SOS Children's Villages UK – Trustee Role

Candidate Pack
July 2026

SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES

Charity People
PERMANENT AND TEMPORARY

Certified B Corporation

A message from the Chair

Dear Prospective Trustee,

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Trustee of SOS Children's Villages UK.

In December 2025, the Board of Trustees made the pivotal decision for our Charity to leave the SOS Children's Villages Federation. Although we have been a member of the Federation for over 50 years, we decided that we can do more to realise this fundamental right for children as a fully independent organisation.

We are delighted that you are considering joining our Board at such an important moment in our organisation's journey. Across the world, millions of children are growing up without the care, protection and opportunities every child deserves. Our purpose is simple but powerful: to ensure that no child grows up alone.

SOS Children's Villages has been supporting children and families for more than 75 years and are work is global. Together with local communities and partners, we help children grow up in safe, loving families wherever possible, strengthen families at risk of separation, respond to humanitarian crises, and advocate for the rights of children who have lost, or are at risk of losing, parental care.

The challenges facing children today are becoming increasingly complex. Conflict, climate change, displacement, poverty and inequality are placing unprecedented pressure on families around the world. During the past year, our programmes responded to humanitarian emergencies affecting children and families in places including the Middle East, Ukraine and South Sudan, providing life-saving support and helping communities begin to recover.

Against this backdrop, SOS Children's Villages UK has continued to strengthen its own foundations. We have enhanced our governance, grown our income, expanded our partnerships and increased our influence, enabling us to make an even greater contribution to improving the lives of children and families around the world.

As we look ahead, we have ambitious plans to deepen our impact. Our priorities include increasing our influence for children without parental care or at risk of losing it, embedding safeguarding and meaningful youth participation across everything we do, building long-term financial sustainability through diversified income, and continuing to foster an inclusive, values-led culture throughout the organisation.

This is an exciting opportunity to join a committed and engaged Board helping to shape the future of an organisation with both global reach and local impact. We are seeking people who share our commitment to children and who bring curiosity, strategic thinking, sound judgement and a collaborative approach. Whether or not you have previous board experience, we welcome applications from people with diverse professional backgrounds, lived experiences and perspectives.

If you believe every child deserves the opportunity to grow up safe, supported and connected, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Thank you for considering this opportunity to serve as a Trustee of SOS Children's Villages UK. I hope this recruitment pack gives you a sense of our ambition, our values and the difference we can make together.

With best wishes,

Mrs Harpinder Collacott
Chair of the Board of Trustees
SOS Children's Villages UK

About the Organisation

In autumn of 2026 we will re-launch under a new name and logo. We will continue to work with many of the same partners as well as look for new ways to increase our impact.

Importantly, our belief that that all children have the right to feel loved, safe and supported remains the driver for everything we do. We focus on supporting children and young people without or at risk of losing parental care. We are there for children every step of the way.

From caring for children without parental care, and helping families to stay together, to guiding young adults toward self-reliance and protecting children in emergency situations. By nurturing trust, confidence, and a sense of belonging, we empower children to find their voices and build brighter futures.

Every child deserves to grow up with love, respect and security.

Families come in all shapes and sizes, but what truly matters is that children and young people have a sense of belonging and are supported by individuals who care for them and believe in them.

But 1 in 10 children and young people are at risk of separation from their families and communities, abandoned, or forced to live in abusive environments.

This can kick-start a cycle of neglect, as generation after generation repeat the behaviour they learnt as a child. Together, with children, families and their communities, we are breaking this cycle.

What We Do

Every child is unique, so we tailor our support to meet each child, family and community's individual needs. We do this through:

- **Keeping families together:** we support and strengthen families who are under pressure, helping them to stay together.
- **Caring for children:** when children are not able to stay with their families we help to find another form of quality, alternative care until they can safely return to their community.
- **Youth employability and education:** through training, mentoring and developing skills, we help young people to prepare for their future and find employment or set up businesses.
- **Protecting children in emergencies:** we support children and families in disasters, emergencies and crisis situations, helping with their physical and psychological needs.
- **Advocacy and research:** we take action to amplify the voices of children and young people and bring them to the forefront of policy and decision-making, working with states and partners to ensure that their rights are respected.

We are improving how we listen to young people, families and communities to understand the tools and resources they need to build bright, successful futures, rooted in care and love. We then tailor our approaches to meet their unique needs – delivering solutions informed by their voices and focused on where we can have the greatest impact.

Strategic Goals

We acknowledge the complex and volatile global factors impacting our work to keep children safe and help them to thrive. This has fuelled our ambition to scale our work further. We will respond to these challenges and opportunities, including placing greater emphasis on understanding communities' and families' needs and solutions, listening to the voices of children and young people and being agile, to ensure we do whatever we can to protect children and their rights.

Working in partnership with those who are well-placed to respond and who share our ambition – including governments, non-governmental organisations and community-based organisations – we will strive to address child poverty and vulnerability at individual, family and community levels ensuring children grow up in a safe and nurturing environment.

Our current strategy guides us towards achieving objectives in five key areas:

1. Locally-led and sustainable change

Building locally-led programmes that deliver demonstrable positive change for children and young people who have lost, or who are at risk of losing, parental care, protecting their rights and ensuring every child belongs to a family and grows with love, respect and security.

