



Trustee Policy

Sudden Sam



Reviewed June, 2024.



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“Providing support in the aftermath of sudden death – you are not alone.”

Our Vision

Our vision is that Sudden Sam becomes a beacon of support for those enduring the pain and confusion of sudden loss, ensuring that no one faces the challenges of sudden death alone, thereby promoting healing, unity, and resilience within our community.

Our Mission

Our mission is to ensure that, through support from Sudden Sam, families of loved ones who have died suddenly feel supported, both emotionally and financially and that the community, through public awareness, develop a greater understanding and empathy of their suffering.



Our Aims

The aims of the trustee policy for Sudden Sam are designed to ensure that the trustees effectively govern the charity and support its mission of helping those impacted by sudden death. The trustees play a critical role in guiding the charity, making strategic decisions, and ensuring that the charity operates in accordance with its values and objectives.

Here's an explanation of the aims of the trustee policy, focusing specifically on the responsibilities and goals of the trustees:

1. **Governance and Oversight:** The primary aim for trustees is to provide strong governance and oversight for Sudden Sam. This involves ensuring that the charity is compliant with all legal and regulatory requirements, operating ethically, and using its resources efficiently to maximise impact. Trustees are responsible for setting the strategic direction of the charity and monitoring its progress against set goals and objectives.
2. **Mission Alignment:** Trustees are tasked with ensuring that all activities and decisions align with the charity's mission to support those impacted by sudden death. This means regularly reviewing the charity's programs, services, and initiatives to confirm that they are meeting the needs of the community and staying true to the organization's core purpose.
3. **Financial Stewardship:** A key aim for trustees is to oversee the financial health of Sudden Sam. Trustees must ensure that the charity is financially sustainable, using its funds responsibly and transparently. This includes approving budgets, monitoring financial performance, and making sure that adequate controls are in place to prevent misuse of resources.
4. **Risk Management:** Trustees are responsible for identifying and managing risks that could affect the charity's operations or reputation. This involves developing and implementing a risk management strategy, regularly reviewing potential risks, and taking steps to mitigate them. Effective risk management helps ensure the charity can continue to provide support to those affected by sudden death, even in challenging circumstances.
5. **Advocacy and Representation:** Trustees aim to act as ambassadors for Sudden Sam, advocating for the needs and rights of individuals and families impacted by sudden death. This includes engaging with stakeholders, representing the charity at public events, and building relationships with partners, donors, and the community to advance the charity's mission.
6. **Continuous Improvement and Development:** Trustees are committed to their own development and the continuous improvement of the charity. This involves staying informed about best practices in governance, participating in training and development opportunities, and conducting regular self-evaluations to ensure they are fulfilling their roles effectively.
7. **Transparency and Accountability:** Trustees aim to maintain high standards of transparency and accountability. They are responsible for ensuring that the charity's activities and outcomes are communicated clearly to stakeholders, including beneficiaries, donors, and the public. This transparency fosters trust and confidence in the charity's work.

By adhering to these aims, the trustees of Sudden Sam are committed to providing strong leadership and ensuring the charity fulfils its mission of supporting those impacted by sudden death in the most effective and compassionate manner.



Legislation and Guidance

Our Trustee Policy has been created in conjunction and consideration of the following legalisation and statutory guidance:

- Charity Commission Rules and Guidance
- Code of Conduct
- Data Protection Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Safeguarding
- Safer Recruitment
- Conflict of Interest
- Financial Management

What is a Trustee?

The Trustees of a charity, regardless of its size, are the group of volunteers who have the ultimate responsibility for running and managing the charity for the Public Benefit in accordance with its governing document and in compliance with charity law. Sudden Sam needs a minimum of 3 trustees at any one time, and a maximum of 12.

Who can be a Trustee?

Not everybody can be a trustee of a charity. Sudden Sam prides itself on ensuring we follow the rules and guidance from the Charity Commission. Sudden Sam works hard to ensure our trustees are of high quality and are committed to our charitable mission. Section 9 of our Constitution of a Charitable Incorporated Organisation details further information on who can be a trustee.

Please find below further information on who can and cannot be a trustee:

- Due to Sudden Sam being a registered charity and not a company, we ensure that all of our trustees are at least 18 years of age.
- We recognise that trustees must not act as a trustee if they are disqualified, unless authorised to do so by a waiver from the commission. This includes being bankrupt or having an individual voluntary arrangement; having an unspent conviction for certain offences; being on the sex offender's register. This list is not exhaustive.
- We recognise that there are further restrictions for charities that work with children or adults at risk.
- We recognise that trustees must be properly appointed following the procedures within the governing document.

