



Over 110 Years of Connecting People

(TRUSTEE) VOLUNTEER POSITIONS

About Birthlink

Birthlink is an Edinburgh based charity. Birthlink holds the Adoption Contact Register (ACR) for Scotland which celebrated its 40th Anniversary in 2024. Birthlink also works in partnership with the Scottish Government including through Future Pathways.

The organisation was first established in 1911 as the Eastern Branch of the National Vigilance Association to support vulnerable women and girls

Our mission is to enhance and promote the wellbeing of adults. Birthlink provides life changing support to adults affected by Adoption with a Scottish connection, adults who have experienced abuse in care in Scotland irrespective of where they live in the world today.

Birthlink support those adults by:

- Supporting people to find and access their information and records
- Supporting people to make application to Scotland's Redress Scheme
- Reuniting people and their families

Birthlink is at a developmental stage, undergoing a comprehensive business change programme to ensure the organisation is equipped to continue to deliver its functions in the future.

Birthlink's Core Services are:

- Edinburgh's oldest thrift shops; soon to be merged
- Post Adoption Support Service this includes the after-adoption information phonenumber, wrap around practical and emotional support to people on their journey, accessing records, managing the adoption contact register, mediation for people who are matched on the adoption contact register in advance of when they meet for the first time
- Care Connect Service, supporting adults who have been in care to find information about their past or trace estranged family members
- Scotland's Redress Scheme, Redress Support Service, supporting people to access their records in advance of applying to Scotland's Redress Scheme

As an aspect of the change programme the following services are being grown:

- Genealogy Service
- Counselling Service
- Heritage programme

You can read more about Birthlink and these services here [Home - Birthlink](#) , [Services - Birthlink](#) and [Heritage - About - Birthlink](#)

Our services are life changing and are funded through a mix of grants and fund-raising including our two charity shops.

Birthlink is a charitable company governed by the board of trustees.

Joining the Board

We are now seeking to recruit to our volunteer board of Directors to ensure our continued growth, future strategy and protect the interest of our stakeholders. We will achieve this by ensuring we have the right skills and expertise to continue to transform and drive the organisation.

As a member of Birthlink Board, you will play a key role in the Governance and Strategy to ensure we can continue to serve our beneficiaries.

We are looking to recruit five board members including a Secretary, Treasurer (also see page 4) and Safeguarding Lead (also see page 5) with professional subject matter expertise in the following areas:

- Adoption practice (historic to modern times)
- Adult and Child Protection
- Business development, strategy and management
- Corporate Partnerships



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- Feminist issues impacting on our beneficiaries, their children and families and the intergenerational and generational impact of these
- Fundraising and Philanthropy
- Human Resources including employee engagement and development
- Information governance and data protection
- Membership organisations
- Risk Management
- Senior Social Worker with practice teaching experience and experience of working in a psychologically safe and trauma informed organisation
- Social impact measurement
- Startups, non-profit, non-government, government or charity organisation
- Volunteer growth and management

All board members do not need to have professional subject matter expertise in all areas. However, an understanding of the impact of adoption, forced adoption, abuse in care and being in care in Scotland and an understanding of trauma and generational trauma is critical.

Birthlink are committed to representing the diversity of our beneficiaries on our Board and welcome applications from people who have family or personal experience of adoption and forced adoption or experience of being in care in Scotland.

Excellent skills in using Microsoft Teams and associated packages critical. Knowledge of information management systems and electronic finance systems needed.

