# Candidate Pack: Governors (Trustees)

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**Deadline for Expressions of Interest: 16th October 2025, 5:00 p.m.**

For an informal discussion please contact our Chief Executive
Sarah Benioff at Sarah.benioff@cripplegate.org.uk

For more information please visit: www.cripplegate.org and www.islingtongiving.org.uk

**Cripplegate Foundation is committed to best practice in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

# BACKGROUND BRIEFING

**We transform lives for people in Islington.**
**We're independent, and trusted.**

Are you interested in making a positive difference in Islington; helping to effect change and tackle issues related to poverty and inequality?

- Can you help amplify the voices of those we work with, through your personal or professional experience?
- Could you bring additional diversity to our board so that we better reflect the communities in which we work?
- Do you have some frontline charity experience, senior leadership or otherwise?
- Are you able to commit the time required to make the most of joining us?

If any of the above apply to you, then becoming a Governor of Cripplegate Foundation may be the right opportunity for you. Full induction and support would be provided, so **don't let a lack of experience of being a trustee or governor deter you from reading more**…

*Our vision for Islington is of an equal borough*
*where everyone can enjoy a life free from poverty*
*and access the many opportunities on offer in their local area.*

## About Cripplegate Foundation and Islington Giving

Cripplegate Foundation has grown from a local grant-making trust established over 500 years ago in Islington. We now have an endowment of nearly £50 million; together with Islington Giving, we give out grants of approximately £2 million a year to other charities and voluntary sector organisations in the local area. We want to improve access to opportunities and make lasting change. For more information on Cripplegate Foundation, please read our 2024 Annual report and accounts.

Our aims are to:

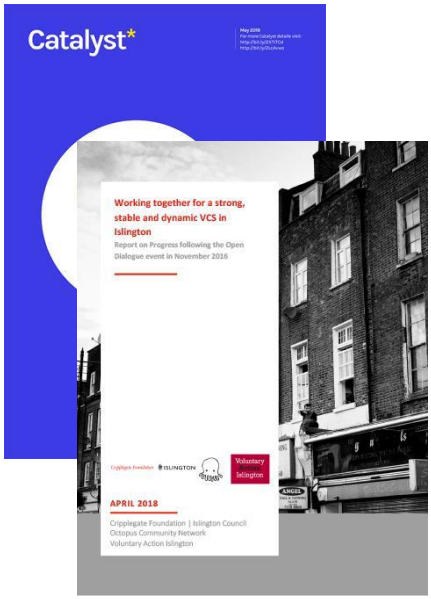
- **Listen, learn and act** - to better understand the needs of local residents and adapt our grant making;
- **Raise funds and make grants** - maximising the money and resources available to support residents and communities;
- **Amplify local voices** - to promote and encourage greater equity and access to opportunities across Islington;
- **Aim for organisational excellence** - to achieve our strategy and our longer-term impact.

**Islington Giving** now forms a significant part of the work of Cripplegate Foundation. It brings together a network of coalition partners, other funders, individuals and businesses committed to addressing poverty and inequality and making Islington a better borough to live in for everyone. In collaboration with local residents, Islington Giving raises funds, gives grants and shares local knowledge and expertise. The main aims of Islington Giving are to:

- Raise more funds to support local projects that create a greater sense of community in Islington;
- Increase access to opportunities for all residents in Islington;
- Reduce isolation and create connections for all residents in Islington;
- Share decision making more equally with residents and, as a coalition, share our learning more widely.

Islington Giving has its own board, which includes some Cripplegate Foundation Governors. Cripplegate Foundation staff manage Islington Giving's resources and programmes, including fundraising. In 2024 we raised approximately £920,000. For more information on Islington Giving please read our 2024 Impact Report.

Cripplegate Foundation has a reputation for quality and innovation, and for its supportive approach to the development of local voluntary and community organisations. We have commissioned and published important research into disadvantage and inequality in Islington. This has provided the evidence base for the Foundation's and Islington Giving's strategy, partnerships and programmes.




