

# **Your guide to being an erosh trustee**

erosh

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## 1. Introduction

You have expressed an interest in becoming an erosh trustee or are a new trustee. We hope this 'pack' provides you with enough information about the role and answers your questions but please do contact us if you have any further queries (see [Section 9](#) for contact details).

## 2. Who we are

Erosh is a [Charitable Incorporated Organisation](#) (CIO) with a formal [constitution](#) and two overarching 'objects':

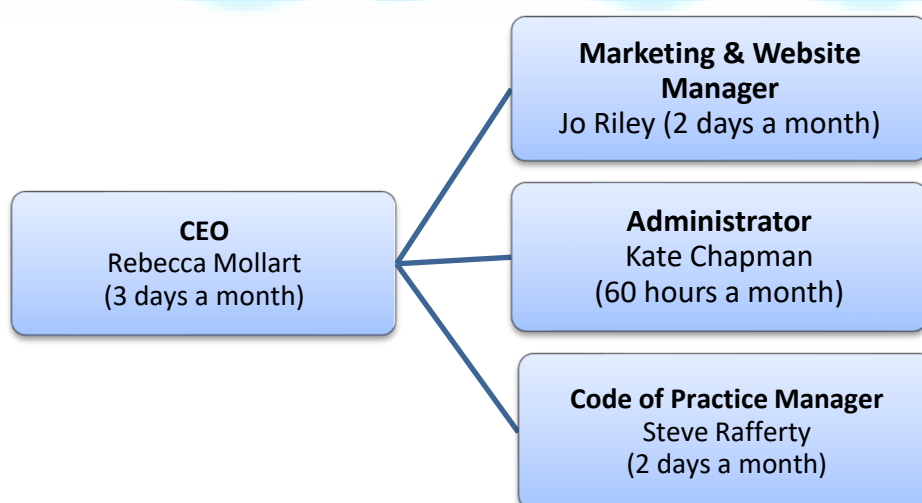
- Promoting the education of the public in the provision of older persons housing and services in order to relieve the needs of older people
- To relieve the needs of older people by promoting the effective use of resources by charities and non-charitable organisations within the older persons housing and support sector

We are regulated by the [Charity Commission](#) and follow the principles in its [Good Governance Code for Smaller Organisations](#).

We champion good quality older people's housing and support and provide practical resources for those working with older people and their service managers. Read more about who we are [here](#).

We have our own Code of Practice enabling sheltered and supported housing providers to demonstrate the quality of their services against nationally recognised standards Read more about what we do [here](#).

Our patron is TV presenter and campaigner Dame Esther Rantzen, and we are supported by a small [team of part-time self-employed staff](#) who work with us on a consultancy basis, and a board of [voluntary trustees](#).



We also have our very popular national and regional networks which give members the opportunity to be more actively involved at a local level. Read more about our networks [here](#).

We don't believe in reinventing the wheel or duplicating others' activities, so we work with a wide range of people and organisations. We are also kindly supported by a [partner organisations](#) who enable us to deliver the valuable resources and practical advice to our members, which ensure we achieve our objectives.

### 3. How we operate

We work to a 3-year **Business Plan** which sets out our previous achievements and current plans as well as how we manage risk. Our business plan is supported by an annual **Action Plan** which trustees use to monitor progress against objectives. Read more [here](#). In November each year we set the budget for the following year which we monitor at every trustee meeting. We publish an annual report and accounts at the AGM.

### 4. Our Trustees

#### a) Role overview

As a trustee, you are ultimately accountable for achieving our charitable aims and managing our resources in line with the Charity Commission and Code of Good Governance. It is a rewarding role with a focus on strategic direction; objectives and financial management; and holding our staff to account. You also ensure we comply with charity and company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations. As we are such a small charity, the role is hands-on and you are expected to contribute your knowledge and expertise.

