

Board performance review

Trustee boards have to make well-informed and appropriately considered decisions to direct the strategy and direction of their charity and to meet their legal responsibilities.

This template self-assessment questionnaire enables trustees to each consider this. XYZ Charity is in this instance a fundraising charity that makes research grants.

The template should be tailored for the activities of each charity.

The purpose of this questionnaire is to ensure that we, as Trustees of (XYZ Charity), are effective in our governance.

This series of questions is aimed at establishing how the Board performs its key functions.

Now, for tomorrow

The responses to the questionnaire should be a mix of binary (yes/no) answers and discursive answers.

There are also questions that relate to training needs, these are marked with a (TR) symbol. The purpose of these questions is to identify knowledge gaps and areas where we, as a board, may require training.

To start, we should remind ourselves of our roles and responsibilities:

In accordance with Charity Commission guidance (CC3)

Trustees must:

- Always act in the best interests of (XYZ Charity) – Trustees must not let their personal interests, views or prejudices affect their conduct as a Trustee
- Act reasonably and responsibly in all matters relating to (XYZ Charity) – act with as much care as if dealing with your own affairs, taking advice if needed
- Only use (XYZ Charity’s) income and property for the purposes set out in its governing document
- Make decisions in line with good practice and the rules set by (XYZ Charity’s) governing document, including excluding any Trustee who has a conflict of interest, from discussions or decision-making on the matter

We, as Trustees, can be liable to (XYZ Charity) if we act unlawfully or negligently as Trustees. Although XYZ Charity might run up debts or other liabilities as a result of decisions we make, you and the other Trustees won’t be liable if you have:

- Acted lawfully, responsibly and reasonably
- Followed the rules in (XYZ Charity’s) governing document
- Taken reasonable steps to manage risks

As Trustees, we share responsibility for governing (XYZ Charity) regardless of whether individual trustees have specific roles, e.g. Chair or Treasurer.

1 Conflicts of Interest	Yes / No / N/A
1. Do you think (XYZ Charity) manages conflicts of interest well?	
2. Do our Trustees meetings, at present, contain too little time / focus on conflicts of interest?	
3. (TR) Do you know what a conflict of interest is?	
4. Do you understand what a ‘related party’ is?	
5. If a conflict of interest is present in the charity, particularly when it affects decision making, how is it managed? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the conflicted individual participate in discussion relating only to the conflict? • How is value for money sought and reviewed when conflicts exist? 	
6. Do the Trustees meetings provide sufficient discussion and debate to ensure that (XYZ Charity) is able to identify all actual and potential conflicts of interest?	
7. Is there any other topic / issue within this subject area that you feel we should discuss as part of our Trustees meetings?	

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Advice and support

Yes / No / N/A

8. (TR) Are you comfortable that you know and understand your role and responsibilities as a Trustee?

9. In any of the following sections of this questionnaire do you feel you need further training or support?

- Governance, staffing and HR
- Fundraising
- Research

10. (TR) Are there any areas you feel that the charity needs to take further advice from 3rd party consultants / advisors?

11. Should our meetings make you aware of all the 3rd party consultants / advisors who provide the charity with their services on a regular basis? For example, does the charity engage with professional fundraisers? Do you have a commercial participator agreement?

12. Should our meetings make you aware of how the charity monitors the performance of all 3rd party contractors / advisors?

Should this be delegated to a sub-committee?

13. Are the reasons for our decisions as a board adequately supported with evidence and sufficiently documented?

14. Were written reports clear, concise and delivered on time?

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Governance, staffing and HR

Yes / No / N/A

15. (TR) Do you feel that the governance of the charity is effective?

16. Do we have the right composition, skill set and number of Trustees?

How often should we assess this? Should it form part of board meetings?

17. Do we need term limits for Trustees?

18. It is proposed that we implement, as of xx/xx/xxxx, a term period of xx years, after which re-election is required. Trustees can be elected for a maximum of three terms. Do you agree?

19. Do you believe the board meetings and sub-committees are well run?

What more would you like to see?

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What more would you like to see?

21. Do we have the right number and composition of sub-committees? They are currently:

- Finance Committee
- Remuneration committee

Do there need to be additional committees; such as:

- Fundraising committee
- Research committee
- Marketing and PR committee
- Other

22. Does each sub-committee have terms of reference and are they reviewed and updated by the board? Should our meetings spend more time on the subject?