How are Trustees Appointed?

Sudden Sam prides itself on the quality of its trustees.



- A trustee can be nominated or express an interest themselves. In selecting individuals for appointment as charity trustees, the current trustees must have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the charity.
- As stated within the Constitution of a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, a potential trustee has to be voted into office by its current trustees on a majority vote.
- A trustee's term of office is three years. After 3 years, the trustee is able to be voted in again, if they wish to do so.
- Once a trustee has been appointed, the new trustee must receive a copy of the current version of the constitution and a copy of this policy.

Responsibilities and Roles

There are a number of roles involved within Sudden Sam. The trustees, along with the CEO, are responsible for ensuring policy is put into practice across all roles. They are legally responsible for overseeing the organisation's governance and ensuring that it operates in alignment with its mission to provide support to those impacted by sudden death. Trustees play a crucial role in the leadership and management of the charity, acting as stewards of its assets and ensuring that the charity's resources are used effectively and ethically to achieve its charitable objectives.

Sudden Sam roles:

CEO / Chair of Trustees – The CEO, Tom Hanlon, is responsible for overseeing the Trustee Board and the overall management of the trustees and their responsibilities. The CEO is accountable for the provision that is offered to users, as well as safeguarding.

Trustees – Sudden Sam has the following trustees: Susan Hanlon; Andrew Mercer; Paula Mercer; Gaynor Shiels; Tom Hanlon. The trustees are responsible for maintaining the vision of Sudden Sam and assists in ensuring policy is put into practice.

Counsellors / Therapists – Sudden Sam utilises the support of qualified external counsellors and therapists in order to offer a credible service to our users. The counsellor is responsible for offering quality Emotional Support to those who need it.

Volunteers – At times, Sudden Sam relies on the support of kind volunteers in order to maintain our service. During community Emotional Support sessions, volunteers are often utilised in order to ensure the service runs smoothly.

Trustee Responsibilities

1. **Governance and Oversight:** The primary aim for trustees is to provide strong governance and oversight for Sudden Sam. This involves ensuring that the charity is compliant with all legal and regulatory requirements, operating ethically, and using its resources efficiently to maximise impact. Trustees are responsible for setting the strategic direction of the charity and monitoring its progress against set goals and objectives.
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6. **Continuous Improvement and Development:** Trustees are committed to their own development and the continuous improvement of the charity. This involves staying informed about best practices in governance, participating in training and development opportunities, and conducting regular self-evaluations to ensure they are fulfilling their roles effectively.
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Trustee Code of Conduct

Sudden Sam prides itself on the integrity of its trustees. Sudden Sam trustees understand that they are role models and their actions reflect on the organisation.

Selflessness	The trustees of Sudden Sam have a general duty to act in the best interests of Sudden Sam as a whole. They should do so to gain financial gain or any other materials benefits for themselves, their friends, or (if applicable) an organisation that they represent.
Integrity	The trustees of Sudden Sam: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisation that might seek to influence them in the performance of their role.• Should avoid any appearance of improper behaviour
Objectivity	In carrying out their role, including making staff and trustee appointments, awarding contracts or transacting other business, the trustees of Sudden Sam should ensure that decisions are made solely on merit.



Accountability	<p>The trustees of Sudden Sam:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have a duty to comply with the law on all occasions in accordance with the trust placed in them and in such a way as to preserve public confidence in Sudden Sam.• Are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public, funders and service users and must submit themselves to scrutiny as appropriate to their roles.
Openness	<p>The trustees of Sudden Sam:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Should ensure that confidential material, including that about individuals, are handled with due care (please refer to the Data Protection Policy).• Should be as open as possible about their decisions and the action they take and give reasons for their decisions and restrict access to information only when the wider interest clearly demands.
Honesty	<p>The trustees of Sudden Sam:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have a duty to declare any interests relating to their trustee role and to take steps to resolve conflicts that may arise.• Must resolve any conflict between his/her private interests and his/her trustee duties in favour of the trustee role.• Must make relevant declarations of interest in their difference roles both within and outside Sudden Sam.
Leadership	<p>The trustees of Sudden Sam:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Should promote and support the principles of leadership by example.• Must respect the role of staff and volunteers.

Trustees – Representation of Sudden Sam

Online

- When communicating with Sudden Sam clients or persons of interest, trustees should only use their Sudden Sam trustee email address and, where possible, avoid using their personal email address.
- Trustees must ensure their emails are professional, sensitive, and grammatically correct and are aware that emails can be requested by people during a SAR.
- Trustees must abide by the Data Protection policy and ensure they double check the recipient email address is correct.
- Sudden Sam volunteers must ensure that they are aware that their views and beliefs can be seen as representation of Sudden Sam and should take caution with their social media posts. Ideally, social media should be private and trustees should avoid reaching out to clients via their own social media and should instead use the Sudden Sam accounts.



