

WANT TO HELP MAKE CREATIVITY TRULY INCLUSIVE?

Under the Stars Trustee Pack

Under the Stars is looking for new trustees to join the board. It's an exciting time to join as we are growing our services, getting more ambitious with our art and music and exploring possibilities for a new, improved home for Under the Stars. We need trustees to support us to strengthen and enhance our offer to people with learning disabilities.



"Being part of Under The Stars is incredibly rewarding... knowing that my role as a trustee contributes to the wellbeing and growth of all those involved makes this a truly fulfilling and enjoyable part of my life."

– James Smith, Trustee



OUR JOURNEY

Twenty years ago in Sheffield, there were services for people with learning disabilities – but very few social opportunities in the evenings. Under the Stars was founded to change this, aiming to create a genuine nightclub experience where attendees could party with friends.

The first event in April 2007 was a huge success, attracting 350 people. It sparked the launch of our regular nightclubs, which now draw over 300 attendees from Yorkshire, Derbyshire, and Nottinghamshire. In 2010, Under the Stars expanded to offer music workshops, supported by Sheffield City Council's personalised care services, ensuring more secure funding.

In 2016, we took over a long-standing drama service in Sheffield and began running theatre workshops. Today, Under the Stars continues to thrive, providing social and creative opportunities in music and theatre for adults with learning disabilities and/or autism.

Originally set up as a social enterprise, Under the Stars became a registered charity in 2018 – reflecting our long-term commitment to delivering high-quality, inclusive creative opportunities for adults with learning disabilities and/or autism.

"I like Under the Stars because there's so many things going on and everyone has their own opinion, and everyone is very creative here. I've been able to make songs with music and make shows with drama. It's good because I get to show my talents and see everyone else's talents – and show the world what we've been doing!"

– Jack, Performer



ABOUT US

People with learning disabilities and/or autism are often **unseen, unheard and underestimated.**

Our Vision



People with learning disabilities and/or autism feel powerful, valued, included and respected.

Our Mission



We use the power of creativity and performing arts to enhance the lives of people with learning disabilities and/or autism.

Our Values



Artistic Excellence – We work together to produce artistic work of the highest quality. Our participants deserve the best from us, including expert tuition, professional performance opportunities, and the use of our industry-standard equipment.

Ambition – We try new, untested ideas, take bold, creative risks and broaden people's experiences. We create and share unique, original, imaginative art.

Person Centred – Each individual we work with is included, valued and respected. Their unique contributions are celebrated in an open, trustworthy and supportive environment.



OUR THEORY OF CHANGE



The **Under the Stars** Theory of Change shows how we use creativity to help people with learning disabilities and / or autism feel seen, heard, and valued. Through music, theatre, and bespoke events, our artists gain new skills, build confidence, and make friends. By being part of something special, and getting the opportunity to perform, they feel a sense of pride and belonging.

The result is a more inclusive world where people with learning disabilities are respected and celebrated for who they are.

"It creates all sorts of options to do the things you want to do in life. It helps you be a more confident person. Everyone's equal."

– Vicky, Performer



WHAT IS A TRUSTEE?



Trustees are the heart of Under the Stars – a dedicated and passionate team of volunteers who see the bigger picture and help shape the charity’s direction. They provide guidance, challenge ideas, and support the management team to keep things running smoothly and make sure our work has real impact.



Our trustees act with care and consideration to ensure the charity is well managed, with enough resources to follow its strategy. Trustees oversee governance, policy and support the management team in their roles and their development.

Trustees help to support and champion our events and activities and are a crucial part of our team at Under the Stars.

Alongside their role in shaping and supporting our work, trustees also have legal responsibilities as outlined by the Charity Commission. You can find a helpful summary [here](#).



WHAT DO TRUSTEES DO?



Finance

Make sure Under the Stars has enough money and spends its money wisely. Trustees agree budgets that are in the best interests of the charity and make sure that they meet the objects of the charity. Trustees also ensure that effective financial management and controls are in place. You can view our annual audited accounts [here](#).

Contracts

Make sure we meet our contractual obligations with the council and with funders. Trustees ensure formal and informal accountability to all our users, regulators, funders and stakeholders.

