**TRUSTEE**

**WELCOME**

Every 6 minutes someone learns that they are losing their sight. Every five hours, a baby is born with sight problems. In these moments, two profound questions emerge:

• Can this be stopped?

• How do I (or my child) live this life?

The merger of Fight for Sight and Vision Foundation, which took place on 1st April 2023, will enable us to address both questions. By combining our strengths and expertise we are now the only significant national funder with the efficiency,

capability, and capacity to increase investment in medical research and social improvement. Together we can mitigate both the prevalence and impact of sight loss. We have a clear ambition – to save sight and to change lives.

We are now seeking up to four new trustees as we establish ourselves in our new form and under our new name (soon to be announced). This is an exciting inflection point for us, and our new trustees will be central in enabling us to achieve our ambition.

We have worked through our merger and have a clear focus and vision, as well as a strong Board and senior leadership team, all of whom are ambitious for the potential impact we can make. Our re-brand will also enable us to amplify our position as a leader within the sight loss sector. Our merger was a critical step in accelerating research which will create a positive impact on the lives of millions of people. We do not want this opportunity to pass us by and that’s what makes these such an important and exciting roles for the right people.

As a trustee, you will have the opportunity to steer the course of our charity and our sector, shaping our strategies, and advocating for meaningful change. You will be help us be a driving force behind world leading research into sight loss prevention, and transformative initiatives that enhance the quality of life for countless individuals.

We are particularly seeking individuals who have a medical or scientific research background, ideally in ophthalmology, and those who have experience in retail and fundraising. If you want to be part of something that will really make a difference, we’d love to hear from you.

*“I extend a heartfelt invitation to those who share our commitment to making a profound difference in the lives of individuals affected by sight loss. Our journey towards a future where eye diseases are prevented and the challenges faced by the visually impaired are overcome requires the collective effort of dedicated individuals. We are seeking trustees who are not only passionate advocates for our cause but also possess the vision, expertise, and dedication to guide and govern our organisation. Your unique perspectives and skills will play a pivotal role in shaping and defining our impact for years to come.”*

**Dr Heather Giles, Chair**

*“Our two organisations came together to form a new dynamic, ambitious, entrepreneurial, impact-driven organisation to save sight and change lives. We are searching for trustees that can join us, and be at the forefront of creating the culture, the outlook and the methods of working and the operations to truly make a difference in society.”*

**Keith Valentine, CEO**

**ABOUT US**

We are a new organisation forged from two ambitious charities: Fight for Sight and Vision Foundation. Our single, unifying mission is to save sight and change lives.

It is a mission that reflects two urgent questions everyone faces when they receive a diagnosis of sight loss: ‘**How do I stop this**?’ and ‘**How do I live my life**?’

Answering these questions guides our strategy as we progress a five-year plan with solid and lofty aspirations.

**THE MERGER**

Fight for Sight funds breakthrough research and life-changing services to build a more equitable future for blind and partially sighted people by accelerating breakthroughs in multiple sight loss conditions.

Vision Foundation works to inform, include and empower the visually impaired community. Empowerment is at the heart of what we do; our work focuses on what people can do, rather than what they can’t.

The merger will help us to realise a joint ambition to tackle sight loss from both a clinical and social perspective. Our combined organisation is now grounded in data and insight into the science, as well as the lived experience of, sight loss. With this wealth of evidence we’re determined to:

* generate further investment into the sector,
* accelerate clinical progress,
* improve quality of life for people facing or living with sight loss

Crucially, coming together is about growing our influence and impact, not reducing or diluting what we do. So, as we evolve as a merged organisation, we are combining our teams, announcing our new name and fine-tuning our unified

mission and strategy – as well as continuing with the important work we’re already committed to – you can expect big things from us and it is an exciting time to join us as a trustee.

**OUR FUTURE**

Our principal role is as a grant-maker. We award grants to the scientific community that could lead to scientific breakthroughs and treatments to stop eye diseases from progressing. In the future, we believe research can prevent people from losing sight and reverse sight loss. We invest to advance treatments that will cure eye disease and protect and grow the community of world-class scientists, technologists, and data scientists who can deliver tomorrow’s breakthroughs. Historically, Vision Foundation has funded innovations that directly impact people who are blind or partially sighted, from music classes for children to projects that take eye tests into at-risk communities. We invest in programmes, organisations and activities that deliver equity for and with blind and visually impaired people.

As a grant-maker, we are change-makers, accelerators and drivers of impact. We are bold, energetic, challenging, disruptive, tenacious, and determined.

We aren’t afraid to tackle the challenges facing the sight loss community, either. Recent campaigns include The Unseen, which unearthed the shocking scale and nature of domestic abuse among blind and partially sighted people, and See My Skills, which addressed high unemployment rates. The charity excels at working in partnership with others towards creating a more equitable society for the sight loss community.

As we progress, we’ll scale the impact of projects like these, look beyond the nation’s capital, and drive systemic change. We’ll need to secure the funds to invest in our trusted partners to achieve our ambitions. We’ll continue to fundraise by engaging with supporters and companies through legacies, events such as the London Marathon, and our network of charity shops.

The evidence we commission influences policy and decision-making to demand equality for all.

We’ll shortly have a new name that reflects our united ambitions, so it’s an exciting time for us and the people we serve.