Role of the Board of Directors

- First and foremost, board members owe a fiduciary duty to the beneficiaries of the trust. This means we must always act in the best interests of those beneficiaries. We must exercise our powers honestly, diligently, and with skill and care.
- Manage, safeguard and protect the assets and resources of Birthlink and ensure that they are used only for the purposes set out in the memoranda and articles of association.
- Compliance with Articles of Association, the legal document outlining the settlor's wishes and the instructions for managing the organisation. It's crucial for Board members to fully understand and abide by these terms to ensure we are fulfilling our duties correctly.
- Make sensible investment decisions, considering factors like risk, return, and diversification. We must also ensure that assets are properly maintained and, where necessary, insured.
- Ensure compliance with legal and financial requirements and oversee excellent financial planning.
- Responsible for keeping accurate accounts of the finances and transactions. We must also provide beneficiaries and stakeholders with regular reports on the performance and financial position. This helps ensure accountability and allows them to monitor the activities.
- We have a duty of care towards the beneficiaries, and staff which means we must act with reasonable skill and diligence. This includes keeping accurate records, providing beneficiaries and staff with relevant information about the trust, and seeking professional advice when needed.
- Open communication with beneficiaries, staff, all stakeholders is essential. Keeping them informed about the administration, including any significant decisions or changes. To build trust and ensures transparency in the management of the organisation.
- Develop, set and deliver the strategy and vision of the organisation
- Oversee the recruitment, appointment and management of key staff ensuring compliance with best employment practice.
- We must not place ourselves in a position in which our interests as an individual may conflict with our duty as a trustee.

Benefit Realisation

There are so many benefits that ambitious, passionate people can expect to gain from joining a board. You can make an impact, get involved in a cause you care about and learn leadership skills.

People willing to commit themselves to a directorial role on top of their day-to-day job is showing your capability of taking on more responsibilities and your ability to balance executive and non-executive roles. As your credibility and reputation improve, with that comes a host of new opportunities for you in your career or business. Working on a



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diverse board means that your fellow directors will be from different professional backgrounds. Not only is the diversity that comes with being a director an interesting break from the norm, it's also a great opportunity to build upon your current skills and knowledge and learn about different professions.

By working on the board, you have the unique opportunity to see through the lens of a non-executive versus the perspective of a role in management that you are likely more used to. This will give you a more holistic view of how organisations work and gain insight into the role of the director and empathy for the work they do. You will be able to learn new ways to improve your relationships that will benefit the whole team, and to ask the right questions to get the best results.

As well, it is an opportunity to share your own subject matter expertise with a group of people you might otherwise never meet.

Commitment

The board meets monthly online, a weekday at 1800. The expectation is that all board members will meet in person at a minimum twice per year. One of these sessions is a board development session. Twice yearly there is a meet the board session for all staff, one in person and one online. Subgroups and short-life working groups are also a regular commitment expected of the board. Extra ordinary meetings will occur as needed. The Annual General Meeting is in December, online.

Trustees serve for 3 years and are eligible for re-appointment up to a maximum of 6 years.

Birthlink trustees act in a personal capacity unconnected with their day job.

Reading

The Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 (the 2005 Act), under the 2005 Act, the charity trustees have general control and management of the administration of the charity. Section 66 of the 2005 Act places the charity trustees under a number of general duties.

They must:

1. Act in the interests of the charity and must, in particular:-
 - seek, in good faith, to ensure that the charity acts in a manner which is consistent with its purposes;
 - act with the care and diligence that it is reasonable to expect of a person who is managing the affairs of another person; and
 - manage any conflict of interest between the charity and any person or organisation responsible for the appointment of the charity trustee.
2. Ensure that the charity complies with any direction, requirement, notice or duty imposed on it in terms of the 2005 Act ('the specific duties').

As a body, the charity trustees have a collective responsibility to act in the interest of the charity and comply with the specific duties. Any breach of these duties is to be treated as misconduct in the administration of the charity ('misconduct' includes mismanagement).

The Scottish Charity Regulator are responsible for regulating Scottish charities and their charity trustees.

The 'Guidance and good practice for Charity Trustees' publication provides further information on charity trustee duties and the specific duties in the 2005 Act. We recommend that all charity trustees read this guidance.

In this guidance, the general duties and specific duties of charity trustees in the 2005 Act is explored. There are examples of how these might work and good practice from the Regulator and from other organisations in the charity sector.

This guidance explains what the law says charity trustees must do or must not do. The charity trustee duties are set out in The Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 referred to in this Guidance as the 2005 Act.

Guidance and good practice for charity trustees [OSCR | Guidance and good practice for charity trustees](#)



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TREASURER

About You

Are you someone who has been involved in startups, non-profit, non-government, government or charity organisation with evidence of past performance and including supporting those organisations through times of change.

We are seeking a Treasurer to oversee the financial management of the organisation, working closely with the Board, CEO and finance manager to ensure accurate financial records, and preparing and presenting financial reports to the board. The treasurer will advise on financial strategy and risk management and ensure compliance with financial regulations and reporting requirements.

