



Nominate yourself for a Trustee position

At the AGM all members get the opportunity to vote on who the member trustees of the board will be for the following year. It is also the opportunity for interested members to put their name forward to be a member trustee

Feedback from previous AGM's has shown the members weren't really sure who they were voting for, so this year we'll be providing some information on all trustee candidates so members can make an informed decision.

This year we're asking any interested individuals to make themselves known and provide some information on why they wish to be a trustee and what they would bring to the board. You can contact David Hardwick – branch Secretary for more information on david.hardwick@rspca-yorkhome.org.uk

Have you thought about becoming a Trustee?

Our branch is governed by a committee of volunteer trustees who are responsible for managing the affairs of the branch. The board meets monthly and the work is shared between the branch officers (the Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary) plus the other Board members.

Why become a branch trustee?

Our branch relies on volunteers to undertake a wide range of animal welfare work in the local area, such as fostering, fundraising, home visiting and charity shop work to name a few. As a trustee of a branch, you will have the chance to influence how we care for and prevent cruelty to animals at a strategic level.

It's a great way to meet like minded people who share your enthusiasm for animal welfare. You will have the opportunity to gain new skills and develop existing ones, whilst making a real difference to the lives of animals.

Most people aged 18+ are eligible to become a trustee. In most cases, you will need to be a member of the RSPCA.

It is an extremely rewarding experience and a great way to use your valuable skills to help govern a charity and shape animal welfare and care in your community.

What we are looking for:

We are recruiting for Trustees with the following experience:

Finance
Corporate Fundraising
Planning / construction project management
IT
PR/Marketing
Data protection
Animal Welfare

Running a branch as a Trustee has significant responsibilities:

We are one part of a very broad ranging team. Our role is to work collectively with team members, volunteers, fundraisers and the wider public to ensure we deliver the charities aims and objectives.

Charity trustees are the body of people who have ultimate legal responsibility for a charity. It is our responsibility to govern and control the charity and to make decisions about the charity's policies, objectives and strategies.

Charity trustees may also be called the management committee, the board of management, the directors or other similar terms. Regardless of what they are called, they hold the same position of responsibility.

Primary Responsibilities of Charity Trustees

The primary duty of all charity trustees is to advance the purposes of the charity. However in the pursuit of this primary duty, trustees must fulfil a number of basic responsibilities.

Proper Administration & Public Benefit

Trustees must ensure that the charity is run in accordance with its governing document, and in compliance with charity law and all other laws and regulations affecting its remit.

In addition to laws and regulations, all charities must be operated for public benefit. The Charity Commission has extensive guidance on public benefit contained in three publications: PB1 – The Public Benefit Requirement, PB2 – Public Benefit: Running a Charity, and PB3 – Public Benefit: Reporting. Public benefit is considered in more detail in section 6.

Ultimate Responsibility

Trustees must accept ultimate responsibility for everything that the charity does. The trustees are responsible for all strategic and operational aspects of the charity and are accountable if anything goes wrong.

In many cases the charity will have a team of paid employees who will carry out the day-to-day operations of the charity. Whilst it is permissible for trustees to delegate the implementation of decisions to staff (or other agents), trustees cannot absolve themselves of their responsibility to make the decisions and be accountable for them.

Act Reasonably and Prudently

The law imposes a duty of care on charity trustees. This means that they must exercise such care and skill as is reasonable in the circumstances.

If a trustee has (or claims to have) specific knowledge or expertise, perhaps by way of their professional background, they can reasonably be expected to apply that knowledge to their role as charity trustee. In these cases the duty of care is therefore greater. If trustees do not have the required skills or expertise to make an informed decision, they can be reasonably expected to take professional advice.

- **Safeguard and Protect Charity Assets**

Charity trustees have a responsibility to safeguard the assets of the charity at all times. This includes tangible assets such as property, cash, stock and staff, as well as intangible assets such as intellectual property, brands and reputation. To effectively safeguard the charity's assets, trustees have a responsibility to identify and evaluate potential risks facing the charity and to mitigate those risks accordingly.

- **Act Collectively**

Trustees have collective responsibility for all actions and decisions. It is important for all trustees to take an active role in the decision-making process and for decisions to be taken according to majority rule. Some trustees may serve a particular function on the board (e.g. chair, treasurer or secretary). Whilst they may be responsible for explaining a certain subject area (e.g. the treasurer may present the financial accounts), the responsibility for decision-making is still collective.

- **Act in the Best Interests of the Charity**

Trustees must always act in the best interests of the charity. They have a duty to exercise objectivity and independence when making decisions. Trustees must never allow their personal interests or views to affect their judgement.

- **Avoid Conflicts of Interest**

Conflicts of interest come in many forms: a conflict of interest could be where a trustee stands to benefit personally from a charity, or it could be where a trustee's loyalty to another organisation affects their ability to prioritise the best interests of the charity.

Charity law is very strict in ensuring that trustees cannot influence decisions in their favour.

Financial Procedures

Robust financial procedures are another key part of safeguarding a charity's assets. Comprehensive financial procedures should cover everything from cheque signatories, authorising expenditure, budgeting processes, cash handling, opening post and accounting processes.

Trustees are responsible for ensuring adequate financial procedures are in place and are complied with. If money is lost as a result of staff fraud, the trustees will be expected to explain to the Charity Commission what steps were being taken to prevent fraud and why they broke down.

Reporting and Accounting

It is beyond the scope of this guidance to cover all potential reporting obligations for charities. The fundamental obligations are covered below.

The Charity Commission regulates charities in England and Wales. All charities who are registered with the Charity Commission have to submit annual returns, annual accounts, and trustees' annual reports every year.

Eligibility

Certain individuals are not eligible to act as trustees. You will be ineligible if:

You have an unspent conviction for an offence involving dishonesty or deception;

You are currently declared bankrupt, subject to bankruptcy restrictions or an interim order;

You have an individual voluntary arrangement to pay off debts with creditors;

You are disqualified from being a company director; or

You have previously been removed as a trustee by either the Charity Commission or the high court due to misconduct or mismanagement.

It is advisable for charities to obtain a declaration from new trustees confirming their eligibility to act.