In person

- Sudden Sam trustees should ensure they act in a professional manner when dealing with Sudden Sam clients or persons of interest.
- Trustees should treat clients with respect and sensitivity at all times.

Understanding the Governing Document

Sudden Sam recognises that Sudden Sam is a Foundation CIO model – Charitable Incorporated Organisation. As such, our governing document is a Constitution of a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. This document has been created by the CEO and registered with the Charity Commission.

All original trustees read through the Governing Document and agreed to abide by it before accepting to become a trustee. Trustees ensured that they understood all elements of the document. New trustees are sent the Governing Document upon them being voted onto the trustee panel.

All trustees must:

- Ensure that Sudden Sam complies with the Governing Document at all times
- Comply with charity law requirements and other laws that apply to Sudden Sam, as stated within the document.
- Ensure they understand what the charity exists to do; what power it has to further its objects; who the trustees are, and how many trustees there should and shouldn't be; rules about trustees and meetings; how decisions are made.
- Have an up-to-date copy of the Governing Document and regularly refer to it.
- Meet to review the Governing Document as and when required, as directed by the CEO.

Acting in the Charity's Best Interests

It is essential that all trustees continually act in the charity's best interests.

Trustees must:

- Do what you and their co-trustees (and no one else) decide will best enable the charity to carry out its purposes
- With your co-trustees, make balanced and adequately informed decisions, thinking about the long term as well as the short term.
- Avoid putting yourself in a position where your duty to your charity conflicts with your personal interests or loyalty to any other person or body.
- Not receive any benefit from the charity unless it is properly authorised and is clearly in the charity's interests; this also includes anyone who is financially connected to you, such as a partner, dependent child or business partner



Understanding the Charity's Interests

Acting in the charity's best interests means always doing what the trustees decide will best enable the charity to carry out its purposes, both now and for the future.

It's not about serving:

- The interests of trustees or staff
- The personal interests of members or beneficiaries
- The personal interests of supporters, funders or donors
- The charity as an institution in itself, or preserving it for its own sake.

Making Decisions

The trustees are ultimately responsible for deciding what activities the charity will undertake, what resources it will need, how it will obtain and use them. Collective decision making is one of the most important parts of the trustee role. Some decisions are simple and straightforward; others can be complex or far reaching in their consequences. When you and your co-trustees make decisions about your charity, you must:

- Act within your powers
- Act in good faith, and only in the interests of your charity
- Make sure you are sufficiently informed, taking any advice you need
- Take account of all relevant factors you are aware of
- Ignore any irrelevant factors
- Deal with conflicts of interest and loyalty
- Make decisions that are within the range of decisions that a reasonable trustee body could make in the circumstances

Participation in Trustee Meetings

Sudden Sam trustees have an obligation to attend Trustee Meetings – more detailed information about these meetings is within our Governing Document.

Trustees understand that these meetings are vital and they ensure good practice. Trustees are encouraged to hold trustees to account and question viewpoints in order to ensure we are the best we possibly can be. All meetings are minutes and secured. Trustees understand that these minutes can be requested at any time.

Attendance	Trustees are expecting to attend every trustee meeting. Obviously, there will be times where this is not possible – in these situations, trustees contact the CEO and inform him/her of their absence. Attendance can be virtual or in person, providing the virtual enables communication to be heard from both ends.
Calling Meetings	Generally speaking, the CEO calls the meetings, however all trustees are able to request a meeting at any time.



Making Decisions	<p>No decision shall be taken at a meeting unless a quorum is present at the time when the decision is taken. The quorum is two charity trustees, or the number nearest to one third of the total amount of trustees. A trustee is not counted within the quorum if the decision to vote is something that effects them.</p> <p>When voting, if there is a balance in votes, the CEO has the casting vote.</p> <p>All trustees are responsible for the decisions voted for, regardless of whether they personally voted in favour or against of it.</p>
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Conflict of Interests

The Charity Commission's guidance publication defines 'Conflicts of Interest' as: "Any situation in which a trustee's personal interests, or interests that they owe to another body, may (or may appear to) influence or affect the trustee's decision making." Examples include:

- Direct financial gain or benefit to the trustee, such as: a payment to a trustee for services provided to the charity.
- The award of a contract to another organisation in which a trustee has an interest and from which a trustee will receive a financial benefit.
- The employment of a trustee in a separate post within the charity, even when the trustee has resigned in order to take up the employment.
- Indirect financial gain, such as employment by the charity of a spouse or partner of a trustee, where their finances are interdependent.
- Non-financial gain, such as when a user of the charity's services is also a trustee.
- Conflict of loyalties, such as where a trustee is appointed by the local authority or by one of the charity's funders, or where a friend of a trustee is employed by the charity.

