



Join our Board of Trustees

Trustee Candidate Pack, May 2026

Closing date: Wednesday 10 June 2026

About us

The Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) supports people and organisations across the UK to tackle the climate emergency and end the suffering caused by cold homes.

We undertake practical work to support households and communities to act on energy, alongside original research and analysis to inform local and national policy.

Our vision is a world where sustainability is second nature, carbon emissions have been reduced to safe levels, and fuel poverty has been replaced by energy justice.

We are one of the UK's leading sustainable energy charities, with a 45-year track record of award-winning impact, innovation and influence (as most recently detailed in our [2024-25 Impact Report](#)). You can read more about our priorities, methods and approach in our [organisational strategy for 2024-2028](#).

Our Board of Trustees is critical to our continuing success. Our trustees work collaboratively, providing support, insight and constructive challenge to help shape our strategy, set our ambition and enhance our effectiveness and impact in delivering our mission.

Charity number 298740





Our six Work Programmes

Our work falls into six broad areas we call our Work Programmes. They are where we are best placed to drive change and maximise our impact.

Fuel poverty

Our practical energy advice improves the wellbeing, energy literacy, and affordable warmth of those experiencing cold homes.

Housing energy retrofit

We support the delivery of high-quality and people-centred retrofit services to address British homes that aren't fit for the future.

Local authority support and action for net zero

We help local authorities of all scales to plan and deliver their energy-related net zero goals.

Community action on energy

We design and manage community energy funds, support local groups to develop projects, and provide training, support and community engagement.

Future generations

Our youth-specific work inspires young people from all backgrounds to play a meaningful role in a more sustainable and fairer energy system.

Fairness in the energy system

We're working to bring about a future energy system that is both low carbon and demonstrably fair.



Operations and funders

Currently CSE has 150 staff, organised into five teams: Research and Analysis; Local and Community Empowerment; Household Energy Services; Finance & Operations; and Development & Communications.

We have also established [Retrofit West Community Interest Company](#), focused on accelerating home energy retrofit across the West of England as an exemplar for others across the UK. Retrofit West has its own board of directors which includes representatives of CSE's the SLT.

We currently work with a wide range of partners and funders including: the Big Lottery Fund, the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, Ofgem, National Grid, energy suppliers and network companies, local authorities, the UK Energy Research Council, charitable trusts and a range of other organisations and funding sources.

Our turnover for 2024-25 was just over £10 million. Our reserves at 31 December 2025 were slightly in excess of £1.85 million, above our minimum reserves target. Our most recent Annual Report and Accounts (2022-23) can be found [here](#).

Our culture

Our staff are deeply passionate about our work and committed to our shared charitable mission. We promote collaborative culture where everyone's input is valued.

Much of our work is project-driven, meaning that staff get to collaborate across teams and work programmes, connecting with colleagues across the organisation and fostering new ways of working together.

Our staff-led groups, including our Employee Voice and Equity Diversity and Inclusion working groups, give everyone the opportunity to have their voices heard, helping to shape initiatives and policies.

We support our people to build long-term careers at CSE, with retention above the sector average — a sign of the engaged, motivated workforce trustees help us to steward.





Our values



Commitment to our mission

We reflect our charitable purpose, vision and strategic objectives in our work, and we contribute to a culture where everyone feels welcomed, valued and able to belong.



Conscientiousness

We take responsibility for our work, deliver to the best of our ability, and work to improve while caring for CSE's resources and reputation.



Collaboration

We share knowledge and experience generously, value others' contributions, and communicate with openness and respect.



Initiative

We look for ways to improve outcomes, solve problems and try new approaches, while responding flexibly to change and supporting others to do the same.



About the role

As a CSE trustee, you will help guide one of the UK's leading sustainable energy charities as we deliver our 2024–28 organisational strategy.

The Board of Trustees at CSE is the governing body for the charity. It has steered the organisation through various phases of growth, development and change, providing the stability, insight and support needed to enable the organisation to develop and thrive. The Trustees meet quarterly and retain overall responsibility for CSE's governance, long-term strategy and finances.

