

What Do Trustees Do?

In charities and voluntary organisations throughout the country, whether it's a small group of volunteers working locally or a large complex national charity with paid staff, there is a group of people who are responsible for the organisation. These are the trustees.

Trustees work in a group which may also be known as the management committee, executive committee, steering committee, board of directors or board of trustees. It is often simply referred to as 'the board.' They all mean the same thing.

The Board of Trustees or Management Committees of charitable organisations have twelve main roles:

1. Set and maintain vision, mission and values

The Management Committee is responsible for establishing the essential purpose of the organisation. They are also responsible for guarding and maintaining the ethos and values of the organisation.

2. Develop strategy

Together, the Management Committee and the Chief Executive (if there is one), develop long-term plans for the organisation. Meeting agendas should reflect the key points of the plans to keep the organisation on track.

3. Establish and monitor policies

The Management Committee creates policies to govern the organisation. These include:

- Relevant policies to your area of work such as Child Protection, Vulnerable Adults and Equality and Diversity
- Systems for reporting and sharing information
- Guidance for staff
- Conduct of the Management Committee and their meetings

4. Set up employment procedures (if or when you have staff)

The Management Committee creates comprehensive, fair and legal policies for employees. These protect the organisation and those who work for it. They cover:

- Recruitment
- Support
- Appraisal
- Discipline and Grievance
- It also recruits and selects new members to the Management Committee, subject to the approval of the membership

5. Ensure compliance with governing document

The governing document is the rulebook for the organisation. The Management Committee make sure it is followed. In particular, the organisation's activities must comply with the charitable objects.

6. Ensure accountability

The Management Committee should ensure that the organisation fulfills accountability and responsibility as required by the law to the Charity Commission, HM Revenue and Customs and the Registrar of Companies (if it is a Company Limited by guarantee.) The organisation should also be accountable to donors, staff, beneficiaries, volunteers and the public.

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7. Ensure compliance with the law

The Management Committee are responsible for checking that all the organisation's activities are legal.

8. Maintain proper financial records

The Management Committee are responsible for effectively managing the organisation's finances and resources so it can meet its charitable objects. They should:

- Secure sufficient resources to fulfil the aims of the organisation
- Monitor spending in the best interests of the organisation
- Approve the annual financial statement and budget
- Seek to minimise risk for the organisation
- Participate in fundraising and income generation
- Ensure legal compliance

9. Select and support the Chief Executive (if you have one)

If necessary, the Management Committee creates policy covering the employment of a chief executive. They also select and support the Chief Executive and review their performance.

10. Respect the role of staff (if you employ staff)

The Management Committee recognises and respects the domain of staff responsibility. At the same time, it creates policy to guide staff activities and safeguard the interests of the organisation.

11. Maintain effective board performance

The Management Committee keeps its own house in order. It engages in:

Productive meetings

Development activities

Regular performance reviews

Partnership with other organisations where necessary

12. Promote the organisation

Through their own behaviour, their governance oversight and their activities on behalf of the organisation, the Management Committee enhance and protect the reputation of their organisation. They should be good ambassadors for the organisation.

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