Sudden Sam acknowledges that a 'conflict of interest' is not a negative thing, and in fact does just show that an individual is enthusiastic, active, and dynamic in their interests – exactly the kind of people who makes a good charity trustee. Having said that, Sudden Sam does ensure our trustees abide by the regulations from the Charity Commission, including ensuring they are declared, acknowledged and managed.

Why Do Conflicts of Interests Occur?

This can be due to deliberate exploitation of the situation by one party for their personal benefit. By 'deliberate exploitation', it means that the party concerned knows (or, at least, suspects) that what they are doing is wrong/immoral/illegal, but carries on doing it anyway.

Sudden Sam acknowledges that it is essential not to have a cavalier, dismissive approach to conflicts of interests and takes them very seriously. We appreciate that a well-maintained Register of Conflicts of Interest is the best defence against suspicions or accusations of impropriety against individual Trustees.

Please refer to our Conflict of Interest Policy for more detailed information.



Safeguarding

At Sudden Sam, safeguarding is of paramount importance, not only to protect the individuals we support but also to safeguard our trustees against potential accusations. As trustees, we are responsible for ensuring that our charity operates with the highest standards of care and integrity. By adhering to robust safeguarding policies and procedures, we protect ourselves and the organization from misunderstandings or allegations of misconduct. This commitment to safeguarding helps maintain the trust of the community and ensures that we can continue providing vital support to those affected by sudden death in a safe and professional manner.

Our charitable activities include working with people of all ages, including children and young people. We pride ourselves on our safeguarding commitment to all stakeholders of Sudden Sam, including:

- Clients
- Trustees
- Volunteers
- Counsellors
- Employees

Please refer to our Safeguarding Policy for a more detailed overview of safeguarding as a whole within our organisation.

Disclosure and Barring Services

The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) merged to become the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). The DBS runs lists of people who are barred from working with vulnerable adults and/or children and young people by reason of their history and criminal convictions.

A DBS certificate search is colloquially known as a 'DBS check'.

There are three levels of check available:

- Standard
- Enhanced
- Enhanced with list checks.

Sudden Sam acknowledges that employers or contracting organisations have a responsibility to run criminal records and other necessary security checks on practitioners working with vulnerable adults, as appropriate to the practitioner's level of contact with the vulnerable clients.

Trustees	All trustees are DBS checked.
Counsellors	All counsellors are DBS checked before any counselling commits.
Volunteers	Volunteers do not need to be DBS checked as they will never be alone with clients and will always be within ear and eye shot of trustees.



Managing Risk and Duty of Care

Sudden Sam works hard in order to manage risks to those involved with any service within Sudden Sam. We reduce the risk by ensuring that DBS checks are carried out on the appropriate people, qualifications and experience is checked and considered, and counselling contracts are read and understood by all involved in the experience.

Sudden Sam ensures that we abide by the advice, guidance and legalisation of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy.

We acknowledge that managing risk is everybody's responsibility within Sudden Sam and that the trustees have a duty of care to their clients. As detailed above, although confidentiality is important to us, there are times where the necessity of managing risk outweighs our promise of confidentiality.

If a client ever expresses any potential intent to harm themselves or others, or a breach of safeguarding, our counsellors have to assess:

- The seriousness of the likely harm
- How imminent the risk is to the client
- The effectiveness and impact of a disclosure

Clients do not need to consent to a referral if the counsellor believes harm to themselves or others is imminent. Wherever possible, disclosures should be made with the consent and co-operation of the individual concerned. However, if there is a serious risk to the client or others, the counsellor is able and is obliged to inform the CEO and the relevant authority.

Children and Young People

There are times where Sudden Sam works with children and young people for emotional support and counselling. We are extremely committed to safeguarding the needs of children and young people.

Please refer to our separate policy for a more detailed explanation on our approach to working with children and young people.

Age	Definition	
Under the age of 16	Sudden Sam considers people under the age of 16 as children.	People within this category are classed as children and need parental consent for counselling to commence – this has to be from somebody with parental responsibility.
16 to 18	Sudden Sam considers people aged between 16 and 18 as young people.	Young people are able to receive counselling without parental consent.

Links with Other Policies

This policy has been written with the following policies in mind:

- Safeguarding
- Data Protection



- Health and Safety
- Children and Young People
- Conflict of Interest