



Recruitment Pack for the PET Trustee Development Programme

September 2024

1. Introducing you to Prisoners' Education Trust

Over the past 35 years, Prisoners' Education Trust (PET) has supported thousands of learners to gain qualifications that have enabled them to move on with their lives.

Many of those who find themselves in the criminal justice system were excluded from school or struggled to gain any academic qualifications. However, there is a clear link between education and rehabilitation which is why at PET we are committed to ensuring everyone in the prison system has access to education and, in turn, why we fund courses in subjects and at levels that are not available through prison education departments.

Gaining these qualifications enables people with lived experience of the criminal justice system to secure meaningful and rewarding employment to support themselves and their families.

As the Chair of PET, and someone who has my own experience of the criminal justice system, I'm committed to providing opportunities for people with lived experience to contribute to our organisation and other charities working in criminal justice.

Our Trustee Development Programme has been designed to support those who would like to become a trustee of a charity to gain the skills and knowledge to help them make a meaningful contribution as a trustee in the future.

The Trustee Development Programme enables successful applicants to shadow the work of our trustees and senior management team, attend our board meetings and to be mentored by one of our trustees.

In this document you can find out more about PET, our work and the Trustee Development Programme.

If you care about prison education and its power to change lives, I hope you will consider applying to join our Trustee Development Programme.

With best wishes,

Paul Kelly
Chair, Prisoners' Education Trust

2. A view from a former participant on the Trustee Development Programme

I was a beneficiary of PET while in prison. PET funded a course which I felt would help my transition and rehabilitation once released.

I knew I would not be allowed to return to my original profession, so I needed the funding to support me in my quest for a change in career.

Upon release, I joined PET's alumni group and volunteered as a speaker, sharing my story to create awareness of the trust by speaking at PET events and giving interviews to journalists, who published articles in the media (e.g. Buzzfeed).

I applied for a trustee position in response to an advert. Although I did not quite meet the criteria to become a trustee at that time, I was accepted as the first participant on the Trustee Development Programme, where I had the opportunity to shadow trustees, attend and contribute to board meetings, and develop my skills. The trustees and senior leadership team were very supportive and accommodating.

After I completed the Trustee Development Programme, when a vacancy to join the board was advertised, I applied, was successful and was offered the role of trustee. The Chair and Chief Executive then helped immensely in my successful application for a waiver from the Charity Commission to enable me to become a trustee.

If you are thinking about becoming a trustee in the future, and you have lived experience of prison, please apply to join the Trustee Development Programme; let nothing stop you, as the team are very supportive and inclusive.

Join us; your lived experience would be valuable to us in helping to shape the future of PET.

Ola Daniel

PET Trustee and a former participant on the Trustee Development Programme

3. About Prisoners' Education Trust

At PET we believe that everyone in prison, wherever they are and whatever their background, should have access to education.

We work with prisons in England and Wales, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man to offer distance learning courses and related advice and guidance to people in prison.

We offer 130 different courses including GCSEs and A-levels, Open University Access modules, and a wide range of professional courses. We help around 1,400 learners each year to study, giving them the skills and qualifications to build brighter futures.

We also use our policy and advocacy work to improve prison education and show prisons, policymakers and the public the impact it can have – for people in prison, their families, and wider society.

If you would like to find out more about PET, the following may be helpful:

- PET's vision, mission and values are on our website at <https://prisonerseducation.org.uk/about-us/mission-vision-values/>
- PET's current strategy - which sets out our priorities for 2022-26 - is on our website at <https://prisonerseducation.org.uk/about-us/>
- PET's annual report and accounts for 2023, which describe what we did last year, are on our website at <https://prisonerseducation.org.uk/about-us/annual-report-and-accounts/>

PET currently has 22 staff and a Board of Trustees of 10, with a broad range of backgrounds and experiences. We have offices in London and Cardiff.

4. What is the Trustee Development Programme?

At PET, we believe that people with lived experience of prison education should be at the centre of our work. We aim to work co-productively and ensure that people with lived experience inform our thinking in all that we do.

As part of our commitment to providing opportunities for people with lived experience, we run the Trustee Development Programme. It is designed for people with lived experience of prison who are interested in becoming a charity trustee in the future but are not yet ready to become one. It is an opportunity to gain the insight and experience needed to be a member of a board, without holding the full legal responsibilities of being a trustee.

It is a two-year programme shadowing PET's Board of Trustees. After a comprehensive induction process, participants attend board meetings and participate fully in board discussions. Participants have a mentor from the board to

support them and are also provided with external and internal training, the costs of which are covered by PET. As with trustees, participants are otherwise unpaid, although expenses are covered.

