

First Story is looking for up to three new trustees to join the board.

We recently conducted a skills audit, and we are particularly interested in recruiting trustees with experience in PR and marketing and writers with experience of working with young people and/or experience of developing writers.

We want our board to reflect the communities we work with, so we would welcome applications from people who understand the socio-economic/political context outside London and/or belong to the diverse communities we serve.

ABOUT FIRST STORY

Founded in 2008 by writer William Fiennes and teacher Katie Waldegrave, First Story is working towards a society that encourages and supports young people from all backgrounds to write creatively, for pleasure and agency. We believe there is dignity and power in being able to tell your own story, and that writing can transform lives.

Our flagship programme places professional writers into state secondary schools, where they work intensively with students and teachers, over one or two terms, to develop confidence, creativity and writing skills. First Story is committed to bringing opportunities for creativity to students who may not otherwise have the chance. We focus on partnering with schools that serve low-income communities, often in inner-city or isolated rural areas where arts engagement is low. Through our core programme and extended activities, including competitions and events, we expand young people's horizons and encourage aspirations. Participants gain vital skills that underpin academic attainment and support achieving potential.

Over ten years we have expanded our offer from London to the East Midlands and Yorkshire and now work in over 60 schools. Our strategic objectives for the next period are:

- to deliver a flagship young writers' programme that builds confidence, creativity and skills for secondary students and brings wider value to the whole school;
- to have embedded and strengthened our offer in the north of England, working with more schools and solid strategic partnerships;
- to have developed a wider First Story family of schools and alumnae/i receiving benefits beyond our young writers' programme; and
- to have established high-quality and distinctive CPD and resources for teachers and writers.

We have a further charitable objective to support professional writers; we work with a very diverse group of committed writers across the regions we work in. Over the next period we are looking to diversify our group of writers further and to support and train new writers to work with young people.





WHY JOIN THE BOARD NOW?

As a result of Covid-19 we all find ourselves in challenging times. There is increasing evidence that First Story's target groups are more severely affected by school closure and will not only have fallen behind, but will also have lost out on all the benefits of enrichment programmes such as our young writers' programme. We are confident that our offer can really support young people who have missed out on their education over the past few months. But we know that we will need to be adaptable as to how it is delivered, and that will include developing our digital content. We also know the financial context we work in will be very demanding.

Nevertheless, First Story is at an important point in our development. We like to think we've reached young adulthood – we're fresh and enthusiastic, but we are still a charity in our youth and have an exciting journey in front of us. We are reviewing our business model and asking ourselves how we can get even better at what we do. Over the next three years we want to extend our offer to the Manchester region and into more alternative provision. We want to be supporting emerging writers to work brilliantly with young people. In five years' time we aim to make more difference to young people in areas of need in England, and we want to be more sustainable as a charity.

We have a committed and experienced trustee team at First Story who work closely with our CEO Antonia Byatt. All new trustees have an induction, and we will support you to understand the work of the charity fully.

You can find out more about our trustees here:
<https://firststory.org.uk/about/team/>

HOW TO APPLY

Please send your CV with a covering letter telling us why you are interested in joining our board to:
antonia.byatt@firststory.org.uk.

Closing date: **23 September 2020**

Interview date: To be arranged for a mutually convenient date in **early October 2020**.

TRUSTEE ROLE

Purpose

First Story's board of trustees provides governance for the charity to ensure that the organisation's activities, performance and outcomes are in line with its vision, aims and charitable objectives. The trustees also provide overall policy oversight and support First Story in achieving its operational aims and making key contacts necessary to maintain successful operations.

The trustees are also responsible for ensuring the legal and statutory requirements of a UK charity in compliance with companies and charity law and the Charity Commission guidelines.

Term of service

Trustees of First Story are usually expected to serve for a minimum of four years. After the period of four years, a trustee's commitment may be extended for another term by mutual agreement.



Key accountabilities

1. To take ultimate responsibility under the charity's constitution for controlling the management and administration of the charity while delegating management to the Chief Executive Officer.
2. To ensure that the organisation functions within the legal and financial requirements of a registered charity, including any relevant rules relating to financial reporting, charitable governance, health and safety, data protection etc.
3. To ensure that the policies, plans and budgets of the organisation are in keeping with its aims.
4. To assess and approve the strategic direction for the organisation, including its vision, aims and strategies, and to guide First Story to achieve its aims in the most efficient and effective manner consistent with its organisational values and approach.
5. To review regularly the context and operating environment in which First Story works and to address emerging issues that may have an impact on strategy, the implementation of plans or its reputation with key stakeholders.
6. To employ, supervise and support a Chief Executive Officer and to delegate the day-to-day management of the organisation to her/him.
7. To ensure that the organisation has the resources, both human and financial, to achieve its aims.
8. To approve the charity's annual budgets, multi-year budget projections and reserves policy, and to monitor progress against those.
9. To ensure that the organisation is managing cash flow and reserves prudently.
10. To ensure that annual audits are carried out across the organisation and reported to the Finance Committee, and that reports from that Committee are considered by the board as a whole.
11. To approve annual reports and accounts for First Story Limited and First Story Enterprises Limited (a trading subsidiary that is currently dormant).
12. To ensure that an ongoing risk assessment and management process is in place across the organisation that informs policies, procedures and plans, and that trustees are updated on that and informed of any significant changes as they occur.
13. To ensure that a register of fraud and serious incidents is held and made available to all trustees, and that any serious fraud and serious incidents are reported to the board as a whole and investigated.
14. To sit on appraisal, recruitment and disciplinary panels as requested.

Commitments

Trustees are expected to attend four board meetings a year (usually held in January, June, September and November respectively), plus a strategy day on a Saturday (usually held in March). We have two committees – a Finance Committee and a Programme Committee – and most, but not all, board members are a member of a committee. Board members also share expertise/support staff on specific issues as they arise.

Who are we looking for?

We are looking for people who are committed to our values and who can take a role in steering the charity for the future and champion our work externally. Each of our board members brings something different to the board; we work as a team, but we value everyone's individual contribution. You don't need experience of being a board member, but you will need:

- the time and willingness to take part. If you feel unsure about being able to commit the time, please talk to us before applying.
- the willingness to learn and improve your contribution over time. We are keen to be a board that develops our trustees and will provide induction and training opportunities.
- an ability to think strategically and to make constructive criticisms of management reports, finances, forward plans, overall objectives, major resourcing issues and potential risks. As board members, it is more important that we ask intelligent questions than know the answers.
- to be eligible: that means being at least 18 years old, and free to declare that you have never been disqualified from being a trustee under the Charities Act.

