

Helping the voluntary sector support local communities

Volunteering as a Trustee or a Treasurer



There are over 180,000 charities in England and Wales involved in wide ranging activities for the benefit of the public. Like all organisations, charities need a governing body or board to direct its strategy and activities and this is where the role of trustee fits in.

Trustees may be known as directors, board members, governors or committee members of a charity. They are responsible for directing the activities of the charity, ensuring it remains solvent and well-managed and delivering the outcomes for which the charity was set up.

Some of the main responsibilities of a trustee are:

- Set and maintain vision, mission and values
- Develop strategy and monitor implementation
- Establish and monitor policies
- Set up employment procedures (include volunteers)
- Ensure accountability and compliance with the law
- Maintain proper fiscal oversight
- Select, manage and support the chief executive
- Promote the organisation

Is the Treasurer role for you?

- A key role in the effective governance of most charities is that of the Treasurer as an 'office-holder' among the charity trustees. Other Trustees look to the Treasurer to advise, guide and reassure them on all aspects of the charity's financial management and reporting (internal and external), control systems, solvency, risk management and investments.
- The Treasurer's role is an important one which is vital to the well being of any charity. It is also a very rewarding role which needs to be widely recognised and acknowledged.

Why do people become trustees/treasurers?

This should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience. It is a great way to be involved in a community or cause which matters to you. Trustees and Treasurers come from all walks of life and it can help you meet new people, change your community for the better, learn new skills or use your existing skills in a new context.

It is a great way to enhance your CV, have experience of strategy and management or find out more about the not-for-profit sector before making a career change.

Being a trustee puts you at the centre of the action for the organisation you are involved in. The more effective the board of trustees, the greater difference you and your organisation will make.

Who can be a charity Trustee?

The Charity Commission provides guidance on who can be a trustee.

What skills do I need?

Some individual trustees will have specific professional or business skills. Others will bring 'soft' skills such as facilitating, team work, problem solving, or even building the social side of being on a board. Different experiences and perspectives are important and a board that also reflects the people and communities they service will help improve effectiveness.

So an effective board will need a range of skills, attributes and personal experience to enable it to work towards the aims and objectives of the voluntary organisation.

How much time will it take?

The time commitment will vary from one organisation to another and understanding the likely commitment will probably be part of the discussion you have when exploring a possible trusteeship.

What are my legal responsibilities as a Trustee?

Being a trustee carries legal responsibilities which should be understood before taking up a position. It is worth taking some time to understand these duties and to find out the specific situation at the organisation you are considering joining. If a charity is also a company limited by guarantee then the liabilities of a trustee, for example, are different.

Further information can be found from The Charity Commission website: [Trustee Duties at a Glance](#).

Interested in volunteering?

Many charities need more trustees. If you are interested in becoming a trustee, it is very important that you find a charity which inspires you but also one which has a board who you feel you can work with. [Please click here](#) to view current local trustee/treasurer volunteering opportunities.

Further Information

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