**TRUSTEE JOB DESCRIPTION AND PERSON SPECIFICATION**

Designability is a UK charity transforming the lives of disabled people and those living with a long term health condition. Our team of designers and engineers creates products to help people who are facing challenges every day through life-changing assistive technologies.

We want products and technology to be more accessible to everyone. Our team follow the principles of human-centred design which means that everything we develop is done in response to what people tell us they need. Our aim is for people to achieve greater independence and happiness in their lives – goals that benefit all of society.

We are a local charity with national and international reach. Formed over 50 years ago by the University of Bath and the Royal United Hospital Bath, our products are used across the UK (and as far north as the Shetland Islands) and globally, as far away as Australia. Our turnover is around £2million a year, our team numbers 26 staff and we have recently completed a strategic review that sets out our plans for the future with a clear focus.

Working as a team, trustees have three main responsibilities:

* To set a clear direction for Designability
* To make sure that the charity’s plans are being carried out appropriately
* To ensure that the charity meets its legal responsibilities

The role and responsibilities of trustees are governed by charity law and further information is available from the Charity Commission, in particular *The Essential Trustee* publication. All new trustees take part in an induction programme with the Chief Executive and senior managers, and are offered ongoing training and support.

The duties of a trustee are to:

* Ensure that the charity complies with its governing documents, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations
* Ensure Designability pursues its objects defined in its governing document
* Ensure that the charity applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objects
* Contribute actively to the board of trustees by giving firm strategic direction to Designability, setting overall policy, defining goals, setting targets, and evaluating performance against agreed targets
* Safeguard the good name and values of the charity
* Ensure the financial stability of the charity

In addition to these duties, trustees should use any specific skills, knowledge or experience they have to help the board of trustees reach sound decisions. This may involve leading discussions, identifying key issues, providing advice and guidance on new initiatives, and evaluating or offering advice on other areas in which the trustee has particular expertise.

Being a trustee is a voluntary role and as such, trustees receive no remuneration. However reasonable expenses can be claimed, for attendance at board meetings and other related events.

Trustees are appointed for up to 3 terms of office of 3 years, and are expected to have a commitment to the mission of Designability and the ability to meet the time requirements. These are 4 two hour Board meetings a year plus an annual Away Day. Trustees are also invited to join one of two sub committees – Project & Research Governance Committee or Finance & Audit Committee, which also meet for 4 two hour meetings a year. These meetings are held in Bath.

Time should also be allowed for reading papers (normally distributed one week before meetings) and for attending ad hoc events.

The skills needed to be an effective trustee include:

* Independent judgement and a willingness to speak their mind
* Able to work effectively in a team and take decisions for the good of the charity
* Strategic thinking as well as the ability to understand performance reports
* Understanding and acceptance of their legal responsibilities and liabilities
* Understanding of the difference between nonexecutive and executive responsibility

Having reviewed the skills, experience and diversity of current trustees, we would welcome candidates with experience in the following areas:

* Legal expertise
* Design and creative industry experience
* Charity leadership
* Manufacturing or engineering
* Financial
* Commercial or business experience

We encourage applications from people who have personal experience of disability, women and people of BAME heritage who are currently underrepresented on our board.