The Board's principal roles are to provide the Senior Leadership Team with appropriate support, constructive challenge, insight and a long-term perspective. As the guardians of the charity's objectives and overseers of its financial and operational health, the Board has a crucial function in ensuring the effective operation and strategic development of the charity.

Because CSE is a company limited by guarantee, trustees also act as non-executive directors of the organisation. With 150 staff, an annual turnover of over £10 million, and more than 120 live projects at any one time, this is a board role at meaningful scale.

Outside board meetings, trustees are expected to stay familiar with CSE's work. This may include attending staff briefings, engaging with staff to understand work programmes in more depth, and attending relevant events where possible. Trustees may also contribute their specific expertise to particular areas of work – such as through the finance or people sub-group or providing a trustee lead role e.g. for research ethics, safeguarding or major projects – and support relationship-building with funders and partners, including occasional engagement alongside CSE staff.



About the board

You will join a board of eight trustees. We are recruiting up to four new trustees as part of a planned transition, strengthening the current board and replacing members who are coming to the end of their terms.

Our current trustees bring a broad range of experience across climate policy, sustainability, energy, the voluntary sector, business and research. As a board, they provide informed oversight and constructive challenge, grounded in a strong understanding of the communities and issues CSE exists to serve.

The board meet quarterly and retains overall responsibility for governance, long-term strategy and finances. Between meetings, much of the detailed work happens in the sub-groups (People, Finance, and Nominations committee), with members joining on a voluntary basis according to their interests and expertise.

You can see all current trustees and their backgrounds at cse.org.uk/staff-and-trustees.

You'll work closely with...

- **The [Senior Leadership Team \(SLT\)](#)**

The SLT consists of the Chief Executive and the Directors of our five teams. They meet fortnightly to address the operational needs of the charity, and the board's relationship with them is one of the most important parts of the trustee role.

- **Other senior staff**

A wider Senior Management Team includes Heads of Department and meets monthly to support the SLT in managing the operations of the charity. Trustees may also engage with Heads of Work Programmes e.g. through our annual strategy day. Trustees are welcome to attend staff briefings and events to help them stay close to the work.

About you

You don't need to have been a trustee before, or to be an expert in energy. What matters is your commitment to CSE's mission and charitable objectives, the qualities listed opposite, and your willingness to give the role the time and attention it requires.

We are keen to broaden the range of perspectives on our board and particularly welcome applications from people who are currently under-represented. This includes young people, people from global majority backgrounds, disabled people, and people with lived experience of fuel poverty or the wider energy issues we work on.

We want our board to better reflect both the staff who work at CSE and the people and communities we serve.



We're looking for trustees who can demonstrate (or have the potential to develop):

- A strong commitment to CSE's mission of tackling the climate emergency and ending the suffering caused by cold homes.
- Sound judgement, strategic vision and effective decision making.
- A genuine commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion and safeguarding.
- The confidence to offer independent perspective and constructive challenge.
- The ability to work effectively as part of a board, contributing to collective decisions and maintaining appropriate confidentiality.
- Impartiality, fairness, and a willingness to act in the charity's best interests.
- A realistic commitment to the time required, including occasional ad hoc input between meetings.
- An understanding of the legal duties and responsibilities of trusteeship, and the respective roles of trustees, the Chair and the CEO.



What we're particularly looking for

We are particularly interested in candidates who bring expertise in at least one of the following areas:

- **Community energy**, including an understanding of the challenges and opportunities of delivering local or community energy projects, and how these connect to national policy.
- **Organisational development and people management**, including an understanding of employment law.
- **Finance, accounting or audit**, for example through senior financial responsibility or business leadership.
- **Voluntary and community sector networks**, including experience of community organising and working with grassroots organisations.

We would also welcome candidates with:

- Expertise aligned to CSE's work programmes (including fuel poverty, housing retrofit, community energy, local net zero delivery, future generations, or fairness in the energy system).
- Understanding of the causes and impacts of fuel poverty, and how these can be addressed.
- Knowledge of the UK energy system, including the policy and regulatory environment, and the transition to a fairer, low-carbon future.
- Experience influencing policy or working at a national level.



Key responsibilities

Trustees play a central role in the governance and strategic direction of CSE. As a board, trustees share collective legal responsibility for the charity. This responsibility is joint and several — meaning each trustee is accountable for the decisions of the board as a whole, including those they were not directly involved in.

