

[Press release: Work with us blog: independent members, transferrable skills](#)

By Aruna Walsh, independent member since 2009

When I first saw the advertisement for new Parole Board members I didn't really consider it seriously. My whole career had been spent in sales, marketing and operations – and in the main, in retail, and my degree is in Music and History, so how could I possibly be suitable for such a role?

On closer reading of the requirements, however, I noted that the skills being sought were in analysis, evaluation, communication, working collaboratively, drawing on written and orally heard information, and electronic working. There was no specific mention that you had to have previous involvement in the criminal justice sector or legal fields. When I reflected on the roles and responsibilities I had held to date it became apparent that I had in fact gained experience in all these skills and used them day in day out to make key decisions.

Having been successful in my application I was then given training and a mentor. Since then I have undertaken various accreditations, which combined with my previous transferable skills and life experiences have enabled me to thoroughly enjoy the work I do as an independent member, a role I have now held for nine years.

Due to the way the work is allocated there is an element of flexibility, with all the preparation done from home. Time management, self – motivation, and the ability to take on board an array of information from which you then draw on to make key decisions about risk and public protection are also very relevant and I would encourage others from all walks of life to consider the opportunity if you are looking for a role that is stimulating, challenging and rewarding.

[Press release: 12 month prison sentence for man who tipped 100 tonnes of waste at school](#)

A Manchester man has been jailed for 12 months for illegally dumping 100 tonnes of pungent waste on the site of The Kingfisher Special School, Oldham. The school was left with a £22,197 bill to remove the waste. The Environment

Agency brought the case against Mr Francis Anthony Heaton after he was arrested by Greater Manchester Police for dumping processed household waste (Trommel fines) on land used as a car park at the school. Heaton pleaded guilty on 18 December 2018 at Tameside Magistrates Court.

A representative for the special school confirmed to the police that the school gates had been cut and removed to allow access for the waste to be deposited. The pupils, some with life limiting conditions, had their education disrupted for two weeks due to the waste. The children were unable to use the outdoor education facilities due to an insect infestation in the waste and the risk to the pupils from the infestation. The Kingfisher Special School was helped by Oldham Council to remove the waste, however the cost of the waste removal will fall to the school to pay that is the equivalent to the cost of a teaching assistant's annual salary or the school's annual budget for its learning resources.

In April 2018 Mr Heaton was fined at Tameside Magistrates for driving the vehicle without the correct driving licence, with false plates, no insurance or a valid MOT certificate and had his driving licence endorsed with penalty points. Greater Manchester Police seized the vehicle and following the statutory period the vehicle was crushed as no owner claimed the vehicle or made a claim for it.

Mark Easedale, Area Environment Manager for the Environment Agency said:

This case demonstrates how seriously the EA takes illegal waste crime. We take robust enforcement action against those who deliberately ignore the law to protect communities and the environment.

Heaton put the welfare of the pupils at risk and disrupted their education. This case is particularly disturbing as the Kingfisher Special School were made to pay to clear the waste.

Waste crime damages the environment, endangers communities and undermines legitimate business. If you have any suspicions that waste is being deposited on your land please contact the Environment Agency on 0800 80 70 60 or the police as soon as possible.

In mitigation Mr Heaton's barrister told the court that he accepts there was damage to the community and he pleaded guilty on the day of his trial. Judge Lawton told the court he believed Mr Heaton knew full well what he was doing and that it was a deliberate act.

Last year, the Environment Agency closed over 800 illegal waste sites, more than 2 a day. The EA were also granted new powers to combat waste crime. The regulator now has the authority to lock up illegal waste sites and block access to prevent waste piling up and posing a risk to the environment.

To report waste crime, contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111. You

can call the Environment Agency on 0370 850 6506 to find out how to responsibly manage any waste your business produces or visit gov.uk/managing-your-waste-an-overview/overview.

ENDS

[Press release: Work with us blog: a new challenge](#)

By Cassie Williams, independent member since 2016

I joined the Parole Board in 2016 and have discovered so much more about risk assessments, psychology, people and myself than I thought would come from this role. I applied to become a member as I was looking for a new challenge that worked around my busy family life as a mum to 3 young daughters, and professional commitments as a barrister. It isn't always easy, but the ability to plan my Parole Board commitments some months ahead allows me to take on as much or as little work as I want.

Sometimes I undertake 3 or 4 oral hearings in a week, where I actively question professionals and prisoners, sometimes I work from home carrying out paper assessments to determine whether a case needs an oral hearing, whether I can direct release, or make no direction for release of a prisoner. I also attend meetings at headquarters both in person and via skype.

The work is challenging in terms of the materials you have to consider and the responsibility of the decisions, but I've found my colleagues supportive and helpful. I've gained a great deal from members from different professional backgrounds and can honestly say that I find it to be a very rewarding role. As well as my normal Parole Board work, I am involved in developing and implementing policy, practice observations and much more.

The development of the membership is an ongoing priority for the Parole Board and so the opportunity is there to take on additional roles, qualify as a Chair and participate in events and training.

[News story: Military to donate unused](#)

ration packs to charities

Under the plans, the military will provide operational ration packs to FareShare, a charity who distributes food to nearly 10,000 UK charities, including community groups, homeless hostels and lunch groups for the elderly.