**OUR FINANCES**

The charity is in a strong position financially, with a high level of reserves that we intend to draw down over the coming years as we focus on investing in sustainable growth and increasing our impact. Compared to many charities, we

have well diversified income streams, predictable costs, and are in the fortunate position to hold a sizable portfolio of investments. Our plans for the short and medium term are to invest in our income generation infrastructure, and to significantly increase the amounts of funding we can put to our charitable purpose.

**OUR BOARD AND LEADERSHIP TEAM**

Fight for Sight / Vision Foundation is the only organisation in the sight loss sector with an Executive Leadership Team that has over half of its members with lived experience of sight loss.

[Follow this link to find out more about our executive team.](https://www.fightforsight.org.uk/about-us/our-organisation/executive-team/)

The Board currently numbers ten trustees, including our newly appointed Chair.

The Board meets four times a year, or more often as required.

[Follow this link to find out more about our Board.](https://www.fightforsight.org.uk/about-us/our-organisation/trustees/)

**ROLE DESCRIPTION**

As the most senior leaders in our charity, trustees play a pivotal role in guiding our strategic direction, amplifying our impact, and ensuring the fulfilment of our mission to save sight and change lives. You will serve on the main board and will be invited also to get involved in one of our sub-committees. These are currently:

* Social Impact & Scientific Research Committee (SISR)
* Finance, Audit, Risk & Resources Committee (FARR)
* People Committee
* Retail Committee

**MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Strategic Leadership & Planning**

* Provide leadership and strategic guidance to the charity, aligning efforts with the mission and values of the organisation.
* Collaborate with the board, executive team, and stakeholders to develop and implement long-term strategies that advance the charity’s impact and sustainability.

**Governance**

* Ensure effective governance, decision-making, and compliance with legal and ethical standards.
* Work closely with board members, fostering a culture of transparency, accountability, collaboration and open communication, harnessing different views and opinions.

**Engagement**

* Represent the charity at public events and networking opportunities to promote our mission and raise awareness about our cause.
* Develop and nurture relationships with key stakeholders, including donors, partners, corporations, government agencies, and the visually impaired community.

**Evaluation and Accountability**

* Collaborate with the board to evaluate performance, ensuring alignment with the charity’s goals and objectives.
* Ensure the charity is accountable to donors and beneficiaries, that is financially robust and sustainable, and that is effective risk management in place.

**PERSON SPECIFICATION**

We are seeking dynamic and dedicated individuals to serve as trustees of our ambitious merged organisation. The ideal candidates will have a strong commitment to our cause, along with the following:

**Specialist experience**

At this time, we are particularly interested in candidates who have leadership experience in:

* Scientific and/or medical research
* Ophthalmic research and/or clinical practice
* Strategic oversight of substantial fundraising and/or retail operations

Despite these areas of interest, we welcome a diversity of skills and experience at our charity and on our Board, and want to find the right candidates regardless of their specific areas of expertise or experience. So if you are interested in this role and think you can contribute to our mission, we’d love to hear from you.

**General attributes**

**Knowledge & experience**

* An understanding of governance, and experience on a committee or board.
* Demonstrated ability to build and maintain partnerships with stakeholders, including donors, corporations and government agencies.

**Skills & abilities**

* Strategic thinking and the ability to contribute to long-term planning and vision to deliver impact.
* Exceptional interpersonal and communication skills, with the ability to engage diverse audiences.
* Entrepreneurial instincts and a healthy understanding of risk balanced with ambition using sound judgement.

**Styles & behaviours**

* High ethical standards and commitment to upholding the charity’s values, as well as a passion for advocating on behalf of individuals with, or at risk of, sight loss.
* Collaborative, highly inclusive, fostering trust and valuing difference perspectives.
* Solution-focused, with an ability to see the big picture and be pragmatic.

**TERMS OF APPOINTMENT**

**Remuneration**

This role is not accompanied by any financial remuneration, although reasonable expenses may be claimed.

**Time commitment**

While the exact time commitment may vary based on the charity’s needs and priorities, we anticipate the following general expectations:

* A minimum of four Board meetings per year
* Up to four subcommittee meetings per year (the specific committee depending on skills and experience)
* Preparation for meetings, review of materials, and other trustee engagement as appropriate.
* Annual Strategy Day with full Board and executive team.
* Meetings with members of the executive leadership team as appropriate.
* Representing the charity at high profile events, functions and public engagements to enhance its reputation and partnerships.

**Location**

At present Board meetings are held in central London. Subcommittee meetings are held remotely.

**HOW TO APPLY**

If you have questions about the appointment and would find it helpful to have an informal conversation, please contact trustee.recruitment@fightforsight.org.uk and we will be happy to arrange a call.

To make an application, please send your CV and a supporting statement (max two pages) to trustee.recruitment@fightforsight.org.uk outlining your motivation for applying and how you meet the attributes outlined in the personal specification including, if appropriate, the specialist experience we are seeking.

We hope you will consider making an application. Together, we can achieve extraordinary things.

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION**

Don’t meet every single requirement? At Fight for Sight and Vision Foundation we are dedicated to building a diverse and inclusive workforce, so if you’re excited about this role but your past experience doesn’t align perfectly with every item in the job description, we encourage you to apply anyway. You may be just the right candidate for this or other roles that we have.

We have an inclusive and accessible recruitment process, including any adjustments required to support people from diverse community groups.