TRUSTEE ROLE DESCRIPTION AND RECRUITMENT

November 2026

The Prison Radio Association (PRA) is a media and criminal justice charity. We use the power of audio to transform the lives of people in prison and the wider criminal justice system.

We run **National Prison Radio**, the world's first national radio station for people in prison, broadcasting across England and Wales. We also produce **Life After Prison** and other podcasts, make award-winning programmes for the **BBC** and other partners, and provide **training and career opportunities** for people during and after imprisonment.

Last year we were named **Production Company of the Year** at the Audio Production Awards, and we recently won **Podcast of the Year** at the British Podcast Awards.

Lived experience is central to how we work, the stories we tell and the decisions we make.

We are looking for several new trustees to join the Board over the next 12-18 months. Details of specific areas of interest are listed below.

Why join the Board now?

The PRA is entering an exciting period of renewal. A new Chief Executive took up post at the beginning of 2026, following almost two decades of founder leadership, and we are developing our strategy for the next five years. We are refreshing and expanding our Board so that it can bring the range of experience, perspectives and connections the PRA will need for its next chapter.

There are significant opportunities ahead. National Prison Radio is being modernised; digital access to content in prisons is growing; our podcasts and BBC productions have an increasingly strong profile; and there is scope to develop new partnerships, diversify our income and extend our impact.

We will pursue these opportunities against a challenging backdrop. Charities face pressure on funding and costs, while the criminal justice and media landscapes are changing rapidly. We are looking for trustees who can help us respond with ambition, creativity and sound judgement while protecting the quality, independence and impact of our work.

The role of a trustee

Our trustees play a vital role in ensuring that the charity achieves its purpose. They are collectively responsible for the governance and strategic direction of the PRA, overseeing its work and ensuring its resources are used responsibly.

Trustees support and constructively challenge the Chief Executive and senior team. They bring independent judgement to the Board's decisions and help the PRA remain ambitious, effective and accountable.

In line with Charity Commission guidance, trustees have a responsibility to:

- ensure that PRA carries out its charitable purposes for the public benefit;
- comply with PRA's governing document and the law;
- act in the charity's best interests;
- manage the charity's resources responsibly;
- act with reasonable care and skill; and
- ensure that the charity is accountable.

In practice, this includes contributing to the development and review of the PRA's strategy; scrutinising its performance, finances, impact and management of risk; ensuring that appropriate policies, controls and safeguarding arrangements are in place; and declaring any actual or potential conflicts of interest.

Trustees exercise these responsibilities collectively through the Board rather than as individuals.

What engagement looks like

We are not looking for trustees to run the charity or to be constantly available. We do, however, want Board members who are engaged, enthusiastic and willing to contribute.

Trustees are expected to:

- attend four Board meetings each year and an annual half-day strategy or development session;
- read papers in advance and participate thoughtfully in discussions and decisions;
- develop a good understanding of the PRA's work, including visiting one of our projects where possible;
- keep abreast of significant developments affecting the PRA and the environment in which we work;
- contribute to occasional advisory work, a committee or a time-limited project where their experience is relevant;
- act as a positive ambassador for the PRA;
- commit to at least one element of practical support per year (for example, speaking or writing about the PRA in public, meeting our beneficiaries, supporting with fundraising, supporting on the delivery of a piece of work); and
- where appropriate, offer advice or make useful introductions to potential partners, supporters, funders or advisers.

The contribution made by individual trustees will vary according to their experience, interests and availability. At times, trustees may be asked to contribute beyond formal meetings. For example, by advising on a new initiative, supporting a particular area of work or representing the PRA externally.

Trustees govern and advise the charity but do not direct staff or become involved in routine operational management.

Trustees are normally appointed for a three-year term, subject to the PRA's Articles of Association. The role is voluntary and unpaid, although reasonable expenses will be reimbursed. The PRA will provide a structured induction, access to relevant training and support from the Chair, Chief Executive and fellow trustees.

Who we are looking for

We are looking for thoughtful, engaged people who have relevant experience and knowledge and who share the PRA's commitment to people affected by the criminal justice system and recognise the value of lived experience.

Trustees should be able to think strategically, assess information and exercise sound judgement. They should be willing to ask difficult questions in a supportive and collegiate way, listen to different perspectives and contribute to decisions made collectively by the Board.

We particularly value integrity, curiosity, openness and respect for others. Trustees should have a strong commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and help us create a Board on which different experiences and voices are heard.

Previous trustee experience is not essential. We welcome people whose knowledge comes through professional expertise, lived experience, community leadership or alternative paths.

We recognise the particular insight and expertise that people with lived experience of the criminal justice system bring to the PRA. A criminal conviction is not in itself a barrier to becoming a trustee, subject to Charity Commission rules.

Skills and perspectives of particular interest

We are seeking several new trustees and do not expect any individual candidate to cover every area.

Our present priorities are:

Lived experience of the criminal justice system
First-hand experience of imprisonment, release, resettlement or using services for people affected by the criminal justice system.

Fundraising and income diversification
Experience of philanthropy, trusts and foundations, corporate partnerships or developing new sources of charitable and commercial income.

Commercial media production and strategy
Knowledge of media business, commissioning, intellectual property, rights, distribution or the commercial development of content.

Digital and technology governance
Experience of technology, data protection, cybersecurity, digital transformation or the responsible use of emerging technologies.

Charity leadership and organisational growth
Senior experience of charity management, organisational development, business planning, operations or supporting an organisation through growth and change.

We are also interested in people who can bring valuable networks, public influence or perspectives not currently well represented on the Board.

We will be appointing a new Chair in the coming twelve months. That person is likely to have a significant, existing public profile, with requisite influence and experience.

Appointment process

We will invite candidates to submit a CV and covering letter explaining their interest in the PRA and the contribution they believe they could make. Selected candidates will be invited to interview, and any appointment will be subject to formal approval by the Board of Trustees and eligibility checks.

Candidates are invited to arrange an informal conversation with the Chair or Chief Executive before applying or progressing further.

This is a longer-term programme of Board renewal rather than recruitment for a single immediate vacancy. We expect to make appointments at different points over the next 12 to 18 months.

We are therefore happy to hear from strong candidates who could begin soon, as well as those who may be interested in joining during 2027 or later. We will discuss the most appropriate timing with candidates as part of the process.

PRA is committed to an inclusive recruitment process. Any equality and diversity monitoring information collected will be held and considered separately from applications.

Submit applications to: recruitment@prison.radio

Deadline for applications: Sunday 6 December 2026 (23:59)