



sense
for deafblind people

SENSE'S BOARD (COUNCIL)

- a maximum of 26 trustees allowed - 16 elected and 10 co-opted
- Council meets four times a year
- the fixed term is 4 yrs + 4 years - after which at least a year out
- three 'officers' - Chair, Vice Chair and Treasurer
- two permanent sub-groups: Finance Committee (also responsible for internal audit and risk) and the 'Chair's Group' (which manages the Board)
- various - time and subject specific - adhoc groups

- Council Management Links

- Sense Scotland and Sense International are two wholly owned subsidiaries

BALANCING THE BOARD

- Careful and regular audit of skills mix is taken to ensure we have a balanced board - not only in the work experience of trustees but also in their ages, their differing experience of the different types of deafblindness, where they live in England and their ethnicity.
- Our convention has always been that at least half the trustees must be parents, grandparents, family of deafblind people or deafblind themselves - ie at least half the trustees must be 'users'.

WHY TRUSTEES SHOULD NOT RECEIVE REMUNERATION

- The power of the trustee is vested in the very fact that he/she is a volunteer, giving freely of their time. This is indomitable. It earns true respect.... within the organisation and in the outer world.

WHY TRUSTEES SHOULD NOT RECEIVE REMUNERATION

- Being a 'volunteer' fulfils the 'gift relationship' (a term first coined by the seminal thinker Richard Titmuss) - It is the embodiment of a high sense of social responsibility towards the needs of other members of society - a desire to contribute to the welfare of others in need - or as with some within Sense - a desire to help the organisation which helps them.

WHY TRUSTEES SHOULD NOT RECEIVE REMUNERATION

- The ideology of the voluntary sector should remain in direct opposition to the ideology of the private market - which teaches us to give as little and take as much as we can.

WHY TRUSTEES SHOULD NOT RECEIVE REMUNERATION

- The fact that governance of charities is in the hands of those who receive no remuneration separates / distinguishes the voluntary sector from the public sector and the private sector. It is the last matter of substance and principle that prevents the voluntary sector becoming - what it already has become, to some extent, in the last 20 years - but an arm of the state - a milch cow to the public sector.

WHY TRUSTEES SHOULD NOT RECEIVE REMUNERATION

- If someone can only be wooed onto a Board by the size of the 'handout' / 'fee' then they should be working in another sector.

WHY TRUSTEES SHOULD NOT RECEIVE REMUNERATION

- It is crucial for the maintenance of public trust in the sector for it to be clear that no pockets (of those with strategic power within the organisation) are lined from fund raising activities. How can we work on assuring our donors that all their donations go direct to the purpose of the organisation and yet justify some being creamed off for trustees!

WHY TRUSTEES SHOULD NOT RECEIVE REMUNERATION

- It is crucial for the encouragement of new initiatives, new ideas and new organisations that they should not be burdened by having to pay for their trustees. Would Sense have become what it is today if those young, struggling, families in 1955 had had to pay their trustees!

▪ WHY TRUSTEES SHOULD NOT NEED REMUNERATION

Charities should and can save trustee time and money:

- invest in support staff within the organisation**
- provide a ‘plastic’ and a dedicated mobile**
- pay for more than just travel costs – eg child care cover, taxis to make travel easier**
- give ‘absence of leave’ for up to a year to those faced with extra work, family or other crises (usually the younger trustees)**

ADDITIONAL ISSUES OF PARITY OR FAIRNESS

- and if some organisations start paying their trustees and others don't, what will that do to the fraternity within the sector?
- How will the less glamorous, unwealthy organisations, working for less eye catching heart rending issues compete ?

ADDITIONAL ISSUES OF PARITY OR FAIRNESS

- How would you calculate a trustee's day rate?
- Would remuneration be set on a) 'amount of time taken up by the charity's work' or b) 'measurable' skills of some kind?
Neither would be fair.
- Singling out some (eg the officers) not others on the board could be a) demotivating and b) inappropriately reinforce a hierarchy.

ADDITIONAL ISSUES OF PARITY OR FAIRNESS

- At what stage in a charity's development would you say - 'yup - now we need to pay?'
- being the trustee of a small organisation with no/few staff can be as time consuming as being the trustee of a very large one. Size of budget or number of staff on the pay roll should not be the arbiter of when a trustee might need to be paid.

ON THE SUBJECT OF VOLUNTARY ENDEAVOUR

- ‘Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. In fact it's the only thing that ever has.’ Margaret Mead (1901 - 1978)
- but payment interferes with notions of ‘the group’, their commitment and their status

Katia Herbst Chairman Sense 2001 - 2007



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