

Volunteering as a charity trustee at Melbourn Playgroup and Out of School Club

About us

We operate the Playgroup which provides term-time early years provision for children from two years old until they start school. We also operate an Out of School Club which provides after school care for 3-11 year olds during term time, and holiday club care during some school holidays. Melbourn Playgroup and Out of School Club has recently completed the process of transitioning from an unincorporated association to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

Membership

We have adopted the Pre-School Learning Alliance Model CIO Constitution for Childcare Providers (2013).

Under this constitution, family membership is available to parents or guardians of all children who attend any group run by the CIO and wish to support the aims of the CIO.

Affiliate membership is also available to anyone who is interested in furthering the purposes of the CIO, upon application to the trustees.

Trustees

The charity is governed by trustees, who are appointed from amongst the members of the charity. Trustees can be family or affiliate members, although ideally at least two thirds of the trustees should be family members.

How you can help

The support you can provide as a charity trustee is extremely important to us. We value the contribution of your time and skills, as they are an essential ingredient to our success. We work closely with the employed staff to ensure that we provide the best possible childcare and education for the children in our care.

Why volunteer?

- Are you interested in learning new skills?
- Would you like to meet new people?
- Would you like to share your skills, time and ideas with others?
- Are you passionate about the development and education of young children?

If you answer "Yes!" to these questions, you might be the right person to become a trustee!

It offers you the opportunity to become more practically involved in the care and education of the children. You will also have a chance to update existing skills and learn new ones. This can have valuable long-term benefits when applying for jobs or undertaking further training.

What are charity trustees?

The charity trustees are in charge of the overall running of the charity, making decisions regarding its management in order to achieve its aims. This is a crucial role in the existence of a charity, but the position carries a number of important responsibilities. This guide provides a brief introduction to the different aspects involved in being a trustee of our charity.

Who can be a charity trustee?

Individuals over the age of 16 years are eligible to be elected as a trustee of a CIO. A few individuals may be disqualified from acting as a trustee of a charity, such as those that have an unspent conviction for an offence

involving deception or dishonesty, or are bankrupt (unless they are discharged). If you are unsure if you are eligible, please refer to [The Essential Trustee: What you need to know, what you need to do](#), for further guidance.

The trustee role is also subject to suitability checks by Ofsted (www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted), which include an enhanced criminal records check. Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from volunteering with us. This will depend on the circumstances and background of the offence(s) disclosed.

About the role

The trustees are jointly responsible for the effective running of the charity and have various roles and duties. From time to time, we may agree to give individual trustees certain key tasks to perform to help ensure they are carried out effectively and efficiently. However, the trustees are a team and must support one another so that no one person has too much work or responsibility.

As a volunteer you will not be issued with a contract of employment. There will be an expectation that you will meet the role's requirements – as a charity trustee, an employer and a registered childcare provider.

The Model CIO Constitution for Childcare Providers 2013

The *Model CIO Constitution for Childcare Providers 2013* is the legal governing document for our charity. It outlines the rules that the trustees must follow to run the charity properly and legally, and will answer many of the common queries about how the charity operates. You should familiarise yourself with the constitution upon becoming a trustee. The constitution can be found on our website www.melbournplaygroup.org.uk.

Charity Commission registration

We are registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) with the Charity Commission, which is the body that regulates charities in England and Wales. The trustees are responsible for completing an annual return for the Charity Commission each year within 10 months of the charity's financial year-end, to ensure they are kept up-to-date with any changes to the charity or its trustees. A copy of the charity's annual report and accounts must also be submitted to the Charity Commission with the annual return.

As a charity, we are accountable to the public. The names of our trustees are publicly available on the Charity Commission Register of Charities. We are also required to keep a register containing certain details about all of our current and former trustees, which any person may request to see. The information that is held includes:

- the name of each trustee, including any former names
- an address for contacting them (which can be given as the principle office of our CIO)
- the date of their appointment as a trustee
- the date that they cease to be a trustee

Managing the finances

An important part of the role of the trustees is to ensure that the charity's finances comply with financial requirements and are managed in accordance with the *Model CIO Constitution for Childcare Providers 2013*. This involves keeping accurate accounting records, preparing the accounts at the end of the financial year and having them independently examined or audited to ensure the money is appropriately accounted for. The accounts must be accompanied by an annual report, describing the activities of the charity in the year and providing information about the management and operations of the charity. The day to day management of our finances is carried out by our employed staff, but the trustees are ultimately responsible.

Managing employees

As a trustee, you will be an employer of the staff who work for the charity and must comply with the laws on employment. These will involve you fulfilling responsibilities to your employees (by respecting their legal rights) and to the Government (by operating PAYE and other systems). The trustees will need to work together to supervise the work of employees and to put appropriate systems and controls in place to ensure that tasks are carried out correctly. We are a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance, and have free access to a 24-hour legal helpline, to assist with these responsibilities.

Ofsted and the Early Years Foundation Stage

Melbourn Playgroup and Out of School Club CIO is registered as a childcare provider with Ofsted. Ofsted inspects and regulates the quality and standards of care and education in childcare settings against the outcomes and requirements of the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage* is a mandatory framework for all registered childcare providers and schools caring for children from birth to five years. It aims to ensure that all childcare services provide a safe and secure environment for children and support children's learning and development, through carefully planned play activities that are fun and appropriate to their needs.

The trustees of our charity jointly form the 'registered person' with Ofsted and have overall responsibility for ensuring the childcare provision complies with the requirements of Ofsted registration and the *Early Years Foundation Stage*. As part of your induction you will need to ensure that you are aware of these requirements. For the most part, the requirements will be delivered through the effective leadership of the staff at the setting; particularly the Manager and Deputy Managers, who will take charge of the day-to-day running of the provision.

Safeguarding children

We are committed to ensuring that children have a safe and positive environment where they can learn and develop. The role of the trustees is to ensure that all staff and volunteers are also committed to children's well-being and safety; are clear about their responsibilities to safeguard and promote children's welfare; know the procedures for highlighting any concerns; and have appropriate guidance and training to undertake their roles.

Confidentiality and data protection

As a trustee of the charity, you will come into contact with a range of confidential personal information about staff, children, families and other volunteers. You must ensure that this information is treated with absolute confidentiality at all times and that you do not share personal information unless you are legally required to, or have obtained consent from the individuals concerned. Otherwise you could breach Data Protection regulations.

Expenses

Trustees are entitled to be reimbursed for any reasonable expenses they incur that are necessary to enable them to carry out their duties as trustee.

Liability

As a CIO most liabilities arising from its operations will fall on the charity as an entity. Provided that trustees act honestly, reasonably and in accordance with the provisions of the constitution then any liabilities they incur can normally be met out of the CIO's resources.

Further information

Resources to support charity trustees are available from the Pre-school Learning Alliance, www.pre-school.org.uk and the Charity Commission, www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission.

If you have any questions or need any further information, please get in touch with either Janet Cottenden or Lisa Bamber (current co-Chairs).

Thank you!

Thank you for considering volunteering as a charity trustee with us. If you would like to put yourself forward please complete a trustee nomination form.

Melbourn Playgroup and Out of School Club CIO, Registered as Charitable Incorporated Organisation in England & Wales
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