

# designability



## Trustee Recruitment Pack

## Welcome

I am delighted that you are interested in becoming a trustee of Designability.

We are at an exciting time in our development – last year we celebrated 50 years of designing and making products for people with disabilities and long term health conditions. We appointed a new Chief Executive in 2019 and she and our Board of Trustees have created a new strategy putting the focus firmly on expanding our range of products to help more people with disabilities to live with greater independence.

We are now seeking a number of people to join our Board, and would like to consider from a wide variety of backgrounds and careers, as outlined below.

We are a national charity and welcome candidates from across the country, with meetings taking place at our headquarters in Bath.

Our Trustees share a passion and commitment to helping people with disabilities to enjoy independence through the design and provision of life-changing products. If you would like to join us, please get in touch.

If you have any questions, or would like to have an informal conversation, please contact me or the CEO Catharine Brown via [ceo@designability.org.uk](mailto:ceo@designability.org.uk)

Thanks again for your interest in Designability,

### **Libby Gawith**

Chair of Trustees



## Our story

For over 50 years, we have created products that increase dignity, confidence, independence, safety and empowerment for users and their loved ones.

Designability is an independent charity first set-up by famous inventor and engineer, Bevan Horstmann, and local consultant surgeon, Kenneth Lloyd-Williams. It was the birth of Mr Horstmann's daughter Nicola that made him personally aware of the severe lack of suitable medical products available to professionals. Kenneth Lloyd-Williams shared this concern and was aware that some of his colleagues were already designing some of their own surgical equipment as a result. The pair embarked on a mission to create a platform for engineers and clinicians to design and develop medical equipment. They aimed to draw on the expertise and resources of as many individuals as possible to ensure their products really worked. Supported by the University of Bath and the local health board, the two set up the charity with an Executive Director, a Projects Committee, and a Board of Governors which included our first President, Sir Barnes Wallis.

We were first situated at St Martin's Hospital in Bath. Placed so closely to an NHS hospital meant clinical experts could be consulted and trials could be easily organised. It was in 1987 that we moved our offices to our current base, at the Royal United Hospital (RUH) in Bath, where we've been ever since.

We are now a charity with a vibrant programme of product innovation and development, providing products to children and adults with disabilities across the UK and internationally.

For more information about key dates, milestones and product successes, please visit [Our Story](#).



## Designability: now and in the future

Designability is a UK charity transforming the lives of people with disabilities. 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.

Our most well-known product is the Wizzybug, a powered wheelchair which we designed especially to provide children under 5 with independence, freedom of movement and fun. We provide them to families across the UK through our award-winning loan scheme which means that children can have one for as long as needed completely free of charge.

Our team have designed and developed a wide variety of products over the years, including technology which benefits people living with dementia, as well as a range of adapted products for children and adults with restricted growth. Some of our most popular creations solve typical day-to-day challenges, such as our bottom wiper which gives people greater dignity and independence in their personal hygiene.

We are a local charity with a surprisingly broad reach – people with disabilities use our products around the world - across the UK (and as far north as the Shetland Islands) and internationally, in France, Norway, Israel and Australia to name just a few.

Our turnover is around £2million a year, our team numbers 26 staff and we have recently completed a strategic review which sets objectives under three areas of work: insight and engagement; product development; provision of products and services.

In the next three years, our work will focus on:

- **Product development**, directly through our own products and indirectly by advising others
- Helping adults and children who have primarily **physical disabilities**
- Providing solutions for disabled people's **mobility challenges** in our new product development.

In our planning we will focus on projects which deliver **impact** for people with disabilities within a five year horizon and which build financial **sustainability** for our organisation.

## Our strategy and values

### Vision

Our vision is a future where every person with a disability has the products they want to live the life they choose.

### Mission

We will create and provide products which enable people with disabilities to live with greater independence.

### Values

The values we hold as an organisation when delivering our work are:

**Creative** We aim to be innovative, inspiring, dynamic, imaginative yet simple

**Inclusive** We aim to be honest, open, welcoming, listening, friendly, informed

**Practical** We aim to be pragmatic, down to earth, evidenced, direct, professional, have a can-do attitude and deliver on our promises



## Role of a trustee

Becoming a trustee can be rewarding in many ways – being part of a talented and committed team, sharing the responsibility of ensuring the charity is well run and making a difference to the lives of people with disabilities.

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

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 three terms of office of three years, and are expected to have a commitment to the mission of Designability and the ability to meet the time requirements. These are four two-hour Board meetings a year plus an annual Away Day.

Trustees are also invited to join one of two sub committees – the Project & Research Governance Committee or Finance & Audit Committee, which also meet for four 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.

## Person specification

In addition to the duties listed above, 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.

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
- Charity leadership
- Manufacturing or engineering
- Finance or accountancy
- Commercial or business
- Health or social care

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

## Further information

To find out more about Designability, please visit [www.designability.org.uk](http://www.designability.org.uk)

If you have any questions, or would like to have an informal conversation, please contact Libby Gawith, Chair of Trustees or Catharine Brown, CEO via [ceo@designability.org.uk](mailto:ceo@designability.org.uk) or telephone 01225 824103.

- Read our [Annual Report & Accounts 2018-19](#)
- Read our [Impact Report 2018-19](#)
- Find out more about our [current trustees](#)

## How to apply and timetable

To apply, please send your CV with a letter explaining why you would like to be a trustee of Designability and how your experience meets the specification above, to [ceo@designability.org.uk](mailto:ceo@designability.org.uk)

**Applications must be received by 9am on Monday 6 January 2020.**

Interviews will take place on Monday 3 February or Friday 7 February 2020 in Bath.

New trustees will be appointed at the Board of Trustees meeting on Monday 23 March 2020, which they will be invited to attend.