Over the years, we have achieved a successful record of spotting and seizing opportunities for new avenues of work, new resources and partnerships. We have become a major influencer in the grant-giving sector on a London-wide and national level and have achieved significant innovations, such as:

- Creating and developing Islington Giving, which has shone a light on poverty and inequality and raised over £11million since beginning in 2010 to invest in local, innovative programmes.
- Pioneering place-based giving which has now become a widespread approach to funding and has been adopted by other funders.
- Partnering with Islington Council to promote community development through Islington Council Community Chest, a small grants programme.
- Establishing Young Grantmakers and other resident-led grants' programmes, supporting local people to make decisions on funding, and run their own grants' programmes.

The Foundation has a small, committed, passionate and talented staff team of 16 (full time and part-time, 11 full-time equivalent.) It is constituted by a Charity Commission Scheme and has a single corporate trustee with 16 directors, known as 'Governors,' who make a huge contribution to our success. We now need to find **at least two new Governors** to join our board; they will make an important contribution to our work and future.

## Why Islington?

Islington is a proudly diverse Borough where people from all faiths, nationalities and backgrounds have made their homes and people really embrace their local community and 91% of residents say that they enjoy living in Islington. However, there is a huge gap between the 'haves' and the 'have nots', for example:

- 43% of children in the Borough live in poverty, the fourth highest child poverty level in London. Children growing up in Black, Asian and other minority Ethnic Groups households in Islington are more likely to be living in poverty in comparison to white children.
- The Borough ranks fourth highest in London for older people living in poverty. Older people make up a significant proportion of Islington's social housing households and they have a considerably lower income than the rest of the borough.

- And, even before the pandemic, Islington ranked the fifth highest in London for loneliness and 1 in 6 people were living with a diagnosed mental health condition.

Cripplegate Foundation and Islington Giving aim to help address these issues.

## Why do we need new Governors?

We have always worked with, not for, the groups we fund. The challenges around tackling poverty and the ways in which the community respond to them are ever changing and the innovation and creativity comes from the grassroots. We know that we need people on our board who genuinely reflect the local community if we are to respond and work alongside it with integrity and understanding. We also need to ensure that our board reflects the diversity of Islington, again because we understand and appreciate that this will lead to a deeper understanding of local issues, better decisions and more effective grant making in the local area. The new Governors will help us ensure the continued relevance of our work and that the creative potential and voice of the community is integral to our work. We will be looking for at least two new Governors to join us from this round of recruitment.

## A little about our Governors

The Governors are motivated by the community and the people and projects that Cripplegate works with. There is a strong sense of respect for them, and the Governors are inspired by their vision, passion and energy to deliver positive change in Islington.

The current governors come from a wide range of backgrounds. They are an interesting group and bring a range of life and professional skills and approaches. Together they have considerable experience of being responsible for the good governance of a grant making foundation. The Governors share a passion for and commitment to the aims, values and work of the Foundation and work effectively and collaboratively, both together and with the executive team. We are ready to share our experience, supporting new Governors to get to grips with the Foundation's way of working and approach to grant making. We are also keen to learn from the new Governors and hope that they will bring diverse backgrounds and approaches, knowledge and experience for us to grow and develop as a group.

We will offer a full induction programme and mentoring for people who have the qualities and experiences we are looking for. You don't need to have experience of being a trustee or a background in grant making: these are skills which can be developed, so please don't let a lack of experience in these areas put you off from applying. We would particularly welcome those with some experience in the voluntary and community sector - senior leadership experience or frontline - as this would complement existing Governors' experience.

## Being a Governor

Governors bring their backgrounds, experiences, time, and skills to the role: we work hard and are a committed and supportive group, working closely with the staff team to ensure the best possible outcomes for those we work alongside.

There is plenty of space for laughter and camaraderie too. Governor satisfaction derives from being able to support extraordinary people and projects in the area. We like to listen carefully, and help, with openness and humility. Building Governors' understanding of the groups we fund is crucial and getting to know projects (for example through presentations and discussions with funded groups at the Foundation's board meetings, and visits to local projects' own activities) is a key activity and one which all Governors will be encouraged to do as part of our ongoing development. There is a time commitment, so you'll need to be able fit us into your life. That said, we do offer flexibility, and we try to accommodate as much as possible to help Governors fulfil their roles well.

We are genuinely encouraging a wide range of people to come forward and cannot emphasise enough about **how your background, life experience, approach and values are more important than any knowledge or experience of grant making, or of being a trustee elsewhere**. What follows should give you an idea of the kinds of responsibilities you can expect to be engaged with, alongside your fellow Governors and with the support of a professional team.

