversations, not job a interview.
- The successful candidate is appointed as a Trustee by the Board, in line with YCSW's Articles of Association.

- Following appointment as a Trustee, the Board appoints the individual as Chair of Trustees and agrees the term of office.
- All appointments are subject to eligibility checks and a satisfactory DBS check.

Term of Office

- Trustees are appointed for an initial term of three years, with the possibility of re-appointment in line with the Articles.
- The term of office as Chair is determined by the Board.

Person Specification

Essential

Governance and Leadership

- Experience operating at Board or senior governance level.
- Clear understanding of the distinction between governance and operational management.
- Ability to chair meetings effectively, enabling inclusive participation and constructive challenge.

Strategic and Values-Led Thinking

- Ability to think strategically and focus on long-term impact and sustainability.
- Strong alignment with YCSW's Vision, Mission and Values.
- Integrity, professionalism and sound judgement.

Working with the CEO

- Ability to build a strong, open and trusting relationship with the CEO.
- Confidence to support and hold the CEO to account constructively.
- Willingness to act as a sounding board on complex, confidential or sensitive issues.

Safeguarding and Risk

- Commitment to safeguarding children and young people.
- Ability to engage with risk, assurance and accountability at Board level.

Time and Commitment

- Capacity to meet the time commitment required.
- Reliability and responsiveness appropriate to a Chair role.

Desirable

- Experience within the voluntary, community or public sector.
- Understanding of services for children and young people or safeguarding-focused organisations.
- Confidence representing an organisation externally.
- Experience supporting board development or governance improvement.