

# TRUSTEE INFORMATION PACK

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### About Us

Cruse Scotland is a unique organisation. Our work offers bereaved people the vital support they so badly need when someone close dies. We have a proven record of providing personalised, quality support to bereaved adults and children across Scotland over the last 50 plus years.

We are Scotland's **only** open-to-all bereavement charity. As such, we support people of all ages regardless of when the death occurred or the cause of death. More than half of our clients live in areas of multiple deprivation and will regularly contact us following a recommendation from their GP or other NHS specialist.

Our expertise is recognised and valued by the Scottish Government, and we are called upon to provide support following significant traumatic incidents such as the Bin Lorry tragedy in Glasgow, the Baby Ashes issue in Aberdeen and currently we are supporting families affected through the difficult situation happening at Ayr and Troon Cemeteries as well as the high profile Covid-19 Inquiry in Scotland.

We are commissioned by Scottish Government to deliver responsive support to any workplace in Scotland in the aftermath of suicide. These facilitated support sessions are delivered on site by a highly qualified team all across Scotland to public, private and voluntary sector organisations.

We deliver specialist counselling and helpline training to around 100 new Cruse Scotland volunteers each year for a varied of roles including counselling support, helpline, children and young people's support and our assessment team. We contribute to the development of Scotland's counselling and psychotherapy workforce through providing placements for counselling students from many Scottish further education institutions. We also provide training to a wide range of external parties including Health and Social Care staff; banking, law and insurance companies and many third sector organisations who are dealing with bereaved people; through the course of their work.

### Our Impact

Research shows that there are approximately 60,000 deaths in Scotland each year with around 280,000 people in Scotland being affected by bereavement. In the year 2023-24 Cruse Scotland received over 12,000 calls to its national helpline and webchat support service and delivered almost 6,000 counselling or group support sessions. Whilst this is a very significant achievement, we continue to work tirelessly to develop our services to enable us to reach even more people who need our help. Since the pandemic, demand for our service has continued to rise and with an increased intensity of need.

The positive impact of Cruse Scotland on those we support (in terms of improved mental and physical wellbeing, reduced need for GP and other medical assistance and earlier return to work) is clearly demonstrated by our evidence-based evaluation. A conservative estimate of the direct value of the support provided by Cruse free of charge to clients is in the region of £2.5m per annum. Our service evaluation indicates that 69% of clients confirmed they had visited their GP less often following counselling from Cruse, clearly showing that our work plays a preventative role and results in cost savings for the NHS.

## Our Team

It is a testament to the hard work and commitment of those involved in Cruse that such an enormous amount is achieved with 22 members of staff (15 wte) and a volunteer team of around 180 spread across Scotland.

## General Statement: Being a Trustee

The responsibility of a Trustee is to direct the affairs of Cruse Scotland through efficient, effective and accountable governance ensuring that the organisation is solvent, professionally-run and that it acts in accordance with its aims and objectives.

Trustees are responsible and accountable for the overall strategic leadership and direction of Cruse Scotland, safeguarding the assets, reputation and ethos of the organisation and promoting its work. Trustees are expected to uphold our core values.

## Time Commitment

The Board meet quarterly, with meetings alternating between in person and online. The Autumn Board meeting also includes our AGM.

Each Board member is also required to join one of the board committees, related to their professional skillset. These committees also meet quarterly and meetings are generally held online. Sub-committees comprise: Finance & Audit; Fundraising & Communications; Practice Governance & Training; and the Executive.

We hold an in-person strategy day once a year to bring together our trustees and staff management team.

It is assumed that Board members will attend our annual volunteer conference held on a Saturday in September, and where possible to engage with celebration events such as Volunteers Week. We deliver an ongoing CPD programme on a wide range of bereavement and related topics which Board members can opt to attend if they are of interest.

The dates for all meetings and events are in place for 2024.

## Duties as a Trustee

The Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) has produced guidance information for this role. The document sets out in detail the duties and responsibilities of charity trustees in Scotland and can be found at <https://www.oscr.org.uk/guidance-and-forms/guidance-and-good-practice-for-charity-trustees/charity-trustee-duties>

It is important to read these before making an application.

**crusescotland.org.uk**