### Strategy and Planning

1. Ensuring that the organisation delivers the best possible outcomes for the groups it works with. This means being responsible (with the support of the staff team) for the direction the organisation takes. This can involve being involved in discussions and decisions around strategy, setting goals and targets and holding the team to account for delivery.
2. Ensuring that the organisation is meeting requirements around charity law and best practice, with support from the staff team and professional advisers.

### Decision Making

1. Approving the grants made by the Foundation and making sure that the resources are used appropriately and effectively, and exclusively with Islington and a small, defined area of the City of London.
2. Being collectively responsible for the organisation's resources: financial (including the organisational budget, endowment and investments), human, the building and IT.

### Relationship Building

1. Building collaborative and collegiate working relationships with other Governors, members of the staff team, our partners and the local community groups and organisations.

## Some qualities, abilities, and skills we are looking for:

We believe that to enjoy Cripplegate's way of working, a new Governor will need high levels of emotional intelligence, empathy and integrity and an understanding of what smaller, locally based organisations might offer their communities.

We would like to hear from candidates from a wide range of backgrounds and would also welcome applications from those who have voluntary and community sector experience. Most importantly, we are looking for those who have a demonstrable commitment to supporting people in Islington to drive their own positive change. We want people who feel a connection and passion for the kind of work we do.

We also have three other hopes for this recruitment campaign.

Firstly, we would like to bring people onto the Board who have experience and knowledge of the kind of organisations and groups we fund. Your experience of the community could come from any number of places. You may have grown up in the area, or you may live here now. You, or a loved one, may have lived experiences of some of the issues we tackle. You may work for or lead a grassroots organisation like those we work with, or you may have experience of community activism. Or perhaps you work in the area. The reason we want to amplify the community voice in this way is because we know that it will deepen our understanding and have a positive impact on the work of the Foundation and will help us to be more authentic advocates for the needs of the community.

Our second hope is to have a trustee board that reflects the diversity of the local community, so we especially want to hear from candidates from a wide variety of ages, backgrounds and ethnic groups, people who have experienced poverty and disadvantage first-hand, and disabled people, or those who have close experience -through family, friends or work - of disabled people.

Finally, the culture of Cripplegate means that Governors become engaged with our work. Governors often join other committees aside from the main board and there is potential, for those who are interested, to take on more responsibilities such as chairing a committee, becoming a Vice-Chair and even the Chair of the board in time. In short, becoming a Governor is not a tick-box exercise, it's a relationship. So, you will need to be able to commit time to the role and be able to attend the meetings regularly. In order to give you a clear idea of the time commitment involved, the current Governors say that ideally it needs at least half a day per month to get the most out of the experience, although this can vary depending on the Governor and number of committees they have volunteered for.

In addition, these are some of the qualities, abilities and skills we are looking for in our new governors. We hope that our new governor(s) will bring some of the following:

- Passion for our work
- Vision and creativity
- Exceptional listening skills, with an ability to speak your mind
- Integrity and commitment
- A team player
- Emotional intelligence

- A willingness to learn about and take responsibility for the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of being a trustee/governor.

If you feel that we are describing you in any of the above, then we'd love to hear from you. Your interest would be greatly valued and appreciated.

## The annual pattern of meetings

Governors meet as a full board four times a year. You will also have the opportunity to join various sub-committees and task groups set up to consider aspects of our strategy, and also to represent the Foundation on one of Islington Giving's committees or another of our local partnerships.

## Next steps

If you would like an initial, informal conversation about these roles please contact Sarah Benioff, Chief Executive of Cripplegate Foundation and Islington Giving. You can email Sarah at: sarah.benioff@cripplegate.org.uk or call her on 0207 288 6940.

**To express an interest in becoming a Governor, please write a letter (no more than one page), addressed to Cripplegate's Chair Sarah Lee, explaining why you are interested, and outlining what you would bring to the role. Please also supply a copy of your CV and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Optional Disclosure form (attached at the end of this pack).**

**Your letter, CV and DEI Optional Disclosure form should be emailed to: recruitment@cripplegate.org.uk by the 16th October at 5:00 p.m.**

If you have a connection to Cripplegate Foundation or Islington Giving, you are still very welcome to apply, but please explain this connection in your covering letter. Once we have reviewed your expression of interest, Sarah Benioff will let you know whether we can take it forward. The next step will be an informal meeting with Sarah Benioff and a colleague, which will provide you with an opportunity to find out more about Cripplegate Foundation and the role.