#### Your key responsibilities are to:

- Ensure we have a clear vision, strategic direction, and objectives
- Manage our performance
- Ensure we comply with legal and regulatory requirements
- Ensure our governance is of the highest possible standard
- Promote the benefits of erosh membership whenever possible
- Safeguard our reputation
- Grow membership and proactively seek opportunities for our development

#### And, more specifically to:

- Agree our vision, strategic direction, and objectives
- Ensure the business plan and budget reflect the agreed strategic direction and objectives
- Ensure we have control systems and procedures to review our level of risk at least annually
- Monitor our progress against key business objectives
- Promote erosh and act in our best interests
- Use your expertise to support other trustees and our consultants
- Represent us at events, to network and promote our work
- Contribute to specific objectives/projects as required

### **b) What we need from you**

- When you become a trustee, if you are not already a member you will need to join erosh, through your organisation if you are employed or as an individual
- Commitment to attending trustees' meetings regularly
- Knowledge of housing/support for older people or a related sector e.g. health or social care
- Commitment to improving older people's housing and support
- Commitment to promoting erosh and increasing membership
- Ability to work collaboratively as part of a dispersed team
- Ability to analyse information and make strategic decisions
- Commitment to contributing to our work to help us maintain existing and develop new services
- Commitment to our values and key messages

### **c) Our expectations**

Being a trustee takes time and commitment (about one day a month) so please ensure you have enough time to give to us, and, if necessary, check your employer is happy for you to become a trustee.

We expect you to attend trustee meetings and prepare by reading papers. We also expect you to support your nearest erosh local network (several trustees are also network chairs) by attending these meetings; and, if there is not a network in your area, play a key role in helping to establish one.

We are a very small charity with part time input from a small number of staff so a 'hands on approach' is essential as regular email communication. We expect you to contribute to activities; usually by e-mail and occasionally a virtual or real project group. We may also ask you to represent us at meetings or events.

This is not a paid post. Modest travelling expenses may be paid (subject to agreement in advance) to trustees who are retired, unemployed or who do not have an employer willing/able to meet costs of attending meetings.

## **5. Our meetings and AGM**

Trustees meet quarterly, usually in central London from 11.30 am to 3 pm (currently virtual with different timings which may continue for one or more). One meeting a year is combined with our AGM and often held in different parts of the UK. We expect you to attend meetings and prepare by reading papers.

## **6. Current trustees and their roles**

We currently have 8 trustees with five officer roles: chair, vice-chair, treasurer, vice-treasurer, and secretary. Trustees normally serve for 3 years; after this they can be re-elected for up to 9 years' continuous service. Read more about our Trustees [here](#). You will have joined us as a trustee because of your particular area of knowledge or expertise. When you apply to become a Trustee, we will ask you to complete a skills audit (which we will update periodically) so we know your specialist areas and how you might help us.

## 7. Induction, training and development

For new trustees we usually provide a 'virtual' induction with the current chair and chief executive. Subject to availability, location, resources, and Covid related safety measures we may be able to do this face to face e.g. before a trustee meeting. Anyone interested in becoming a trustee but not yet decided is welcome to come along to a trustee meeting as an observer before deciding to apply.

As a very small charity, we don't have the resources to formally support you with training and professional development, so rely you to keep up to date with housing and older people issues. We may however, subject to availability, be able to offer a mentoring arrangement with an existing trustee and an opportunity to visit their organisation. If you feel you have a particular knowledge gap, we can point you in the right direction including the following useful organisations, as well as of course our own website [www.erosh.co.uk](http://www.erosh.co.uk)



[Chartered Institute of Housing](http://www.cihousing.org)

[Independent Age](http://www.independentage.org)

[Cymorth Cymru](http://www.cymorthcymru.org)

[International Longevity Centre](http://www.internationallongevitycentre.org)



[Elderly Accommodation Counsel](http://www.elderlyaccommodationcounsel.org)

[Joseph Rowntree Foundation](http://www.josephrowntreefoundation.org)

[Guardian Older People's Housing Network](http://www.guardianolderpeopleshousingnetwork.org)

[NATIONAL HOUSING FEDERATION](http://www.nationalhousingfederation.org)



## 8. Key policies

As we are such a small charity, we have decided to keep our policies proportionate to our size. Therefore, rather than having lots of lengthy document, this section summarises our key policies.

