For the Appointment of

Chairperson

rowanalba.org
# Contents

- Introduction from CEO ................................................................. 3
- Background .................................................................................. 4
- Role of Chairperson ...................................................................... 7
- Functional role of the Chairperson ............................................. 8
- Chairperson role descriptor ....................................................... 9
- Chairperson responsibilities ...................................................... 10
- Our structure .............................................................................. 12
- What is a Director? ...................................................................... 13
- Key Board roles .......................................................................... 14
- Terms of office ............................................................................ 15
- Further reading ........................................................................... 16
- How to Apply .............................................................................. 17
Introduction from CEO and Founder, Helen Carlin

It has been a great privilege to have established Rowan Alba in 1997, and to watch it grow to become a respected service provider to some of the most marginalised and misunderstood individuals in Scotland. Given the growing reach and impact of Rowan Alba’s work, now is a transformational time for the organisation and Rowan Alba’s people are committed to playing their part in taking the organisation on this journey building on its well-established foundations.

Over the past 25 years, Rowan Alba has played a significant role in preventing homeless people from experiencing the worst and most feared outcomes through its unique provision of long term supported accommodation initially at Thorntree Street, Leith, Edinburgh.

We are delighted to have recently opened a second long-term supported accommodation facility in Edinburgh’s Peffermill, catering for a younger client group. We are also in the process of developing a third site specifically for women, extending the provision of our Stramullion service.

Having demonstrated the efficacy of our model, in human and financial terms, I don’t doubt that the next 25 years will be a time of great growth for the organisation, helping a great many more people, not for a year or two, but for the rest of their lives, or just as long as they need it.

That’s not all we do, of course, but it is a great example of our approach, and, as with all of our services, it is designed and delivered in line with our underlying values of Accept, Support and Include.

People are most definitely our biggest asset at Rowan Alba. We are extremely fortunate to have many long-serving committed and skilled people working with us who are dedicated to ensuring that our organisation thrives. Our nurturing, open and inclusive culture has grown with our staff team who deliver our live-saving services every day.

I thank you for your consideration of this role.

Helen Carlin
CEO
Background

Our history

Rowan Alba began to deliver its unique blend of Care at Home and Supported Living with the opening of Thorntree Street in 2004. Originally a part of a UK wide charity, Rowan Alba became independent in 2005.

The aim of Thorntree Street was to provide secure tenancies to older people who had a history of homelessness and a long-term history of problematic alcohol use.

Thorntree Street made Housing First a priority and put the security and dignity of its tenants at the forefront of that it did. In the following years our charity has developed more services in Edinburgh which reduce the chances of people becoming homeless or, where this has happened, provide people with the ongoing care and support they need.

How our services have grown

Starting from Thorntree Street in 2004, we have grown a set of strategically-designed services which are effective in coping with the human impact of unsuitable services or policies and addressing the root causes of homelessness in our communities. Our services often exists as a part of pathway from the NHS into the community. What binds these various solutions together is a compassionate approach built around every individual’s needs.

2004

Supported accommodation with Scottish Assured Tenancies for up to 12 former street homeless men in a communal setting. Support with physical and emotional health and managing alcohol use.

2007

Transitional housing for up to 10 women. Supports women both emotionally and practically to obtain tenancy’s, learn life skills, be independent, gain confidence and meet new people.

2010

Community Alcohol Related Damage Service is a befriending service which provides emotional health and social networks to service users through volunteers.

2022

Supported living for 9 former street homeless men. This has been part-funded through Community Share Investment in partnership with Common Ground Against Homelessness.
Our values

Our values are based on the extensive experience we have of supporting people and helping them build a way of life that works for them.

The 3 foundation principles that underpin our values

accept support include

Accept people as they are. The fundamental principle of the right of the individual to make choices about their lives. Security of tenure, safety, choice, dignity and respect must be at the heart of all that we do.

Support those ready to move to a more independent life. We offer a balance between independent, supported and communal living. We are responsive to the changing needs, priorities and aspirations of each individual.

We strive to include all people in society. By giving ongoing care for those who are not ready, or whose life experiences have left them unable to live independent of support until now we can create inclusion.

The Thorntree model

Rowan Alba’s centre at Thorntree St. in Leith operates a unique model for living that supports former street homeless people in a sustainable way of life.

Independent individuals by nature, Thorntree tenants contribute to the management and organisation. The atmosphere is far from the top-down regimes which have characterised ‘homeless shelters’ in the past.
Our culture

At Rowan Alba we understand that we all have different journeys.

We believe that people change and no one should be written off without being given another chance. This is why we foster a culture of personal development and peer support. Many of our staff began as volunteers or service users and as their skills grew they took on paid roles. Rowan Alba has a structured framework for career development, which is as supportive of our employees as our tenants. We believe every employee should have opportunities to grow professionally and personally, whilst doing life-changing work.

“Seeing one of the tenants eating and enjoying healthy food prepared by volunteers felt like a huge achievement.”

Mario Wellbeing volunteer, Thornree St.