2. Evidence through programmes

Creating locally-led programmes that deliver learning and evidence for improvement and innovation, to strengthen outcomes for more children in the future.

3. Data and research

Identifying, collating and disseminating data and learning to inform improvements to child protection systems and monitoring.

4. Humanitarian response

Responding to urgent humanitarian crises affecting children and young people, where local partners are well-positioned to prevent family separation, protect children who have lost family support, and provide safety and security.

5. Advocacy

Ensuring children and young people who have lost, or who are at risk of losing, parental care are better protected and have the care and love of a family, through greater representation in UK foreign policy and improved application of lessons and best practice in child protection systems.

In 2027, we will embark on a new strategic planning cycle, reflecting our new position outside the SOS Children's Villages Federation.

Organisational Structure and Governance

Our passionate team works tirelessly to protect, care for, and empower children and families worldwide. Together, we are committed to creating brighter futures and lasting change for those in need.

SOS Children's Villages UK is governed by a Board of Trustees, which consists of seven members, who are legally responsible for directing the affairs of the Charity and are also the directors of the company for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006.

SOS Children's Villages UK is led by Chief Executive Alison Wallace, who has held the role since January 2018. She heads the Senior Management Team, which includes four directors: the Director of Development, the Director of Finance and IT, the Director of Communications, Brand and Advocacy, and the Director of Individual Giving.

Further details of our Board of Trustee members and Senior Management team can be found here.

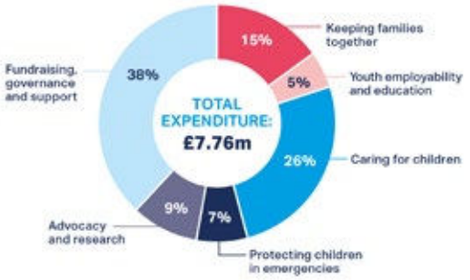
Financial Overview

Our income and expenditure in 2025 reflects our ongoing focus on developing sustainable, community-based programmes to support children, young people and families. This year, we embarked on the first year of our new five-year strategy aimed at growing the organisation and our impact. This included investing in our Advocacy and Research capacity through the R:each initiative, which aims to accelerate progress in community grounded child protection. We continued to invest in our internal resources and capabilities, growing our fundraising team and programme expertise, as well as further strengthening safeguarding and compliance. This means we can better respond to the complex programme environments we are increasingly facing, strengthen our relationships with implementing partners as part of collaborative working and transparent reporting to our donors, and work in partnership to better protect children, young people and families.

Total income in 2025 of £6.45m was £0.31m /5% higher than 2024's income of £6.14m. Expenditure in 2025 at £7.76m was £0.01m lower than 2024 spend of £7.78m.

Income for 2025 was below budget expectations in part due to the cuts in the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's (FCDO) Official Development Assistance budget, which had implications for programme funding, as the sector adjusted, funding opportunities reduced and the pressure on other funding options increased. However, we were able to meet our funding commitments to partners in our other income streams in 2025 through the consistent generosity and loyalty of our donors, through several generous legacy gifts received in 2025, and through further strengthening our fundraising operations.

Lower expenditure in 2025 related to a large one-off legacy donation received and recognised as income in 2022 and finally spent out in 2024.



For more information, please see our Annual Report 2025.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

SOS Children's Villages UK is committed to being a diverse and inclusive charity. The Charity aims to demonstrate support for all its employees and volunteers, valuing each individual's contribution regardless of age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, civil partnership status, disability, nationality, race, religion or belief. We are committed to providing equal opportunities for all employees and volunteers.

About the Role

The role of a trustee is to ensure that SOSUK fulfils its duties to its beneficiaries by delivering on its vision, mission and values in a manner consistent with the requirements of UK charity and companies' law and regulation.

The statutory duties of a trustee are:

- To provide strategic direction for the organisation to ensure it is fulfilling its mission.
- To set the risk appetite for the organisation and support the staff to work within those parameters.
- To appoint the Chief Executive Officer and annually monitor their performance.
- To ensure the organisation complies with its governing document.
- To ensure that the organisation pursues its objectives as defined in its governing document.
- To ensure the organisation applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objectives - the charity must not spend money on activities which are not included in its own objectives, no matter how 'charitable' and 'worthwhile' those activities are.
- To contribute actively to the Board of Trustees' role in giving firm strategic direction to the organisation, setting overall policy, defining goals and setting targets and evaluating performance against agreed targets.
- To safeguard the good name and values of the organisation.
- To provide oversight through board meetings to ensure the effective and efficient administration of the organisation.
- To provide financial oversight to the Executive to ensure the smooth running of the organisation and financial stability in its operations.
- To protect the property of the organisation and to ensure investment of the organisation's funds align with its mission.

In addition, with other trustees to hold the charity "in trust" for current and future beneficiaries by:

- Ensuring that the charity has a clear vision, mission and strategic direction and is focused on achieving these.
- Being responsible for the performance of the charity and for its "corporate" behaviour; ensuring that the charity complies with all legal and regulatory requirements.
- Acting as guardians of the charity's assets, both tangible and intangible, taking all due care over their security, deployment and proper application.
- Ensuring that the charity's governance is of the highest possible standard.