### Code of Conduct

#### We expect you to:

- Act in accordance with our constitution, policies and procedures, and within the law.
- Support and champion our objects, act in the best interests of erosh and its members and avoid bringing erosh into disrepute.
- Declare conflicts of interest so these can be managed appropriately and effectively.
- Respect confidentiality in relation to the organisation, trustees, staff and individual members, and in accordance with Data Protection legislation.
- Keep up to date with our objectives and activities and the environment we operate in as well as with our policies and procedures.
- Prepare for and attend trustee meetings sending apologies where non-attendance is unavoidable after considering other ways of participating e.g. skype, conference call etc.
- Actively and constructively participate in meetings and activities outside of trustee meetings.
- Vote where necessary and be prepared to accept and stand by a majority decision.
- Support and work considerately with trustees, staff and customers, and with respect to different roles and professional boundaries.
- Not gain materially or financially from your involvement with erosh unless specifically authorised to do so.
- Not to accept gifts, bribes, or inappropriate hospitality.
- Claim any expenses in accordance with our policy and procedures.
- Actively contribute to the continuous improvement of our governance activities
- Not make public comments about erosh unless authorised to do so and then in accordance with our policies and procedures.

## Confidentiality & Privacy

**We are committed to ensuring that members' information is collected, stored and used in line with data protection legislation and expect all staff and trustees to comply**

- We obtain the minimum amount of members' information fairly, in accordance with law, and for a specific purpose.
- We seek members' consent to keep and process their personal data.
- We securely store paper and electronic information about our members and allow access only to erosh staff and trustees.
- We only use members' information for the reason it was collected and keep for as long as necessary.
- Members have the right to obtain confirmation at any time of why and how their personal data is kept and processed; and whether it will be passed to a third party.
- We keep members' information up to date and accurate as far as we can; and members have the right to have their data corrected.
- We don't distribute members' information to third parties unless we have specifically asked for and been given permission to do so.
- We do not refer to individual or organisational members in written information unless we have been given permission to do so or the information is publicly available.
- Members have the right to request that their data is no longer kept or processed.

**Confidentiality may be set aside in relation to criminal activity, safeguarding, and health and safety.**

## Equality & Diversity

**We are committed to promoting equality & diversity and to ensuring that no individual is discriminated against in the planning and delivery of our activities**

- We have a strategic commitment to equality & diversity and opposing any form of direct or indirect discrimination across the nine protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010
- We are mindful of equality & diversity in relation to our business planning activities and in relation to our partners, contractors and customers.
- We ensure our meeting and event venues are accessible.
- We ensure our member services are accessible, are not discriminatory, and are inclusive and representative in terms of language and imagery
- We present information in plain language and can make available in alternative formats and languages on request.
- We adopt a zero-tolerance approach discriminatory attitudes or behaviour, and to bullying, harassment or any other form of unwanted behaviour.
- We recruit trustees and staff based on qualifications, experience and abilities.
- We carry out equality impact assessments proportionate to our size and nature of our activities.



## Conflict of Interest

**A conflict of interest does not necessarily reflect negatively on the integrity of the affected trustee provided it is properly addressed.**

- All trustees have a legal duty to take act only in the best interests of the charity.
- A conflict of interest may arise where a decision needs to be made where a trustee has a personal or other interest e.g. benefits (directly or indirectly) financially or otherwise; or their duty to the charity competes with a duty or loyalty to another person or organisation.
- We adopt a 3-step approach:
  - **Identify:** we have a standard item at the beginning of every meeting for trustees to declare actual or potential conflicts of interest.
  - **Prevent:** we will find an alternative approach which doesn't involve the conflict of interest or take appropriate steps to manage the conflict e.g. the trustee affected does not take part in discussions and decisions; and follow any relevant legislation and good practice.
  - **Record:** we will keep a written record (usually in the minutes) of the conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest and how it has been dealt with.