Wellbeing at heart

Through our Wellbeing and Activities programme, tenants at our Thorntree, Thorntree Mill and Stramullion centres have the opportunity to join in a variety of activities.

The activities programme is designed to support the different aspects of wellbeing:

- Physical Activities
- Taking Notice
- Connecting
- Giving back
- Learning

Since the start of our wellbeing and activities project at Thorntree St. our this tenants have shown progress or achieved stability in:

- Mental health 89%
- Life skills 75%
- Physical health 63%
- Reducing addictions 78%
- Social interactions 100%
- Maintaining accommodation 100%
Role of Chairperson

The board Chairperson heads up the full board meetings of Rowan Alba, supports and supervises the CEO Director of Rowan Alba under the direction of the board, leads on the development of the board and ensures its decisions are implemented and takes urgent action between board meetings when it isn’t possible to hold a meeting.
For the Appointment of Chairperson

Functional responsibilities of the Chairperson

General

The Chair will hold the Board and Executive Team to account for Rowan Alba's mission and vision, providing inclusive leadership to the Board of Trustees, ensuring that each trustee fulfils their duties and responsibilities for the effective governance of the charity. The Chair will also support, and, where appropriate, challenge the Chief Executive and ensure that the Board functions effectively as a unit and works closely with the entire organisational leadership team to achieve agreed objectives. He/she will act as an ambassador and the public face of the charity in partnership with the Chief Executive.
Chairperson role descriptor

The Rowan Alba Board is responsible for guiding strategy, monitoring performance and seeking assurance on risk from the Chief Executive. As a member of the Board, the Chair would be expected to lead and contribute to all aspects of the Board’s responsibilities.

The role of the Chair is vital to the effectiveness of Rowan Alba; therefore the person should have a sound knowledge of organisational and executive procedures together with a good working knowledge of the necessary legislation relating to the running of a registered charity.

The viability of the organisation and the views of staff, volunteers, service users and trustees should be of primary concern. The Chair must be fully committed to the aims, objectives and policies of the organisation and its services and understand Rowan Alba’s mission, objectives and priorities.

Chair’s duties

The Chair will co-ordinate the activities of the Board and will delegate certain matters of business to other Trustees as deemed appropriate.

The Chair has executive authority invested in them by the Board and is accountable to the members of the organisation through the Board. He/she is expected to observe total confidentiality.

The Chair is expected to attend and chair:

- Meetings of the Board
- The Annual General Meeting
- Sub-committee meetings as necessary (or appoint another person)

The Chair is required to be familiar with the responsibilities to the Charity Commission under the Charities Act (2011) and to:

- Conduct all the organisation’s business in strict compliance with the governing document (constitution) and any relevant Standing Orders or Terms of Reference.
- Inform Trustees of their collective and individual responsibilities under the Charities Act and other legislation including laws relating to health and safety, equality and diversity and employment.
• Ensure that the Annual Reports and Accounts are produced at the end of each year for presentation to the Annual General Meeting and to ensure that they are forwarded to OSCR within the appropriate time period.

**Chair’s responsibilities**

The Chair will hold the Board and Executive Team to account for Rowan Alba’s mission and vision, providing inclusive leadership to the Board of Trustees, ensuring that each trustee fulfils their duties and responsibilities for the effective governance of the charity. The Chair will also support, and, where appropriate, challenge the Chief Executive and ensure that the Board functions effectively as a unit and works closely with the entire organisational leadership team to achieve agreed objectives. He/she will act as an ambassador and the public face of the charity in partnership with the Chief Executive.

The essential criteria are strong communication skills, a collaborative and relational approach and be able to demonstrate an alignment with Rowan Alba’s mission. The role of the chair will include the following.

**Manage the board, effectively utilising roles and skills** - keep all trustees fully engaged and utilise their skills. Ensure that staff and trustees do what they say they will do. Establish advisory groups, sub-committees or working groups to address specific issues / tasks as deemed appropriate by the Board.

**Manage inclusive meetings** - liaise closely with the Chief Executive in drawing up agendas for all meetings of the Board and sub-committee meetings as appropriate. Ensure that meetings are the right length, include all those who want to speak, and move the organisation’s work forward (see next point).

**Move the board forward on important decisions** - particularly where there isn’t consensus. Ensure that appropriate information is available in order that decisions can be obtained in the best interests of the Organisation. Provide guidance for Trustees as appropriate and sum up matters accordingly in order that decisions are made both during and at the end of the meeting as necessary.

**Lead and guide the board when the unexpected happens** - The chair’s role in this type of situation is to steer trustees towards a decision, or in some cases just making things happen when deadlines are too tight, making decisions when necessary.
Be a sounding board for ideas and developments - hear about the ideas and developments that organisational staff and the Chief Executive are thinking about and to give feedback, support and wise counsel at an early stage.

Keep in touch with staff within the organisation - have an ear to the ground beyond the Chief Executive, ensure there are adequate communication channels and check-ins with staff, understand their roles and responsibilities and maintain good links and relationships as appropriate.

Hold staff to account - ensure the effective line management and support of staff and volunteers. Have the ability to spot problems early and to act on them with trustee support. Ensure an adequate risk and keys issues register is in place.