As well as the various statutory duties, any trustee should make full use of any specific skills, knowledge or experience to help the board make good decisions.

The above list of duties is indicative only and not exhaustive. The trustee will be expected to perform all such additional duties as are reasonably commensurate with the role.

All trustees should also be aware of, and understand, their individual and collective responsibilities, and should not be overly reliant on one or more individual trustees in any particular aspect of the governance of the charity.

Remuneration

The role of trustee is not accompanied by any financial remuneration.

Location

SOS Children's Villages UK is based in central Cambridge. Board meetings are held alternately online and in person in central London.

Time Commitment

4 Board meetings per year.

All trustees serve on a committee too and will be required to prepare for and attend committee meetings which are up to four times per year depending on the committee.

The total time commitment is around 8-10 days per year plus ad hoc availability for meetings with staff, plus any preparation time required.

Person Specification

Individuals are sought who have a strong empathy with our mission. We particularly welcome applications from individuals who have direct experience in the UK or other care systems as a child or an adult.

Experience

- Demonstrable experience of building and sustaining relationships with key stakeholders and colleagues to achieve organisational objectives.
- Proven track record of sound judgement and effective decision-making. A history of impartiality, fairness, and the ability to respect confidences.
- A track record of commitment to promoting equality and diversity.
- Alternative care experience, for example lived experience within SOS Children's Villages or the UK care system, or other demonstrable understanding of the people we serve and the impact of our work.

Knowledge, Skills and Understanding

We are looking for strategic thinkers, people with ideas and innovators as well as those who can help an organisation grow and develop in line with its mission. We would welcome candidates who are keen to use their networks to support profile raising and increasing the ability of the charity to fundraise and increase its income. Although successful experience of operating within a board is advantageous, first-time trustees will be considered. In particular:

- Commitment to the organisation and a willingness to devote the necessary time and effort.
- Preparedness to make unpopular recommendations to the board, and a willingness to speak their mind.
- Willingness to be available to staff for advice and enquiries on an ad hoc basis Good, independent judgement and strategic vision.
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship.
- An ability to work effectively as a member of a team.
- An understanding of the respective roles of the Chair, Trustees and Chief Executive.

What we are looking for

Fundraising Trustee:

- Expertise in mass market fundraising, communications, and branding.
- Strategic understanding of how to raise awareness and income in a low brand recognition environment.
- Proven experience in developing strategic partnerships

Finance Trustee:

- Fully qualified accountant with experience in charity finance (international NGO experience is a plus) or capacity to develop the necessary knowledge and understanding
- Strategic insight into financial performance and risk
- The ability to contribute to the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee

Child Rights Trustee:

- Expertise in child rights, with experience in programme design or oversight, or policy development and advocacy, ideally with an understanding of the rights of children who have lost or are at risk of losing parental care
- An understanding of the role youth engagement and locally-led development play in achieving and sustaining good outcomes
- Thorough appreciation of the key challenges facing the international development sector
- Current direct experience of the countries or regions in which the charity seeks to make an impact, particularly Sub-Saharan Africa, which can help inform Trustee decision making

We welcome applications from both experienced trustees and first-timers. Diversity of thought, background, and age is important to us - so whether you're early in your career or a seasoned professional, we'd love to hear from you.

How to Apply

Charity People Ltd. is acting as a recruitment agency adviser to SOS Children's Villages UK on this appointment.

SOS Children's Villages UK will host a Q&A Webinar at 6pm on Thursday 27th August, where they will share further insights and answer any additional questions you may have. Please register your interest in attending this webinar by using this link. If you have any additional questions about the role or the organisation, please send these to seniorappointments@charitypeople.co.uk.

To apply, please send a CV/Profile and a supporting statement answering the questions below (in text or video/audio format) to seniorappointments@charitypeople.co.uk by 5pm on Friday 11th September.

1. Briefly describe how your skills, experience and personal qualities make you a good candidate for this role. Refer to the role description and person specification for inspiration. (500 words max, 3 minutes video/audio)
2. What motivates you to apply for a trustee role with SOS Children's Villages UK? How do your personal values align with our mission to support children without parental care and families at risk? (500 words max, 3 minutes video/audio)

Fundraising Trustee:

3. Describe a time when you successfully led or contributed to a mass market fundraising campaign. What strategies did you use to overcome low brand recognition or limited resources? (500 words max, 3 minutes video/audio)

Finance Trustee:

4. As a trustee on the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, how would you contribute to strategic financial decision-making during a period of organisational transformation and income growth? (500 words max, 3 minutes video/audio)

Child rights Trustee:

5. In your view, what role can an organisation like ours play in championing the rights of children without or at risk of losing parental care and how should we go about it?

Accessibility and Adjustments

We are committed to providing reasonable adjustments throughout our recruitment process and we'll always endeavour to be as accommodating as possible.

Timeline

Application Deadline: 5pm, Friday 11th September
Interviews: w/c 28th September and w/c 5th October

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