The ration packs are enough to sustain ten soldiers for a 24 hour period and include items for breakfast, lunch and dinner, such as porridge, sausages, baked beans, pasta and rice. The range of ingredients enables the preparation of nutritionally balanced meals and provides 4000 calories to sustain an active person over a 24 hour period.

Minister for Defence People and Veterans Tobias Ellwood said:

Ration packs help provide nutritionally balanced meals to our armed forces on operations around the world. But charity begins at home, and I'm pleased our partnership with FareShare will make sure no food goes to waste.

FareShare does a fantastic job redistributing food across the country and I'm proud the military can support communities in this way.

The ration packs donated by the MOD will help the recipient charities save on food bills, allowing them re-invest money into essential support programmes.

Around 2 million ration packs are used by the military every year, with less than 1% of the MOD's stock requiring disposal. This scheme means that when it becomes clear a batch of ration packs can't be used, there is an opportunity to gift to those in need and ensure that any good food does not go to waste.

The MOD is committed to keeping disposals to an absolute minimum, and this scheme will help reduce these even further.

The operational ration pack provides a two course breakfast, lunch and a three course dinner, as well as a number of drinks, both hot and cold.

Once transferred from the MOD, FareShare will distribute them to their UK-wide charity network.

Roger West, Director Logistic Delivery Operating Centre at Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S), the MOD's procurement organisation, said:

I am delighted to be able to provide support for this important issue.

This solution will deliver food products where they are needed while also minimising waste. Our Corporate Social Responsibility is important to us and we continue to explore ways to do more; this is the right thing to do.

Press release: Corporate trustee of The Cup Trust responsible for ‘clear misconduct and mismanagement’

The Charity Commission has today published a [report](#) of its statutory inquiry into The Cup Trust, a charity involved in a complex tax avoidance scheme, which, if successful, would have resulted in the charity benefiting from gift aid payments from HMRC.

The report details the Commission’s findings as to how the tax avoidance scheme was designed to operate, who stood to benefit from it, and its conclusions as to the actions and omissions of the charity’s corporate trustee.

The inquiry concludes that the charity’s trustee, Mountstar Limited, is responsible for “clear mismanagement and misconduct” and failed to fulfil its legal duties as trustee in entering the charity into the scheme and managing its participation in the scheme.

The report also details failings to address or manage serious conflicts of interest arising from relationships between the corporate trustee and individuals who devised the tax avoidance scheme and had benefited from entering the charity into it and advertising it to tax payers.

During the course of the inquiry, the Commission used its new powers to disqualify both the corporate trustee, and three individuals who served as directors of the corporate trustee, from charity trusteeship under section 181 of the Charities Act.

Harvey Grenville, Head of Investigations at the Charity Commission, said:

Our inquiry demonstrates beyond doubt that The Cup Trust was misused by the corporate trustee to assist higher-rate tax payers in reducing their tax bills, and earning individuals connected to the scheme lucrative fees. Those personal benefits were far more than incidental and the fact that the charity would, had the scheme been accepted by HMRC, have benefited from gift aid, does not

legitimise these intentions or actions.

Charities rely on the public's goodwill in supporting tax benefits designed to encourage genuine charitable donations. It is right that we take robust regulatory action where trustees' actions abuse that goodwill. It is clear that this charity, through its involvement in an attempted tax avoidance scheme, undermined public trust in charity generally. The Commission has learnt from this case: over recent years, we have significantly strengthened our approach to identifying and dealing with risks facing charities, have improved our pre- and post-registration processes and are more proactive and robust in using our legal powers to ensure trustees comply with their legal duties and responsibilities.

We have also successfully called for our legal powers to be strengthened to help us better disrupt and stop the abuse and mismanagement of charities. Some of the new powers we asked for and are using are as a direct result of this case.

The Commission first investigated The Cup Trust in 2010, following concerns reported to it about the charity's participation in a tax avoidance scheme. The statutory inquiry was launched in 2013, when the charity's trustee failed to provide information to HMRC regarding its gift aid claims. The regulator then immediately appointed an interim manager (IM), granting the IM all the powers of trusteeship and excluding Mountstar from decision making at the charity.

The report sets out why the inquiry has taken 5 years to conclude, pointing to extraordinary complexity, various legal challenges by the corporate trustee to the Commission's inquiry and its use of legal powers, and the need for the IM appointed to seek High Court approval to withdraw the charity's gift aid applications. The report also makes clear that the publication of the report was delayed due to the diversion of Commission resources in February 2018 to deal with safeguarding matters. The report makes clear that no tax reliefs were ever granted by HMRC to the charity.

The full inquiry report is available on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

Notes to editors

1. The Commission does not administer gift aid: Whether a charity or its donors are lawfully able to claim tax relief and the issue of whether a tax scheme is legitimate or not is determined by HMRC.
2. The Commission's role as charity regulator focuses on ensuring that trustees discharge their legal duties as charity trustees in managing and administering the charity properly and responsibly. Where issues are raised about taxation matters or concerns about the operation of a charity being examined by other regulators, the Commission considers

whether they indicate misconduct or mismanagement in the administration of the charity and whether it needs to protect charity property.

3. In the case of the scheme that The Cup Trust entered into, no gift aid payments were ever made by HMRC to the charity.
4. The individuals who acted as directors of Mountstar and have been disqualified from charity trusteeship are Matthew Jenner, Darren Stones and Anthony Mehigan. Their names are on the [Commission's register of disqualified and removed charity trustees](#).
5. The Commission has published [guidance on its policy on charity tax reliefs](#).