In the role, trustees are collectively responsible for:

- Ensuring CSE complies with its governing document and pursues its charitable objectives.
- Ensuring CSE applies its resources exclusively in support of those objectives.
- Contributing to the Board's role in setting clear strategic direction, with well-defined goals, and ensuring appropriate delegation to the executive team.
- Ensuring the effective and efficient administration of the organisation.
- Ensuring the financial stability of the organisation and the proper use and safeguarding of its assets.
- Appointing, supporting and holding the Chief Executive to account.
- Maintaining and protecting the charity's good name, values and standards.
- Trustees are also expected to use their skills, knowledge and experience to support good decision-making and the effective governance of the organisation.

The full statutory duties of charity trustees in England and Wales are set out in the Charity Commission's guidance:

- [Charity trustee: what's involved \(CC3a\)](#) — a concise overview.
- [The essential trustee \(CC3\)](#) — detailed guidance on roles and responsibilities.

What's involved



Being a trustee is a meaningful way to support CSE's mission. Here's what the role looks like in practice.

Time commitment

On average, less than a day a month. Four board meetings a year (currently around 3 hours, Thursday evenings in central Bristol in Jan, Mar, Jul and Oct), plus an annual strategy day attended in person (usually Nov). The preference is that trustees attend board meetings in person, though meetings are run as hybrid so you can join remotely when necessary. Board papers are usually circulated 5 days in advance for review before the meeting.

Term

Trustees are appointed for an initial three-year term, renewable up to two further times and potentially extendable on an annual basis with board approval where it's in the interests of the charity.

Sub-groups and wider involvement

Trustees can join one of our sub-groups (e.g. people, finance). Membership is voluntary and involves some additional time outside board meetings. You may also be invited to provide more detailed oversight of specific areas and to offer your expertise to particular work programmes or help with funder relationships. Staff may also occasionally seek your advice on an ad hoc basis between meetings.

Expenses

The role is voluntary and unpaid, as is standard for charity trustees. Reasonable out-of-pocket expenses are reimbursed.



Equity, diversity and inclusion

At CSE, we're committed to an inclusive, diverse and non-judgemental environment in our workplace and on our board. We actively encourage applications from individuals of all backgrounds, identities, disabilities and experiences. Applicants will be treated fairly, with respect and without discrimination.

While we seek to appoint on merit and judge all candidates against the same criteria, we recognise that some people are less likely to apply for trustee roles unless they meet every essential requirement. So, if you're excited about the role but your experience doesn't align perfectly with the person specification, please get in touch — you may still be an excellent candidate.

To support trustees who are new to governance, we provide a full induction, support, and can fund trustee training, and we pair every new trustee with an experienced one as a mentor during their first year — so you'll always have someone to turn to.

If you would like an informal conversation about the role with our CEO or Chair of Trustees, email [**jobs@cse.org.uk**](mailto:jobs@cse.org.uk).



How to apply

To apply, please send:

- A one-page cover letter addressed to the Chair of Trustees. Include in this why you're interested in the role, the qualities and experience you'd bring to the board, and whether you have expertise in one of the areas listed on p10.
- Your CV.

Send your application by email to jobs@cse.org.uk or by post to:
Trustee Recruitment, Centre for Sustainable Energy, St James Court, St James Parade, Bristol BS1 3LH.

Closing date for applications is **midday Wednesday 10 June 2026**.

Interviews will be held in person at our offices in Bristol with members of the nominations committee and the Chief Executive, with the opportunity to meet other members of the Senior Leadership Team. We expect to interview in June 2026.

Appointments will hopefully be confirmed at our July 2026 board meeting.

Successful candidates will need to confirm there are no legal or financial reasons that would prevent them from serving as a charity trustee or company director.

We'd love to hear from you

If you'd like to discuss the role informally before applying, or have any questions about the application process, please email jobs@cse.org.uk — we'd be happy to set up a conversation.

We're committed to making any reasonable adjustments to support your application. If you need this information in a different format, please get in touch.



We look forward to hearing from you!

To stay updated with future opportunities,
[follow us on LinkedIn](#) or check our [current vacancies on our website](#).