



Trustee Recruitment Pack

January 2025

1. Introducing 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 turn their lives around.

Our work has never been more important. With a growing prison population education is more than just purposeful activity, it is critical to supporting people on their rehabilitation journey.

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 why we fund courses in levels and subjects that are not available through prison education departments.

Gaining these qualifications gives people a purpose and self-respect and enables them to secure meaningful and rewarding employment to support themselves and their families.

In 2026 we will begin work on our new five-year strategy to ensure PET is able to meet the needs of the growing prison population and contribute to rehabilitation and a reduction in reoffending.

We are looking to broaden the skills and experience of our Board and are particularly interested in hearing from people with experience of the criminal justice system, prison education, further and higher education, and equality, equity, diversity and inclusion.

In this document you can find out more about PET, our work and our current aims and objectives.

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

With best wishes

Paul Kelly
Chair, Prisoners' Education Trust

2. A view from a Trustee

I first became involved with PET when I worked in the education department of a prison and got to experience first-hand their vital work and the impact on learners. After a change in career I still kept abreast of PET's work and I was delighted when I applied to become a trustee and was successful. Serving as a trustee provides me with the opportunity to collaborate with a diverse group of passionate individuals who believe in the transformative power of education.

As a trustee, you will help steer the strategic direction of the charity, providing the governance and financial probity required of a charity. There is a robust induction process to support new trustees to fully understand their role and the work of PET. In addition, PET has helpfully signposted me towards a number of flexible, external training courses specifically aimed at trustees, in topics such as charity governance, that have been beneficial in helping me undertake my duties.

I have a full time job and I was initially worried about whether I could dedicate enough time to this role. However, I have found that the expectations are not onerous, can easily fit around my other commitments and are clearly communicated, which allows me to forward plan and manage my time. It helps that the charity has an excellent Chief Executive and Senior Leadership Team who support us in being able to undertake our role whilst maintaining a healthy balance with our day jobs and other personal commitments.

I would encourage anyone considering becoming a trustee with PET to take that step. You will work alongside a committed and passionate Board and a dedicated staff team who bring a range of skills and experiences to the table. As a trustee, you will gain valuable insights into the charity sector, enhance your leadership skills, and make a tangible impact on an important social issue.

If you're looking for an opportunity to make a difference, contribute your expertise, and be part of a forward-thinking and compassionate organisation, then becoming a trustee of PET is a fantastic and fulfilling opportunity.

Vicki Mulligan
PET Trustee

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 1,500 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 education can have - not just for people in prison, but also 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 are on our website at <https://prisonerseducation.org.uk/about-us/annual-report-and-accounts/>

PET currently has 22 staff and offices in London and Cardiff.

4. About Prisoners' Education Trust's Board of Trustees

PET aims to have a Board of around 12 Trustees (we currently have 10). Among the Trustees there are three Officers - the Chair, Deputy Chair and Treasurer. Our Board meets four times a year, with two meetings held in person in London and two remotely, as well as holding an annual awayday.

The Board has five formal sub committees:

- Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion - ensures PET explicitly and proactively delivers its commitment to EEDI.
- Finance, Audit and Risk - scrutinises PET's financial performance and risk profile.
- Fundraising - provides oversight and scrutiny of PET's fundraising activity.
- Nominations - leads on recruiting new Trustees and the Chief Executive.
- Quality Assurance Panel - ensures that PET complies with our agreed processes in providing distance learning courses and that these processes are delivering the right outcomes.
- Remuneration - leads on making recommendations on pay and benefits.

5. The Trustee role at Prisoners' Education Trust

5.1 Role summary

The Board of Trustees are individually and collectively responsible for the overall governance and strategic direction of PET, our financial health, and the probity of our activities. They are responsible for developing PET's aims, objectives, and goals in accordance with our Articles of Association and taking full account of legal and regulatory guidelines.

5.2 Principal responsibilities

Strategic leadership

- To contribute actively to the Board of Trustees' role in giving firm strategic direction to PET, setting overall policy and defining goals.
- To set and agree targets and regularly monitor and evaluate performance against these.
- To demonstrate our organisational values and behaviours.

Governance

- To ensure PET's governance is of the highest possible standard and fully complies with our Articles of Association.
- To safeguard the good name and the values of PET by ensuring the organisation complies with charity law, company law and relevant guidance, and fulfils all legal and regulatory requirements.
- To work within any agreed policies adopted by PET.