Following this, we will invite a smaller number of people to meet with some existing Governors and Sarah Benioff for a final discussion, and we will offer the opportunity to meet with a few other staff members and possibly some of our funded organisations.

We think it's important that both potential Governors and the team here feel that there is a positive match of values, a complementary skills-set, and a sense that we can all work well together.

## Timetable

| | |
|---|---|
| **Send a one-page letter, CV and Equalities form to recruitment@cripplegate.org.uk** | **16th October 2025 by 5:00 p.m.** |
| Informal meetings for longlisted candidates with Sarah Benioff (online) | **29th, 30th, 31st October - online** |
| 'Open Day' session online for shortlisted candidates to learn more about the Foundation | **17th November, 9:30-11:30 a.m. - online** |
| Final Interview with selection panel (in person at Crippelgate Foundation Offices in Islington) | **19th November – in person**<br>**Cripplegate Foundation Offices** |
| Potential for successful candidate(s) to attend December Board meeting | **3rd December, 5:30-7:30 p.m.** |

## Data Protection

The personal information that you provide will be used to process your expression of interest with the Cripplegate Foundation/Islington Giving. Personal information about unsuccessful candidates will be held securely for six months after the recruitment exercise has been completed; it will then be deleted. If your application is successful and you take up the role, the information will be used in the administration of your work with us. It will be kept secure and will only be used for purposes directly relevant to your work.

## Any questions?

If you need any further information or you would like to discuss anything in more detail, please email Sarah Benioff at: sarah.benioff@cripplegate.org.uk or call 0207 288 6940.

**We value diversity, equality and inclusivity. Applications are welcomed from those from underrepresented backgrounds, including but not limited to gender, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation and religion.**

# Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Optional Disclosure

In keeping with our DEI Recruitment Statement, we have created this form for candidates to **voluntarily** complete, so we can learn more about you as an individual to see how we, as an employer, can learn from, make use of and adapt to the things that make you unique. **You do not have to tell us anything you don't want to on this form** and in no way will this information be used as part of any selection, performance management or probationary procedures. We have based this form on those characteristics that are protected by law, but there is space at the bottom to tell us anything else you'd like us to know.

However, we are interested to learn more about you so please tell us anything about these characteristics that you think:

a) You'd like us to know e.g., tell us your age or about your ethnic background;
b) Why that is or important to you, if indeed it is
c) How you think we, as an employer, can adapt or use this information to help you be a success at Cripplegate/Islington Giving

We have deliberately not set criteria against which we define these characteristics and you do not have to complete any one section if you don't want to; if you identify with one of these characteristics or you think it is relevant, you are welcome to tell us in whichever way you think it applies e.g. you can tell us your age in a range, or your specific age or nothing at all!

| **1. Age** |
|---|
| a) What you'd like us to know: |
| b) Why this is important to you: |
| c) How you think we can use this to help you be a success: |

| **2. Gender** |
|---|
| a) What you'd like us to know: |
| b) Why this is important to you: |
| c) How you think we can use this to help you be a success: |

| **3. Marital Status** |
|---|
| a) What you'd like us to know: |
| b) Why this is important to you: |
| c) How you think we can use this to help you be a success: |

| **4. Pregnancy/Maternity** |
|---|
| a) What you'd like us to know: |
| b) Why this is important to you: |
| c) How you think we can use this to help you be a success: |

| **5. Disability** |
|---|
| a) What you'd like us to know: |
| b) Why this is important to you: |
| c) How you think we can use this to help you be a success: |

| **6. Race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin** |
| --- |
| a) What you'd like us to know: |
| b) Why this is important to you: |
| c) How you think we can use this to help you be a success: |

| **7. Religion or belief** |
| --- |
| a) What you'd like us to know: |
| b) Why this is important to you: |
| c) How you think we can use this to help you be a success: |

| **8. Sexual Orientation** |
| --- |
| a) What you'd like us to know: |
| b) Why this is important to you: |
| c) How you think we can use this to help you be a success: |

| **9. Other e.g. If you are a carer or your socio-economic background** |
| --- |
| a) What you'd like us to know: |
| b) Why this is important to you: |
| c) How you think we can use this to help you be a success: |