Health and Safety

Check that our services, equipment and buildings are safe and looked after. Ensure that risk assessments for all aspects of Under the Stars activities are regularly carried out and reviewed. Make sure insurance is to an adequate level for the size of the organisation and its activities.

"My fellow trustees all bring different life experiences, skills and knowledge to our decision making and I've learned so much from listening to their contributions."

— Cath Annabel, Chair



Strategy

Decide what the charity should do and stick to the plan. Be accountable to our longer-term plans for Under the Stars. In collaboration with the management and staff teams, trustees help develop our strategy, policies and outcomes.

Ambassador

Advocate for, champion and promote Under the Stars. Always act in the best interests of Under the Stars. Support fundraising and networking opportunities for Under the Stars. Take an active interest and attend events and performances.



WHAT DO TRUSTEES DO?

Legal

Ensure that Under the Stars and its trustees always comply with our constitution, charity law, and any other relevant legislation or regulations. You can view our constitution [here](#).

Staffing and HR

Adhere to employment procedures and respect the roles of staff/volunteers. Support the efficient operational management of the organisation. Participate in other tasks as they arise from time to time, such as interviewing new staff, or helping with recruitment.

Governance

With the CEO and management team, draw up and monitor the implementation of internal policies and procedures.

Collaboration

Our trustees use their skills, knowledge, and professional and lived experience to help Under the Stars reach sound decisions which are in the charity's best interests. This may mean scrutinising board and sub-committee reports and papers, providing advice and guidance on new projects/ideas and other issues in which they have special expertise.

Contribute

Be an active trustee. Be open, respectful and honest.



**"I like doing shows and performing because it's fun.
And I've made friends."**

– Sophia, Performer

At Under the Stars, trustees aren't just decision-makers – they are the backbone of our organisation, supporting our work and ensuring we continue to create meaningful opportunities for adults with learning disabilities.

WHAT MIGHT YOU GAIN FROM BEING A TRUSTEE?



Becoming a trustee is about giving back – but it's also about growing, learning, and being part of something special.

- It can strengthen your CV and boost your employability by demonstrating leadership, strategic thinking, and governance experience.
- You'll develop your confidence and skills in areas like decision-making, collaboration, and working at a strategic level.
- You'll gain insight into the work of Under the Stars, learn about supporting people with learning disabilities, and deepen your understanding of their experiences.
- You'll meet people from different backgrounds and experiences and learn from each other.
- You'll work as part of a great team who support each other and can cover for you when times are busy outside of Under the Stars. The Board is friendly and supportive and gets things done.
- You'll build your understanding of the charity, arts, and social care sectors.
- And you'll help shape something joyful, creative, and genuinely impactful.

"I would wholeheartedly recommend becoming a trustee to anyone who is passionate about inclusion, the arts, or simply making a difference. It's a chance to bring your personal experiences and skills to the table, to learn from others, and to support work that genuinely changes lives. I'm incredibly proud to be part of something so inspiring!"

– Sally Hinchcliffe, Trustee



TIME COMMITMENT

We normally meet five times a year, on **Thursday evenings**, with a **mix of online and in-person meetings**. It's a team effort so you'll be working with others. Meeting papers are shared in advance, so it's important to set aside time to read them beforehand to help us make the most of our time together. Trustees are appointed for **two years at a time** and can serve for up to **six years** in total.

Board meeting dates are set in advance each year but can be adjusted if needed with everyone's agreement.

The in-person Annual General Meeting (AGM) falls on a **Thursday in September/October**.

Outside of meetings, time requirements will vary – but trustees are expected to read meeting papers, respond to emails, and engage with Board business. On average, this is likely to take around **three hours per month**.

We understand that trustees have other commitments, and we aim to be flexible and supportive. At the same time, we're looking for people who can commit to attending meetings and engaging with Board work in a consistent and reliable way.

EXPENSES

We pay all out-of-pocket expenses.



HOW OUR BOARD MEETINGS RUN



The CEO or/and the management team usually attend Board meetings and AGMs. From time to time, when appropriate, the Trustees invite external specialists/consultants to the Board meeting to provide additional guidance or advice.

Board agendas are sent to all Trustees, at least 5 clear days prior to the date of the meeting, and 21 clear days ahead of the AGM. Supporting papers including a CEO and senior management team report are circulated by email prior to the relevant meeting and all Trustees are expected to have read all Board papers and reports prior to attending the meeting.