This will be the third time that we have run the Trustee Development Programme. We have refined and improved it each time, based on feedback from past participants.

5. Why should you join the Trustee Development Programme?

Trustees play a key role in the leadership of charities. They set the overall strategic direction of the organisation and hold the staff team to account for the work that they do. Being a trustee - which is an unpaid voluntary role - is an opportunity to contribute to a charity's work in an important leadership position.

Charities benefit from having people with lived experience on their boards. But sometimes people with lived experience don't feel that they have the experience or skills to become a trustee, although they would like to in the future. Others are interested but aren't sure if it's for them.

PET's Trustee Development Programme was set up to bridge this gap. Taking part in this programme will help you to understand what being a trustee involves and how a charity board operates. It will give you the skills that you need to become a trustee in the future, whether with PET or with another charity, and the confidence to put yourself forward. With many charities now running competitive recruitment processes for trustees, it will be a complement to your CV. We will be happy to provide you with a reference.

Through the Trustee Development Programme you'll gain a better understanding of what the role of charity boards is and how they work in practice. You'll get to understand how charity finances work and what trustees should be looking for. And you'll learn how to contribute effectively to board discussions in a supportive environment.

Completing the Trustee Development Programme does not guarantee you a place on PET's board, though past participants are encouraged to apply when vacancies arise. It will, however, help you prepare to become an effective trustee in the future, whether at PET or elsewhere.

6. What is the time commitment?

The Trustee Development Programme runs for two years. This means that you will have time to understand PET and how our board works, meet and get to know other trustees and members of the staff team, and fully participate in the board's work over a meaningful period of time.

In order to fully participate in the Trustee Development Programme, you will need to:

- Attend board meetings, which take place four times per year (two online and two face-to-face in London). They are normally on Wednesdays at 4pm-6pm.
- Attend one face-to-face board awayday per year. They are normally in London.
- Meet with the Chief Executive and/or Chair before and after board meetings to prepare for and debrief from the meetings.
- Meet with your mentor from the Board of Trustees as required.
- Attend relevant training in line with your interests and needs.

Participants are also welcome to attend meetings of Board Committees. There are four main committees and they each meet three or four times per year. You would not be expected to attend all these meetings.

Where meetings take place in person your travel expenses will be reimbursed. While participants on the programme are not paid, we do not want anyone to lose out financially so please let us know if attending meetings would lead to a loss of income so we can discuss options with you.

We are committed to making any reasonable adjustments that you require to enable you to participate in the programme.

7. Application process

We are looking for two people to join the Trustee Development Programme and are seeking applications from people who can demonstrate that they will bring energy and commitment to PET, along with fresh thinking and new perspectives.

The Trustee Development Programme is open to anyone with lived experience of prison. You do not have to have experience of working at a charity or being on a charity board. The most important things are enthusiasm, a commitment to PET's mission and values, and an interest in being a charity trustee in the future.

To apply to join the Trustee Development Programme, please submit an online application [here](#). This will take you to SurveyMonkey, where you will be able to submit your responses.

The application has two parts to it.

Firstly, you will be asked to answer three straightforward questions to give us a sense of your interest and what you could bring to the programme. The questions are:

1. Please tell us about yourself and what makes you want to join PET's Trustee Development Programme.

2. Please tell us why you are interested in becoming a charity trustee in the future.
3. Over the next two years, what are the two things you most want to get out of participating in the Trustee Development Programme?

When answering these questions please do not feel you need to write too much - this is just to get a sense of you and what you would bring to the programme. As an indication, your combined response to these questions should normally be no longer than about two sides of a Word document but could be shorter.

Responses will be anonymised, before being scored by the members of the Trustee-led Nominations Committee.

If you would prefer to submit your responses to these questions on a Word document rather than through the online form, please send them by email to jon@prisonerseducation.org.uk.

Secondly, you will be asked to upload your CV. This will also be anonymised and referred to at the shortlisting stage. Please don't worry if your CV is quite limited. You don't need a long CV or lots of previous experience to participate in this programme.

You will also be asked to provide contact details and diversity monitoring information. The latter is entirely voluntary.

The closing date for applications is **noon on Wednesday 2nd October 2024**.

A panel will interview shortlisted candidates. Interviews will be held on **16th October** and **17th October**. Interviews will be held remotely for all candidates using Teams or Zoom. If you are not able to make these dates, please let us know when you apply by emailing jon@prisonerseducation.org.uk.

We are committed to making any reasonable adjustments that you require in order to assist you in the application and interview process.

If you have any questions about the process or about the Trustee Development Programme, please contact PET's Chief Executive, Jon Collins, on 07968 493 098 or at jon@prisonerseducation.org.uk.