23. Do board meetings include a sufficient focus upon the findings and recommendations of sub-committees?

24. Does the charity have a suitable method in place for identifying, assessing and monitoring risks?

Do our board meetings allow us to gain assurance over the operational effectiveness of internal controls?

Do we need to spend more time on this area?

25. Are the minutes of Trustees meetings an accurate record and received in a timely manner?

26. Do our Trustees meetings, at present, contain too little time or focus on governance?

27. Is there any other topic / issue within this subject area that you feel we should discuss as part of our Trustees meetings?

28. Staffing needs- would you like to discuss staffing needs and staff levels at Trustee meetings?

If so, what information do you need to make your assessment and what information could be supplied in advance?

Would you feel this is better delegated to a sub-committee?

29. Do you want to be made aware of any HR issues during the Trustees meetings?

Would you feel this is better delegated to a sub-committee?

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Governance, staffing and HR (Continued)

Yes / No / N/A

30. How often should we review the pay and remuneration policy for both key management personnel and of other staff?

31. Do our Trustees meetings, at present, contain too little time / focus on staffing and HR matters?

32. Are HR matters of concern communicated to the board adequately?

33. Do we spend enough time assessing the performance of the Executive team and CEO?

34. (TR) Do you gain sufficient comfort that employment law and best practice is adhered to?

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Financial

Yes / No / N/A

35. Do our Trustees meetings, at present, contain too little time / focus on finance?

36. Do our meetings spend sufficient time assessing the charity's current financial position and performance?

37. Do our meetings make you aware of the charity's cash position, cash flow needs and future projected cash flow?

38. Do you feel the charity is able to measure and monitor its financial commitments, eg. grant commitments?

39. Are the management accounts reviewed at our meetings fit for purpose and are they clear and easy to understand?

40. Do the management accounts contain sufficient detail regarding performance against budget and is a forecast produced?

41. Do we spend sufficient time setting and challenging budget assumptions?

42. Do our meeting allowing sufficient time for us to monitor our reserves position throughout the year?

43. Do we feel we spend sufficient time monitoring key performance indicators such as return of investment of fundraising activities?

44. Is there any other topic / issue within this subject area that you feel we should discuss as part of our Trustee meetings?

45. Do you feel we spend sufficient time and focus assessing what research is being performed / commissioned by the charity, how it fulfils our objects, and provides public benefit?

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Financial (continued)

Yes / No / N/A

46. Do you feel we spend sufficient time understanding why this research is being performed and how it will help achieve our objectives?

47. Do you feel we are able to challenge the assessments of the research? Do we perform assessments with sufficient frequency?

48. Do we focus our meetings to ensure our research links to the strategy of our charity?

49. Do you feel enough time is spent making us aware of our funding commitments and the amounts we have committed?

50. Is there any other topic / issue within this subject area that you feel we should discuss as part of our Trustees meetings?

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Fundraising, marketing and PR

Yes / No / N/A

51. Do our meetings allow for discussion of our fundraising strategy?

52. Do you feel there is enough oversight by the Trustees to ensure that we fundraise in a safe and legal way? Should a sub-committee perform this role?

53. Do we spend sufficient time identifying the risks associated with our fundraising practices, including public perceptions?

54. Do we effectively measure the financial performance of fundraising?
Such measures include return on investment, for example.
Should we spend more time on this area?

55. Do you feel we allow sufficient time to ensure that the charity has taken sufficient steps in order to be compliant with the requirements of regulators / regulations? Such as:

- Fundraising regulator
- Data protection / GDPR
- Charity fundraising regulations / Charity Act

56. Do we spend sufficient time reviewing our strategy to meet the aims and objectives of the charity, and making sure these are clearly communicated to the outside world?

57. Do we discuss the charity's media strategy and how it links to the aims of our charity?

58. Is there any other topic / issue within this subject area that you feel we should discuss as part of our Trustee meetings?

If you wish to make any further comments regarding our Trustees meetings, please do so here.
Other comments and observations:

Name:

Title:

Date:

i How we can help

This template is designed for information purposes only. Whilst every effort has been made to provide accurate and up to date information, it is recommended that you consult us before taking or refraining from taking action based on matters discussed.



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Now, for tomorrow