



Chair of Trustees

Role description

Role summary

Providing leadership and direction to the Board, Chief Executive and staff to ensure The Runnymede Trust remains a strong, sustainable and effective charity, which generates intelligence and evidence through research, network building, leading debate and policy engagement, to challenge race inequality in Britain.

Overall responsibility

The Chair will work with the Board of Trustees to fulfil our governance responsibilities and oversee the implementation of our strategy. The Chair will work in partnership with the Chief Executive to help them achieve the strategic aims of the organisation. Within the charity, you will be working closely with our Chief Executive, providing critical support, and quickly becoming an invaluable source of wisdom and guidance.

The Chair plays an active role in building the national profile of The Runnymede Trust as an authoritative research-based voice to assist practitioners, citizens and policy makers, across the political spectrum, to achieve genuine race equity in Britain. We will provide media training and other development where needed.

The Chair will understand issues relevant to racial justice and race issues and instinctively know how to build positive alliances in and across our communities and nationally. The Chair will effortlessly leverage stakeholder networks, be someone who makes connections easily, and will ensure we have a bold voice with policy makers, opinion formers, partners and others. Given Runnymede's visible public profile, you will be just as comfortable responding to complex and fast-moving issues which require a quick response as well as leading a slower paced dialogue on future direction and strategy.

The Chair will work closely with our Chief Executive, Dr Halima Begum, and her executive team. Like any pioneering organisation, we are busy exploring all opportunities to do more, some of which may lift us out of our current strategic objectives. We are looking for a new Chair who can provide support, stretch and constructive challenge around the big strategic decisions, some of which could go to the heart of our charity's brand and ethos and also national debates on the role of charities and influencing. The Chair will bring balance, perspective and insight, quickly becoming an invaluable source of wisdom and guidance, and a trusted critical friend and sparring partner. In return, we can offer a skilled, knowledgeable, and dedicated

trustee team along with a rare chance to chair a unique and iconic organisation contributing to changing the way racial justice is understood in the UK.

Key responsibilities will include:

- Provide clear, engaging and confident leadership and direction to the Runnymede Trust Board of Trustees, ensuring the Board is fully effective in performing its strategic oversight and scrutiny role.
- Lead the Board's overall development including ways of working, culture and plans for trustee (and CEO) succession
- To Chair the meetings of the Board, support the charity to be well governed and effective and report the business of committees.
- Lead a team of Trustees in a collaborative and inclusive way, holding space for diverse views, building consensus, and ensuring decisions and actions are implemented.
- Regular review of the charity's governance structure and board performance.
- Promote the highest standards of governance, financial probity, regulatory compliance (Charity Commission) and risk management, safeguarding the reputation of Runnymede and upholding its values.
- Ensure the Board fulfils its duties with respect to financial health of the charity, with systems in place to assess risk and ensure financial accountability.
- Works with trustees to respond promptly to urgent Board matters that arise, understanding when to take occasional urgent decisions under devolved powers and reporting back to the Board.
- Working with the board, and the Chief Executive, to ensure the charity has a clear vision, mission and strategic direction, and there is alignment in achieving these. Support the Chief Executive to ensure senior management team are aligned and focus on achieving these.
- Providing oversight, wisdom, counselling, and support the executive, via a primary relationship with the CEO on a wide range of strategic issues relating to the direction sustainability impact and reputation of the charity.
- Effective and supportive working relationships with the Chief Executive, and wider staff team, to ensure good governance of The Runnymede Trust eg communicating and meeting between formal Board meetings, for briefings, discussions and to provide constructive questioning, support and guidance.
- Occasionally being required to externally represent the organisation on governance matters and where needed with key stakeholders such as regulators and senior parliamentarians.

General Trustee duties

- To ensure The Runnymede Trust acts within and pursues its objects as defined in the Memorandum and Articles of Association (its governing document), charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulation and in good faith
- To safeguard the financial stability, good name and ethos of The Runnymede Trust

- To ensure The Runnymede Trust applies its resources exclusively to in the pursuance of its objectives
- To lead the appointment process for the Chief Executive where necessary
- To submit an annual update to the Register of Trustees

Person specification

Experience, knowledge and understanding

Essential:

1. An influential civic or organisational leader with knowledge of the public sector and/or civil society and experience of navigating the environment.
2. Some experience and active interest in, issues relevant to Runnymede's work.
3. Knowledge and experience of good governance practice through experience of leading a Board, committee or group as a Chair.
4. Substantive strategic leadership experience, and evidence of having made an outstanding contribution within your industry or profession.
5. A successful track record of leading the formulation and delivery of organisational objectives and strategies.
6. An understanding and appreciation of the financial constraints and challenges of a charity dependent on multiple funding streams, a competitive fundraising environment, and the need to maintain a sustainable operating model in line with the Runnymede Trust's emerging strategy.
7. An understanding of how charities operate in the current environment balancing research, influence and campaigning within charitable law and governance.
8. An insight into the complexities involved in national organisations such as finance, risk, political neutrality and strategy.

Part Two Skills and abilities

1. A commitment to the objectives of The Runnymede Trust and an understanding of its aims, objectives and vision
2. Diplomacy and ambassadorial skills to negotiate and influence. A collaborative style to build consensus, and to navigate hostile, tense and challenging environments. The Chair will need strong relationship and alliance-building abilities.
3. Strong political acumen and judgement, balanced with seeking challenge and information to take decisions. The Chair will be a clear and independent thinker who fosters a culture of high-quality debate, discussion, and decision.
4. A confident communicator. The Chair will bring strong diplomacy skills and networks to navigate political complexity with the Runnymede Trust's brand and highly visible public profile.
5. Personal integrity, ethics and values, which will inspire the trust and confidence of the Board, the senior management team and the Runnymede Trust's wider stakeholder group. The Chair will maintain positive working relationships between the Board and Executive, and work with emotional and cultural intelligence.
6. Ability to assimilate and analyse information quickly in order to debate complex issues at the highest strategic levels. The Chair will be an out of the box thinker supporting the Runnymede Trust to develop and implement ideas.
7. A high standard of impartiality, transparency and objectivity and sound judgement will be essential.
8. A clear and persuasive leadership style with effective verbal and written communication skills.

How the Chair will work

1. A leader who guides, inspires and energises others, including the Board and executive team.
2. An engaged and versatile communicator, a natural networker who inspires confidence and trust.
3. A natural collaborator with high capacity for self-reflection
4. The Chair will be aligned with the Runnymede Trust's mission and values as at times the Chair will be required the navigate the political complexities of leading one of the most well-known race relations organisations in the country.

Terms of appointment

Time commitment

There are currently 6 Board meetings each year and a Trustee awayday is held on an ad hoc basis.

The Chair will have regular meetings with the Chief Executive and be expected to attend key meetings with The Runnymede Trust's external stakeholders (including politicians and funders) as appropriate, as well as attend the occasional event.

The time commitment for the Chair is expected to be 1-2 days per month on average. This may rise during periods of change and strategic development.

Remuneration

All The Runnymede Trust Trustees including the Chair are voluntary roles with all reasonable expenses incurred in the role reimbursed.

Length of appointment

The Chair of Trustees is appointed for an initial three-year term, renewable up to three times for a maximum of nine continuous years.

Location

The Runnymede Trust's offices are based in London. Regular travel to London would be expected.