Do you

- Have experience of financial management and governance
- Understands the roles and responsibilities of a charities board of directors
- Understand the challenges across the charity sector
- Understands the sustainability challenges faced by the third sector

Treasurer Role

You will:

- Advise the Board on financial matters ensuring that monthly board reports are produced to facilitate robust financial monitoring
- Prepare an annual budget and cash flow forecasts and advise the board of future financial requirements
- Ensure that proper financial procedures and records are in place to safeguard resources
- Develop systems of costing and activity management to enhance efficiency
- On behalf of the directors will cause to be prepared and to be laid before the Board, and all Members at general meetings, such profit and loss accounts, balance sheets and reports
- Participate in the preparation of annual budgets, budget monitoring, and the profiling and modelling of income and expenditure decisions with a material impact on the Charities finances (both turnover and reserves).
- To participate in the preparation and audit of the association's annual accounts; at the conclusion of which, the Treasurer will, with the Board of Directors, endorse said reports.
- Every year within the time allowed by law, the Treasurer (and Company Secretary, if appointed) will send to the Registrar of Companies the annual return in the form prescribed by the Registrar together with all such documentation as is required under the Companies Acts.
- Every year within the time allowed by law, the Treasurer (and Company Secretary, if appointed) will send to OSCR the annual return in the form prescribed by OSCR.

Reading

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SAFEGUARDING LEAD

About You

Are you someone with specific skills specifically focused on Safeguarding. You have knowledge and experience of working in organisations where people have experienced abuse and trauma. You have played a critical role in promoting cultures of safety.

You have provided independent oversight, expert advice, and strategic challenge whilst ensuring the highest standards of safeguarding for vulnerable people, staff, volunteers, service users and beneficiaries has been upheld.

Do you

- Have safeguarding expertise to help strengthen governance, advise on risk, and support our services teams.
- Have significant experience in safeguarding leadership, regulation, or governance (e.g., education, health, social care, charity sector) ideally with an appropriate professional qualification
- Understand and can implement legal duties and statutory guidance on safeguarding and protecting
- Commit to provide strategic oversight and constructive challenge at board and senior management team level
- Commit to promote equality, diversity, and inclusive safeguarding practices

The Role

The role is central in promoting a safe culture and holding the Board and Senior Management Team accountable for the effectiveness of safeguarding practices and risk management.

Strategic Leadership

- Ensure safeguarding is effectively embedded in our strategy, policies, and operations
- Champion safeguarding at board level and organisational level and promote a proactive, learning-based safeguarding culture
- Contribute to the development of policies, systems, and practices that protect individuals from harm
- Ensure safeguarding risks are reflected in the organisation's risk register and are adequately mitigated

Governance and Assurance

- Reporting on safeguarding matters to the board, ensuring that safeguarding is a key part of organisational governance and decision-making
- Ensuring the organisation has appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place and that they are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect best practices and legal requirements
- Monitor compliance with statutory safeguarding responsibilities and regulatory frameworks
- Provide challenge and support to the senior management team in addressing safeguarding risks and incidents
- Review safeguarding performance reports, audits, and investigations to ensure accountability and transparency

Training and Awareness

- Ensure the board, staff and volunteers receive appropriate safeguarding training to understand their responsibilities in protecting individuals at risk

Stakeholder Engagement

- Act as a critical friend to the Board of Directors, Director and Senior Management Team
- Promote wellbeing and welfare of all staff, volunteers and beneficiaries
- Engage with external stakeholders, regulators, and partners to stay informed on safeguarding expectations and best practice



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APPLICATION

To express your interest in all positions and arrange an informal discussion in the first instance please connect with Gaynor.Clarke@birthlink.org.uk (Chair) and Linda.McLeod@birthlink.org.uk (Vice Chair)

We welcome applications submitted to the same email addresses, include an up-to-date CV and an application letter outlining the reasons you are interested in joining the Board and what expertise you will bring and how this will support the growth of the organisation. Include evidence of past performance, including supporting organisations through times of change. A commitment to growing the organisation, instilling Birthlink's vision and values in all that we do, also necessary.

Closing date: **22 September 2025**

Meet the board: **Meet the board sessions will be organised as an aspect of the process.**