## Complaints and disputes

**We value all feedback and are committed to resolving issues fairly, timely and efficiently, as well as to continuous improvement**

- Customers (including Trustees) can make a formal complaint by contacting in the first instance the erosh Administrator, [info@erosh.co.uk](mailto:info@erosh.co.uk), 0333 011 5804.
- We acknowledge a complaint within 48 hours.
- If the Administrator is not able to resolve the complaint or dispute, or the customer is not satisfied with the resolution, it will be forwarded to the erosh CEO.
- If the CEO is not able to resolve the complaint or dispute, or the customer is not satisfied with the resolution, it will be forwarded to the board of trustees (or the chair if the complainant is a Trustee).
- If the customer is still not satisfied with the resolution or the complaint involves a serious risk of harm to the charity or people it helps, they may raise a concern with the [Charities Commission](#).
- We aim to resolve a complaint or dispute as quickly as possible. We keep the customer informed of progress at all stages of the process and request further information from them if necessary.
- We keep records of all stages in the process.
- We maintain records of all complaints or disputes and use these to identify trends or issues, and to review our policies and processes.

## Gifts and Hospitality

**To maintain impartiality, honesty and transparency, and to ensure they do not abuse their position or gain personally, all trustees and staff must abide by this policy.**

- Trustees and staff are expected to refuse or return gifts, benefits, hospitality or sponsorship of any kind as this may be seen as compromising their personal judgement or integrity or constituting a bribe or incentive to exert influence or obtain preferential consideration.
- Any offers (refused or accepted) of gifts, benefits, hospitality or sponsorship should be declared on the appropriate form within 10 working days to the Administrator who will maintain a Register. Failure to do so may result in criminal or disciplinary action.
- Under the Bribery Act 2010 it is a criminal offence to give, promise or offer a bribe, or to request, agree to receive or accept a bribe. If a trustee or staff member is found to have given or accepted a bribe or inducement in breach of erosh policy and/or the Bribery Act, this may result in criminal or disciplinary action.

### Gifts

- Low value gifts (less than £15) e.g. chocolates, biscuits, flowers etc may be accepted and do not need to be declared or recorded. Where such gifts are offered in gratitude e.g. during a scheme visit, rather than causing offence by declining, it is often appropriate to leave flowers, biscuits or chocolates to be shared amongst residents and staff.
- Where the value of a gift or series of gifts from the same source is greater than £15, these should be declared to the Administrator on the appropriate form within 10 working days and recorded.
- Under no circumstances should any kind of monetary gift (including vouchers) be accepted and refusal should be declared to the Administrator on the appropriate form within 10 working days and recorded.
- Corporate gifts at conferences may be accepted and do not need to be declared provided these are of low value (less than £15) and do not constitute a bribe or incentive to exert influence or obtain preferential consideration.
- Any form of significant gift or hospitality e.g. holiday/hotel accommodation, sporting or cultural event tickets, should be declined and declared to the Administrator on the appropriate form within 10 working days and recorded.

### Hospitality

- Modest hospitality may be reasonable where it forms part of a professional relationship e.g. working breakfast, lunches or dinners at restaurants, conference/event drinks, and where this does not constitute a sense of obligation, incentive, or bribe. Low value hospitality (less than £15) e.g. coffee, may be accepted and does not need to be declared or recorded. Hospitality greater than £15 should be declared to the Administrator on the appropriate form within 10 working days and recorded.

### Sponsorship

- Financial support from corporate organisations enables us to develop member resources so is valuable provided it does not conflict with our charitable objectives and/or business objectives. Approaches may be received from organisations or individuals interested in supporting us, or as part of the Trustee or staff role individuals may want to proactively engage in discussions with an organisation or individual to promote opportunities. No kind of commitment should be suggested and details should be passed to the CEO as soon as possible so they can be followed up appropriately.

## Health & Safety

Although Erosch does not have premises, and relies only on self-employed consultants who are responsible for their own working environment, equipment, health and safety, and any risk assessments, we:

- Keep this under review to ensure any health and safety obligations are met.
- Take out any insurance necessary to ensure that erosh consultants, trustees, and others are appropriately covered when undertaking duties on behalf of erosh e.g. at or travelling to meetings, conferences and events, or training courses.
- Record any accidents or incidents experienced by erosh consultants, trustees, and others when undertaking duties on behalf of erosh e.g. at or travelling to meetings, conferences and events, and training courses.

## 9. Any questions

If you would like to discuss the role further or have any queries, please contact our chief executive, Rebecca Mollart, [ceo@erosh.co.uk](mailto:ceo@erosh.co.uk); or our current Chair, Ann Karas, [sarakant16@gmail.com](mailto:sarakant16@gmail.com)