Financial probity

- To ensure the financial stability of PET and ensure systems are in place to ensure financial accountability.
- To protect and manage the property of PET and to ensure the proper investment of the organisation's funds.
- To ensure PET applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its charitable objects.

External relationships

- To act as an ambassador for PET, including acting as a spokesperson when appropriate.
- To represent PET at meetings and events as required.

Extra duties

- To fulfil additional duties as agreed with the Board.

5.3 Core competencies

We are looking for candidates who can demonstrate the following core competencies.

Knowledge and experience

- Empathy with and commitment to PET's vision, mission and values.
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship.
- An understanding of the critical issues and challenges facing the voluntary sector.
- A track record of and commitment to promoting equality, equity, diversity and inclusion.

Skills and abilities

- A collaborative listener with an ability to work effectively as a member of a team.
- Able to exercise independent judgement, a willingness to share opinions, and an ability to focus on arriving at a decision.
- Strong communication and relationship management skills.

Personal style and behaviour

- Willingness to devote the necessary time and effort.
- Conscientious and committed to acting appropriately and to support and maintain PET's reputation.
- The ability to act as a critical friend who empowers and constructively challenges the Chief Executive and the senior management team.

5.4 Additional competencies

In addition, we are particularly interested in candidates who can demonstrate a further competency from the list below:

- Expertise in human resources, particularly in remuneration.
- Expertise in equality, equity, diversity and inclusion.
- Expertise in strategic risk management.
- Knowledge and understanding of the prison and criminal justice system gained through lived experience, academic research, or policy experience.

6. Time commitment

You will be joining the PET Board at a significant time, as we begin the process of developing our new organisational strategy.

In order to contribute to our work, to forge relationships with fellow Trustees and staff alike, we estimate you will need to be able to contribute 10-12 days a year. This will include:

- Attending Board meetings, which normally take place mid-week from 4pm-6pm, four times a year with all the required preparation and reading.
- Attending one board awayday per year.
- Participating in one or more of the Trustee Board Committees, which each meet around four times per year.
- Contributing to other work as needed, collaborating with both fellow Trustees and the staff team.

Of the four Board meetings per year, two take place in person at PET's office in London. The other two Board meetings - and most committee meetings - are held online. The annual awayday, which normally takes place in October, is also held in person.

Where meetings take place in person your travel expenses will be reimbursed, and we are committed to making any reasonable adjustments that you require to enable you to carry out the role.

7. Application process

We are seeking applications from candidates who can demonstrate that they will bring strategic vision and energy, along with fresh thinking and new perspectives.

We recognise and celebrate the unique perspectives that come from having diverse experiences represented on the Board of Trustees. Because we are focusing on becoming an organisation that more closely reflects the society we live in and the population we serve, we especially welcome applications from underrepresented groups and from applicants with lived experience of prison.

Some people are disqualified by law from acting as charity trustees, subject to waiver provisions. You can find out about automatic disqualification rules in Charity Commission guidance [here](#), including information on applying for a waiver. Some of these disqualification rules relate to those with criminal convictions. PET is aware that this could, depending on the circumstances, prove an issue for potential Trustees with lived experience of the prison system. In these circumstances, PET will provide support for a suitable candidate in pursuing a waiver.

To apply for this post, 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, a set of questions to give us a sense of your interest and what you could bring to PET as a Trustee. The questions are:

1. Please tell us about yourself and what makes you want to be a Trustee of PET right now.
2. Referring to the skills and abilities we are looking for in section 5, please share the skills, experiences and perspectives you could contribute to the organisation as a Trustee.
3. In five years' time, what accomplishments would make you particularly proud to have been part of PET?

While there is no set length, as an indication your total response to these questions should normally be about two sides of a Word document. You may look at the list in section 5 and doubt whether you have all these competencies. But if you think this is the right role for you, please don't let this put you off. Focus instead on what you would bring to the role.

Secondly, you will be asked to upload your CV. This will also be anonymised and referred to at the shortlisting stage.

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.

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 **Monday 3 March 2025**.

All applications will be anonymised before being scored by our Trustee-led Nominations Committee. A panel will interview shortlisted candidates. Interviews will be held remotely using MS Teams for all candidates.

Interviews will be held on **Tuesday 25 March 2025**. If you cannot make this date, please let us know as soon as possible by emailing jon@prisonerseducation.org.uk.

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

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