

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

Candidate Brief



Trustee

(voluntary position)

February 2020

Chief Executive

Nick Wright

nwright@booksbeyondwords.co.uk



Welcome from Sheila Hollins, Chair

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in the role of Trustee at Beyond Words. I hope that you will find the information in this Candidate Brief useful. Please also visit our website www.booksbeyondwords.co.uk.

Beyond Words is a Charity that helps people with learning disabilities and autism to communicate better. People who can't read or who don't like written words are often very good at reading pictures. Our books tell a story, but they also let the reader tell their own story – the one they see in the pictures. Our books and our methodology place the reader in the driving seat of their own lives, encouraging them to share their own experiences and have a say in what happens to them and around them. In this way we help to raise aspirations and reduce inequalities.

Last year we appointed a new Chief Executive and have redefined our strategy to extend the reach of our book resources on a national and international scale, using digital means such as e-books and an App.

We are now looking for Trustees with marketing and digital skills, ideally in the health and social care sectors, as well as a healthcare professional with learning disability experience at a senior level, to join our Board to help us realise this strategy. We particularly welcome trustees with experience of learning disability or autism in their family.

If you are looking for an opportunity to contribute, share the values of Beyond Words, and have relevant experience, we would very much like to hear from you. Nick Wright, our Chief Executive, will be happy to discuss this opportunity with you and answer any questions you may have.

Yours sincerely

Sheila Hollins
Chair

Background Document and Job Description

About Books Beyond Words

Too many people with learning disabilities are not living their lives to the full. There are 1.5 million people with learning disabilities in the UK today and most have some difficulty in communicating. This creates barriers within their family or being able to make friends, and they struggle to communicate with professionals who are there to help them make decisions about their own health, education and employment, or simply to help them join in in the community. In August 2018, for the first time ever, NHS England named learning disabilities and autism as one of the four key priorities for the next ten years. We are more aware of the experiences and inequalities facing people with learning disabilities and believe that there has never been a better time to act.

Founded by Baroness Sheila Hollins, Beyond Words has been publishing wordless books since 1989 and this year, as well as celebrating our 30th anniversary and the publishing of our 60th book, we became a charity. The books cover a broad range of subjects to help people with learning disabilities as they transition into adulthood, including health, relationships, bereavement, discrimination, work and community and crime & justice. Our books are co-created with people with learning disabilities and extensively trialed in order to ensure understanding, relevance and enjoyment. We have distributed around 100,000 books and trained 500 practitioners in our unique methodology. Our books are read in 50-60 book clubs across the UK and all our books are now available in eBook versions.

More recently we have developed the BWStoryApp, with over 400 short stories, and an eLearning program of introductory and specialist modules to support our face to face training. Initial piloting of the App and eBooks with nurses in a large Mental Health Trust has been very successful and we are now embarking on a roll out of these resources nationally. In addition we have developed bespoke material to support Clinical Commissioning Groups and GP practices in providing imagery for the Annual Health Check – so important for people with learning disabilities. We are also utilizing all three resources of printed books, eBooks and eLearning in a pilot study with 22 Special Schools around the country, supporting the new Social, Emotional & Mental Health curriculum and providing additional safeguarding support to vulnerable young people. The Beyond Words staff team numbers four: in Publishing & Communications, Licensing & Business Development and Finance & Administration and is supported by a further four specialists who provide support as service contractors in Book Club development, eLearning, books and co-training advice (a person with a learning disability).

Our Board of Trustees provides support and guidance in the content and development of books, their application within the social caring community and in the raising of development funds. New Board members will help us deliver our strategy to offer our services on a broader national and international basis, in particular using modern technology.

Job Description and Person Specification

Role of Trustees

- Appoint, manage and support the Chief Executive
- Contribute to defining the purpose and strategy of the Charity
- Monitor the delivery of the strategic plan
- Ensure, via effective delegation to the Chief Executive, that the organisation is efficiently and properly managed
- Contribute professional knowledge and experience to specific areas of the Charity's program, agreed with the Chair and Chief Executive, that will add value and advance the organisation's success
- Continuously review the financial performance of the organisation, including approving and monitoring budgets and reviewing the annual accounts
- Monitor the financial and non-financial risks to the organisation and resulting risk-management plans
- Ensure the organisation's compliance with Charity Commission guidelines
- Work effectively with the other Trustees to create a team culture.

Personal Characteristics

- A creative, energetic and positive person with a desire to help build a successful organisation
- A team player who demonstrated openness and integrity
- A mature professional with sound judgment, able to think strategically
- Specific experience of one or all of the following:
 - Marketing (ideally of services rather than products)
 - IT/Technology/Social Media
 - International development (how to scale UK services/resources to wider markets)
 - Health, social care or education expertise with respect to learning disability/autism

- Ideally knowledge and experience of the issues and challenges facing people with learning disability and autism
- Willingness to attend Board Meetings and give the minimum time commitment required (2-3 hours every three months)
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of a trustee.

Application

The closing date for applications is 5pm on 9 March 2020.

To apply for this role, please email the following documents (in word format) to nwright@booksbeyondwords.co.uk:

1. A comprehensive CV
2. A covering letter containing:
 - A personal statement which addresses the criteria listed in the Job Description and your motivation for applying
 - Your availability for the time commitment required
 - The name, job title, organisation, email address and mobile phone number of two professional referees. (Please note referees will not be approached without your prior permission.)

Please ensure that you include your mobile phone number and email address in your application. Do not hesitate to contact Nick Wright on 020 7492 2559 if you have any queries.

Diversity

Beyond Words promotes diversity and seeks to ensure that its processes are fair, transparent, promote equality of opportunity for all, and do not have an adverse impact on any particular group. We also follow best practice in GDPR and this means that your personal details will only be retained in our records during the selection and interviewing processes, after which they will be deleted.