Manage and provide support to the Chief Executive - agree on objectives, provide feedback (from the board and staff), review Chief Executive progress on objectives and establish regular supportive supervisory sessions. Conduct the appraisal of the organisation’s Chief Executive with the help of other Trustees. Be an official spokesperson and promoter for the Organisation along with the Chief Executive.
Our structure

Board of Directors
- CEO
  - Head of Quality
  - C.A.R.D.S. Service Co-ordinator / Volunteer Co-Ordinator
  - Fundraising & Marketing Support (Consultants)
  - Accountant
    - Community Development Officer
    - Peer Support Worker
    - CARDS Lothian Alcohol Link Worker
    - NHS Lothian ABRD After Care Co-ordinator
    - Admin Assistant
      - Business Manager
      - Team Leader Thorntree Mill
      - Team Leader Stramullion
      - Team Leader Thorntree
      - SVQ Assessor
        - Finance & HR Administrator
        - Support Staff
        - Support Staff
        - Support Staff
What is a director?

A Charity director has the same powers as a Trustee, but with some additional responsibilities.

Trustees have the overall legal responsibility for a charity. The law describes charity trustees as “the persons having the general control and management of the administration of a charity”.

If an organisation is a charity, even though the constitution and names may be different (such as board members or management committee members), under the Charities and Trustees Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 these people are defined as “charity trustees”.

As Rowan Alba Limited is a company limited by guarantee 289744 with Charitable Status (Charity No.SC036775), board members are referred to as directors and acquire additional responsibilities in addition to the above. However, it is the role that matters, not the title.

The directors are the people who take decisions as the governing body of Rowan Alba, but they need to act collectively as a board. Only if they have been given the authority of the board can a director act on his/her own.

Job description/person specification

A Rowan Alba board member is a director of the organisation and has responsibility to ensure the successful delivery of the mission and aims of the organisation. Rowan Alba Ltd is a charity with the governance structure of a Company Limited by Guarantee, in which all the directors of the company are also members.

Commitment

Being a Rowan Alba director requires a commitment to attend as a minimum four full board meetings a year, and to be a member of at least one sub-committee of the Board. You will also agree to be an advocate for Rowan Alba and undertake work in between board meetings to progress the aims of the organisation. You will play your part as a director in fulfilling the items under ‘Board Responsibility’.

rowanalba.org
**Key board roles**

**Chairperson**

The board chairperson heads up the full board meetings of Rowan Alba, supports and supervises the CEO Director of Rowan Alba under the direction of the board, leads on the development of the board and ensures its decisions are implemented and takes urgent action between board meetings when it isn’t possible to hold a meeting.

**Vice Chairpersons**

Vice-Chairpersons act as a chairperson of a designated scrutiny sub-committee and if required deputise for any other board approved chairperson if he/she is absent from a board meeting or unavailable when urgent action is necessary.

**Treasurer**

Treasurer (a designated vice chairperson or interim nominee) - helps the board to carry out their financial responsibilities through; presenting financial reports to the board so that every director understands Rowan Alba’s financial position; advising the board on financial decisions that need to be made; overseeing the preparation and scrutiny of the annual reports. He/she also takes primary responsibility for facilitating regular updating and review of the risk register.

Each of these roles will generally be carried out for a term (9 years), as set out in the constitution of Rowan Alba.
Terms of office

A normal term of office for a director is one year, at the end of which the director must stand down, and if willing/able, can put themselves forward for re-election. The organisation will offer each director an informal meeting annually where an opportunity will be offered to exchange views on how best the director can contribute to the future priorities and work of the board.

If someone is nominated to be a director and they gain more than 75% approval of a vote taken at a quorate director’s meeting they will be confirmed as a director of Rowan Alba.

A director can resign before their term of office has been completed and can be removed from office if 75% of the directors agree to carry out this action. Where possible we would ask directors to offer 6 months’ notice of their intention to step down from the board as this allows continuity of recruitment and aids succession planning.
Further reading

» Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005
  www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2005/asp_20050010_en_1

» Charities Act 2006
  www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2006/ukpga_20060050_en_1

» National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)
  www.ncvo-vol.org.uk

» Governance Hub
  www.governancehub.org.uk

» Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR)
  www.oscr.org.uk

» OSCR guide for Notifiable Events

» Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO)
  www.scvo.org.uk/resources/governance-resources/

» SCVO Governance
  www.scvo.org.uk/governance

» Dundee Voluntary Action (DVA)
  www.d-v-a.org.uk

» Companies House
  www.companieshouse.gov.uk

» Directory of Social Change – Useful publications
  www.dsc.org.uk/Publications/Managementandgovernance

» Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan – Second Iteration
How to Apply

For further information or a confidential discussion, please contact our Board via: office.manager@rowanalba.org
Rowan Alba Limited is a Company Limited by Guarantee 289744 with Charitable Status (Charity No.SC036775). Our registered head office is 1 Lochrin Square, 92 - 98 Fountainbridge, Edinburgh, EH3 9QA.