



# Trustee Role Description

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## 1. Introduction

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**Trustees play an essential role in the governance of charities. They also have much to contribute to their success. For example, they can:**

- 1.1 serve as a means of communication with communities that the charity serves;
- 1.2 bring valuable professional and other expert experience to charities;
- 1.3 help to ensure that the charity is well-managed through the appointment of executive staff.

## 2. The Statutory Duties of a Trustee

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- 2.1 To ensure that the organisation complies with its governing document, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations.
- 2.2 To ensure that the organisation pursues its objects as defined in its governing document.
- 2.3 To ensure the organisation uses its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objects: the charity must not spend money on activities which are not included in its own objects, no matter how worthwhile or charitable those activities are.
- 2.4 To contribute actively to the board of trustees' role in giving firm strategic direction to the organisation, setting overall policy, defining goals and setting targets and evaluating performance against agreed targets.
- 2.5 To safeguard the good name, reputation and values of the organisation.
- 2.6 To ensure the effective and efficient administration of the organisation.
- 2.7 To ensure the financial stability of the organisation.
- 2.8 To protect and manage the property of the charity and to ensure the proper investment of the charity's funds.
- 2.9 To appoint the chief executive officer and monitor his/her performance.

## 3. Other Duties

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In addition to the above statutory duties, each trustee should use any specific skills, knowledge or experience they have to help the board of trustees reach sound decisions. This may involve:

- 3.1 Scrutinising board papers.
- 3.2 Leading discussions.
- 3.3 Drawing attention to key issues.
- 3.4 Providing guidance on new initiatives.
- 3.5 Chairing subcommittees.

## 4. Terms of Appointment

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The post is voluntary but expenses can be claimed.

## 5. Person Specification

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- 5.1 A practising Christian, or in sympathy with the Christian faith.
- 5.2 Commitment to the charity and its work.
- 5.3 Willingness to devote the necessary time and effort (an outline schedule of time commitment is available).
- 5.4 Able to think strategically.
- 5.5 Sound, independent judgement.
- 5.6 Ability to think creatively.
- 5.7 Willingness to express views clearly.
- 5.8 Understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship (The Essential Trustee, UK Charity Commission).
- 5.9 Ability to work effectively as a member of a team.
- 5.10 Adhere to Nolan's seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership. *(see appendix for detail)*.

## 6. Appendix: Nolan's Seven Principles of Public Life

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At the request of the Prime Minister, the Nolan Committee spent six months inquiring into standards in British public life. The committee concentrated on Members of Parliament, Ministers and Civil Servants, executive Quangos and NHS bodies.

They could not say conclusively that standards of behaviour in public life had declined. They did say that conduct in public life is more rigorously scrutinised than it was in the past, that the standards which the public demands remain high, and that the great majority of people in public life meet those high standards. But there are weaknesses in the procedures for maintaining and enforcing those standards. As a result, people in public life are not always as clear as they should be about where the boundaries of acceptable conduct lie. This was regarded as the principal reason for public disquiet and called for urgent remedial action. Below is a summary of the Committee's unanimous conclusions and lists its recommendations.

### The Seven Principles of Public Life

#### **Selflessness**

Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

#### **Integrity**

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

#### **Objectivity**

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

#### **Accountability**

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

#### **Openness**

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

#### **Honesty**

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

#### **Leadership**

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.