

Likewise trustee guidance



Purpose

Likewise supports people experiencing mental health problems, social exclusion and isolation.

We know that we're all equally human and being there for each other really matters.

We think the most important thing is that people have places and relationships where they feel safe to be themselves. Putting relationships first, we're alongside people helping them find their place and navigate life.

We're committed to learning and growing together, championing the evolution of organisational culture, mental health services and social care to be more human, adaptable and responsive to people's lives.

Our vision for the world

Shared humanity is at our core. We want more moments of human connection; more seeing and being seen; more accepting people as they are; more turning towards each other; more space to be human together.

What we do

Embracing the complex reality of people's lives, we provide one-to-one emotional and practical support, community spaces, activities and events for wellbeing. Alongside this is an experiential learning programme for volunteers, students and professionals.

Our vision for Likewise

Our vision for Likewise is an organisation that is set up at every level to support human relationship in all its delightful complexity, where everyone feels safe to be themselves.

We see thriving community hubs for wellbeing. Places to be for everyone with a range of low cost and free activities. A place to socialise or be quiet, somewhere to sit, chat, meet, sing, cook, dance, stretch or do nothing.

We see our approach to supporting people one-to-one embedded in the system of care across the country. The Likewise way as standard.

We see a learning programme for volunteers, students and professionals that enables change in how people approach their work, their lives and their communities.

Likewise culture

We are...

Optimistic

We see opportunity in challenge, trust each other and know that we will learn from our mistakes.

Honest

It's important that we are straightforward and honest with each other. We don't gossip, denigrate or exclude.

Supportive

We know that we impact each other and seek to create an environment that energises. We're conscious that maintaining energy requires good self-care and regenerative practices as part of our culture.

Authentic

We bring our humanity to work, try to be open and truly see each other beyond our roles, professional identity or labels. We're inclusive, accepting of difference and do our best to listen with presence and communicate in straightforward ways.

Open

We don't bury thoughts and feelings about each other or our work. We seek to be non-judgemental and accepting of ourselves and each other, listening and responding in service of an open culture. We love supporting each other's enquiries, helping to dig deeper, see and understand more.

Playful

We take our work seriously, but we don't take ourselves too seriously. Lightness, humour and humanity mean we enjoy our work and stay grounded.

Pillars

Learning

Learning summarises our entire approach to the work. We believe everyone – staff and clients alike – is engaged in a constant process of learning. The learning frame of mind is an open one – for staff, it means we are always open to our clients rather than fitting them into our pre-conceived notions. It also means we can be open about mistakes – a learner is not tied to the expectation of expertise, and is more inclined to accept and build on their mistakes rather than hide or dismiss them.

Belonging

At Likewise, we aim to create a real sense of belonging: people feeling genuinely valued as they are so that they can better and more sustainably engage with learning, discovery, and opportunity.

We practice acceptance of ourselves and others, making space for difference, noticing when we are judging or excluding.

Doing

Doing refers to the active role our clients play – not as passive recipients, but as doers themselves.

We recognise our clients for what they can do rather than framing them by their problems. This doing is vital for change – we only learn and discover our capacity to feel and behave differently through the act of doing.

Doing also refers to our approach to pragmatism – where we can do something we will.

Board guidance

This board guidance has been developed through drawing on our own experience as well as using the 'Charity Governance Code' and 'Essential Trustee' as guiding principles.

We'd like to be a part of evolving how boards work in a way that best supports ways of being and working that are human and effective. So we'd like this board guidance to evolve over time, and eventually model new ways of doing things to the charity sector.

Principle 1: Organisational Purpose

It's important that the board is clear about Likewise's aims and does all it can to ensure that these are being delivered effectively, sustainably and in keeping with our values.

Trustees play an important part in nurturing and championing the essential purpose of Likewise. Everything we do needs to orientate to this purpose, and be embedded in our values, and the board act as stewards and guardians of this.

The board are ambassadors for the purpose, vision and values of Likewise.

Principle 2: Leadership

Together, the board and the co-directors, in collaboration with key staff, develop long term strategy for Likewise. Meeting agendas reflect the key points of the strategy to guide the organisation over time.

The board commit to an ongoing enquiry into what leadership means and the complexity of power and its use. The board supports the evolution of leadership approaches most appropriate to the complex challenges of the current human context.

Appoint, manage and support the Co-Directors

The board creates policy covering the employment of the Co-Directors. It formally appoints and supports the Co-Directors, and ensures recruitment appropriately involves and includes the Likewise staff team and relevant stakeholders.

Principle 3: Integrity and culture

The board acts with integrity, adopting Likewise values and creating a culture which helps achieve the organisation's charitable purposes. The board is aware of the importance of the public's confidence and trust in charities, and trustees undertake their duties accordingly.

Our approach is based on the principles of acceptance and belonging, continual and active learning, genuine human relationships and practical support. We have a unique workplace culture that allows these principles to flourish.

Our organisational promise is to be person centred, emotionally intelligent, mutually accountable to each other and aware of our power. We can only do this if we are dedicated to being reflective, both in the moment, and through our organisational practices. The board works to integrate this way of being into their approach and the organisation as a whole, being co-guardians and cultivators of our organisational culture.

Principle 4: Decision making, risk and oversight

The board recognises and respects the domain of the staff responsibility. At the same time, it creates policies and controls to maintain oversight and to ensure wellbeing of the organisation and staff.

The board makes sure that its decision-making processes are informed, rigorous and timely, and that effective delegation, oversight and risk-assessment, and management systems are set up and monitored.

Trustees delegate authority but not ultimate responsibility, so the board needs to implement suitable financial and related controls and reporting arrangements to make sure it oversees these delegated matters. Trustees must also identify and assess risks and opportunities for the organisation and decide how best to deal with them, including assessing whether they are manageable or worth taking.

The trustee board co-creates the policies to govern the organisational activity. These cover:

- Guidance for staff
- Systems for reporting and monitoring
- Conduct of trustees and board business

Maintain proper fiscal oversight

The Board is responsible for effectively managing the organisation's resources so it can meet its charitable objects and:

- Monitors spending
- Approves the annual financial statements and budget
- Controls investments
- Seeks to understand and mitigate risk
- Participates in fundraising
- Ensures legal compliance

Principle 5: Board effectiveness

The board works as an effective team, using the appropriate balance of skills, experience, backgrounds and knowledge to make informed decisions.

The Board monitors its own performance. It takes steps to establish:

- Productive meetings
- High standards of Trustee conduct and role modelling of values
- Effective committees and adequate resources
- The appropriate levels of input, preparation and work outside of board meetings
- Development activities
- Recruitment and induction processes
- Regular reflections and review of board performance
- Diversity of thought and representation

Principle 6: Diversity

The board's approach to diversity supports its effectiveness, leadership and decision making.

Boards should try to recruit people who think in different ways, as well as those who have different backgrounds.



Principle 7: Openness and accountability

The board leads the organisation in being transparent and accountable.

The board should ensure that the organisation is accountable as required by law to bodies such as:

- The Charity Commission
- Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC)
- Companies House

The board also needs to make certain that the organisation is accountable to its beneficiaries, staff, and the general public. This means publishing annual reports and accounts and communicating effectively.

Through its own behaviour, governance oversight and activities on behalf of the organisation the Board enhances and protects the reputation of the organisation, acting as ambassadors.

USEFUL LINKS

<https://www.charitygovernancecode.org/en>

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/544220/Jigsaw.pdf

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/842041/CC3_may18.pdf

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