



Who can be a Trustee?

Legal Requirements

Trustees have overall control of a charity and are responsible for making sure it's doing what it was set up to do. There are certain legal requirements governing who can and who can't be a trustee.

You cannot be a trustee if:

- You are below 18 years of age, unless the charity is a registered company, in which case the minimum age is now 16 years
- You have been convicted of an offence involving dishonesty or deception, unless the conviction is regarded as 'spent'
- You are an undischarged bankrupt
- You have been previously removed from trusteeship of a charity by the court or by the Charity Commission
- You are under a disqualification order under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986

Note:

It is an offence to act as a charity trustee while disqualified, unless the Charity Commission gives you a waiver under section 72(4) of the Charities Act 1993. So if this applies to you, either don't stand for appointment as a trustee in the first place or, if you are already a trustee, resign.

Practical Requirements

It is equally important to look at the positive contribution you can make to the organisation as a trustee.

You must be committed to the aims of the charity and able to give sufficient time to your role as a trustee. You must be prepared to:

- Attend trustee meetings and the 'Annual General Meeting'
- Read papers before each meeting
- Make a contribution during meetings
- Make decisions in the best interests of the charity
- Ensure that the minutes of meetings accurately reflect discussions and decisions
- Make sure you know enough about the charity to make informed decisions on its behalf

Trustees use their skills and experience to support their charities and help it achieve its aims. They also often learn new skills and develop into new areas during their time on the board.

The best management committees have different people contributing different skills. In that sense, it's an advantage if you don't have the same experience and contacts as your fellow trustees. You may already be able to make a particular contribution that can be invaluable to the charity. For example:

- You may have certain skills or knowledge to contribute
- You may know influential people in the area, who may support you
- You may have experience of doing the same type of work as your charity
- You may be an enthusiastic fundraiser or events' organiser
- You may be someone who is or has been a beneficiary of the charity

This list is not exhaustive.

Getting further support

For more information on who can and who can't be a trustee, visit the Charity Commission website at: www.charitycommission.gov.uk.

Northumberland Community Voluntary Action (Northumberland CVA) can offer face to face advice and support on all issues relating to group development within Northumberland.

For more information, email enquire@northumberlandcva.org.uk or call 01670 858688.

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