



Information for New Trustees

Introduction

Welcome to our Board of Trustees. Your new role as a Trustee of Streetlight UK is vital to ensuring that the charity is continually aligning itself with its values and key objectives. This document outlines some of the basic information about your role, whilst providing links to other useful resources.

What is a Trustee?

A Trustee is someone who has a legal responsibility within the charity, controls and manages the administrative elements. A Trustee is not involved in the day-to-day management of the charity but delegates this to the other members of staff including the Chief Executive. Furthermore, they support and gently challenge the decisions and actions made by the Chief Executive to ensure that the charity is working towards fulfilling their purpose. The Board of Trustees meet around 4-8 times a year to hold meetings and discussions. In some cases, members of the Trustee Board may have another role within the charity or have previously been a volunteer, and therefore have an in-depth understanding of the charity as a whole.

To find out more about what it means to be a Trustee, please view the following links:

<https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/governance/getting-started-in-governance/trustees>

<https://reachvolunteering.org.uk/guide/become-trustee>

What are my responsibilities as a Trustee?

The Charity Commission for England and Wales outline the 6 main duties of Trustees:

- Ensure the charity is carrying out its purposes for the benefit of the public.
- Comply with the charity's governing document and the law.
- Act in the charity's best interests.
- Manage the charity's resources responsibly.
- Act with reasonable care and skill.
- Ensure your charity is kept accountable.

A more detailed outline of the Trustee's role, which are specific to your charity, will be stated in the charity's constitution and government documents.

What do I need to know?

The Charity Commission for England and Wales have outlined some key points that Trustees need to know in order to make effective decisions:

- What the charity is set up to achieve (its purposes).
- Who the charity is there to benefit (its beneficiaries).
- How they will benefit (what the charity will do for or with them).
- Any order of priority to the services and benefits the charity provides.
- Any restrictions on what the charity can do or who it can help (geographical or other boundaries; or specific criteria that beneficiaries must meet).

To find out more about these points please visit the Charity Commission website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-cc3/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-what-you-need-to-do>

What skills are needed as a Trustee?

It is essential to recruit Trustees from a range of professional backgrounds, who have different skills and attributes. This is because it is important to have a range of opinions when making decisions that will affect the charity as a whole. Moreover, Trustees from a range of professional backgrounds can use their expertise knowledge to support the charity. For example, a Trustee who has a professional background in law is able to provide knowledge surrounding the legalities of running a charity. The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) have provided a list of other important skills that are needed for this role:

- Integrity/ honesty.
- Understanding of legality, finance and management, which are all necessary for the role and complex decisions being made.
- Problem-solving skills.
- Decision making.
- Communication.
- Team-work.
- Understand the nature of the charity/organisation.

It is important to note that this is not a complete list. There will be other skills that are transferrable into your role as a Trustee.

Decision making as a Trustee

Decision making is a core component of being a Trustee. There will be occasions in which making decisions will be either easy or difficult. The Charity Commission for England and Wales have stated several actions that need to happen to make effective decisions:

- Act within your powers.
- Act in good faith, and only in the interests of your charity.
- Make sure you are sufficiently informed, taking any advice you need.
- Take account of all relevant factors you are aware of.

- Ignore any irrelevant factors.
- Deal with conflicts of interest and loyalty.
- Make decisions that are within the range of decisions that a reasonable trustee body could make in the circumstances.

These are some more things to consider when making a decision:

- Following any specific requirements in the governing document about making decisions and conducting meetings.
- Taking decisions jointly (collectively), making sure all trustees have the opportunity to participate.
- If using a power to take decisions outside of a meeting, strictly following the provisions of this power.
- If delegating to staff or sub-committees, having clear and robust reporting procedures and lines of accountability in place.
- Recording decisions properly, so there is no doubt about what was decided and why.

Within the Board of Trustees, all decisions have to be made in unison and no one Trustee can act on their own without the authorisation from the board as a whole. Decisions that hold greater weight and the process to reach this decision should be recorded, if at a later date this process needs to be explained or reviewed. To find out more about making decisions as a board, follow the link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/its-your-decision-charity-trustees-and-decision-making/its-your-decision-charity-trustees-and-decision-making>

Conclusion

Throughout your time as a Trustee of Streetlight UK, you will begin to learn more about the nature of the charity's work and enhance your skillset, which will be helpful in informing any decisions made. Your role as a Trustee is crucial in enabling Streetlight UK to continue to provide specialist support to women involved in prostitution across Sussex, Surrey and London.

The Charity Commission for England and Wales have provided a guidance document, which explains your role as a Trustee in greater depth. We highly recommend you read this to develop a more thorough understanding of your role:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/866947/CC3_feb20.pdf

Other Resources:

The Charity Commission have listed other websites, which provide useful information about your role as a Trustee:

National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA) - <https://navca.org.uk/>

National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) - <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/>

Small Charities Coalition (SCC) - <https://www.smallcharities.org.uk/home>