The Board agenda changes from meeting to meeting but currently there are several standing items:

- Minutes and action points of the previous meeting
- CEO and senior management team report
- Report of the Finances
- Project and event updates
- Health and Safety, Safeguarding project updates

At a Board meeting the trustees:

- Seek to understand, be curious, listen to different perspectives and always be ready to have something to say that relates to the purpose of the discussion or proposal.
- Ask informed questions, to the level of detail that is helpful and appropriate.



OUR CURRENT TRUSTEES

Our trustees are a wonderful bunch! They:

- Come from all different backgrounds, experience and generations
- Have established careers and are driven to give something back to our community
- Have an interest in learning disabilities and the arts
- Want to keep themselves busy and to share their live experiences to benefit others

Find out more [here](#).

UNDER THE STARS BOARD OF TRUSTEES VALUES



Our theory of change is based on the belief that people with learning disabilities and/or autism are often unseen, unheard and underestimated, but that they should in fact feel powerful, valued, included and respected.

As a Board of Trustees, it is our job to show an in-depth understanding of everything the charity seeks to achieve and understand how we can support this mission.

Key Values and Principles of being a Trustee:

1. Understanding: Trustees understand the charity's Theory of Change, the strategy, the vision and the overall mission of the charity.

2. Integrity: Trustees act with honesty and trustworthiness, ensuring the charity's purposes are upheld and its actors and musicians are supported.

3. Commitment: Trustees are deeply committed to the charity's mission and values, actively working to advance its goals.

4. Accountability: The Board are accountable to stakeholders, including donors, actors and musicians, and the community.

5. Transparency: The Board operates in a transparent manner, making decisions and communicating their rationale clearly.

6. Fairness: Trustees act impartially and fairly, ensuring decisions are made on merit and without bias.

7. Respect: The Board respects diverse perspectives and welcomes constructive challenge from all stakeholders, including staff and other trustees.

8. Competence: Trustees possess the necessary skills, knowledge, and experience to effectively govern the organisation.

9. Objectivity: Trustees prioritise the best interests of the charity and its actors and musicians, avoiding personal gain or conflicts of interest.

10. Collaboration: The Board works collaboratively with staff, other trustees, and stakeholders to achieve common goals.



COULD YOU BE A TRUSTEE?

Would you like to make a difference to the learning disability community of Sheffield?

Do you have skills you can offer to Under the Stars such as HR, charity governance, marketing/communications and fundraising?

We welcome people from all walks of life and are particularly keen to hear from those with lived experience of marginalisation or neurodiversity, alongside those with professional skills to offer.

There are some legal responsibilities and eligibility requirements for becoming a trustee. As long as you're over 18 and meet the criteria set out by the Charity Commission (see section 3.1 of their guidance, [here](#)), we'd love to talk to you about joining us.

All trustees must sign up to our data protection and confidentiality policy, conflict of interest policy and have an enhanced DBS check.

We are looking for Trustees who can demonstrate:

- Willingness to devote time and effort to Under the Stars
- Commitment to the values of Under the Stars
- Creativeness and a desire to find solutions to often complex problems
- Skills in areas we want to strengthen (HR, charity governance/management, fundraising and marketing)
- Strong communication and listening skills, with the ability to contribute in a collaborative and constructive manner
- An ability to work effectively as a member of a team and make collective decisions in the best interest of Under the Stars
- Ability to use email, Excel and other Microsoft packages



HOW TO APPLY



We'd love to hear from you!

You can apply by sending a short letter telling us why you're interested in the role and what relevant experience you bring.

You can do this in one of the following ways:

- A written letter (no longer than one side of A4)
- An audio or video recording (up to 5 minutes long)

Please email your application to **Cath**, our Chair of Trustees:
chair@underthestars.org.uk

If we think you might be a good fit, we'll invite you to meet Cath and have an informal conversation with some of our team and participants at Under the Stars.

"Since becoming a trustee, I've gained a deeper understanding of how much thought, care, and passion goes into creating truly inclusive spaces... It's a chance to bring your personal experiences and skills to the table, to learn from others, and to support work that genuinely changes lives."

– *Sally Hinchcliffe, Trustee*



Any questions?

Please give us a call on 0114 233 1869 and we can answer any questions or give you more information.