

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 in this instance is 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.

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:

Trustee role 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.



Question	Yes / No / Don't know / N/A
Conflicts of interest	
Q1	Do you think (XYZ Charity) manages conflicts of interest well?
Q2	Do our Trustees meetings, at present, contain too little time/focus on conflicts of interest?
Q3	(TR) Do you know what a conflict of interest is?
Q4	(TR) Do you understand what a 'related party' is?
Q5	If a conflict of interest is present in the charity, particularly when it affects decision making, how is it managed? - Does the conflicted individual participate in discussion relating to the conflict? - How is value for money sought and reviewed when conflicts exist?
Q6	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?
Q7	Is there any other topic/issue within this subject area that you feel we should discuss as part of our Trustees meetings?
Advice and support	
Q8	(TR) Are you comfortable that you know and understand your role and responsibilities as a Trustee?
Q9	In any of the following sections of this questionnaire do you feel you need further training or support? Those being: 1) Governance, staffing and HR 2) Financial 3) Fundraising 4) Research



Question	Yes / No / Don't know / N/A
Advice and support	
Q10	(TR) Are there any areas you feel that the charity needs to take further advice from 3rd party consultants/advisors?
Q11	Should our meetings make you aware of all of 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?
Q12	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?
Q13	Are the reasons for our decisions as a board adequately supported with evidence and sufficiently documented?
Q14	Were written reports clear, concise and delivered on time?
Governance, staffing and HR	
Q15	(TR) Do you feel that the governance of the charity is effective?
Q16	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?
Q17	Do we need term limits for Trustees?



Question	Yes / No / Don't know / N/A
Governance, staffing and HR	
Q18	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?
Q19	Do our meetings provide sufficient challenge to the executive team? If not, what more could we do?
Q20	Do you believe the board meetings and sub-committees are well run? What more would you like to see?
Q21	Do we have the right number and composition of sub-committees? They are currently: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Finance committee- Remuneration committee Do there need to be additional committees; such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Fundraising committee- Research committee- Marketing and PR committee- other
Q22	Does each sub-committee have terms of reference and are they reviewed and updated by the board? Should our meetings spend more time on this subject?
Q23	Do board meetings include a sufficient focus upon the findings and recommendations of sub-committees?
Q24	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?



Question	Yes / No / Don't know / N/A
Governance, staffing and HR	
Q25	Are the minutes of Trustees meetings an accurate record and received in a timely manner?
Q26	Do our Trustees meetings, at present, contain too little time/focus on governance?
Q27	Is there any other topic/issue within this subject area that you feel we should discuss as part of our Trustees meetings?
Q28	Staffing needs – would you like to discuss staffing needs and staff levels at Trustees meeting? 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?
Q29	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?
Q30	How often should we review the pay and remuneration policy for both key management personnel and of other staff ?
Q31	Do our Trustees meetings, at present, contain too little time/focus on staffing and HR matters?
Q32	Are HR matters of concern communicated to the board adequately?
Q33	Do we spend enough time assessing the performance of the Executive team and CEO?
Q34	(TR) Do you gain sufficient comfort that employment law and best practice is adhered to?



Question		Yes / No / Don't know / N/A
Financial		
Q35	Do our Trustees meetings, at present, contain too little time/focus on finance?	
Q36	Do our meetings spend sufficient time assessing the charity's current financial position and performance?	
Q37	Do our meetings make you aware of the charity's cash position, cash flow needs and future projected cash flow?	
Q38	Do you feel the charity is able to measure and monitor its financial commitments, e.g. grant commitments?	
Q39	Are the management accounts reviewed at our meetings fit for purpose and are they clear and easy to understand?	
Q40	Do the management accounts contain sufficient detail regarding performance against budget and is a forecast produced?	
Q41	Do we spend sufficient time setting and challenging budget assumptions?	
Q42	Do our meetings allow sufficient time for us to monitor our reserves position throughout the year?	
Q43	Do you feel we spend sufficient time monitoring key performance indicators such as return on investment of fundraising activities?	
Q44	Is there any other topic/issue within this subject area that you feel we should discuss as part of our Trustees meetings?	



Question	Yes / No / Don't know / N/A
Research	
Q45	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?
Q46	Do you feel we spend sufficient time understanding why this research is being performed and how it will help achieve our objectives?
Q47	Do you feel we are able to challenge the assessments of the research? Do we perform assessments with sufficient frequency?
Q48	Do we focus our meetings to ensure our research links to the strategy of our charity?
Q49	Do you feel enough time is spent making us aware of our funding commitments and the amounts we have committed?
Q50	Is there any other topic/issue within this subject area that you feel we should discuss as part of our Trustees meetings?
Fundraising, marketing and PR	
Q51	Do our meetings allow for a discussion of our fundraising strategy?
Q52	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?
Q53	Do we spend sufficient time identifying the risks associated with our fundraising practices, including public perceptions?



Question	Yes / No / Don't know / N/A
Fundraising, marketing and PR	
<p>Q54</p>	<p>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?</p>
<p>Q55</p>	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fundraising regulator - Data protection/GDPR - Charity fundraising regulations/Charity Act
<p>Q56</p>	<p>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?</p>
<p>Q57</p>	<p>Do we discuss the charity's media strategy and how it links to the aims of our charity?</p>
<p>Q58</p>	<p>Is there any other topic/issue within this subject area that you feel we should discuss as part of our Trustees meetings?</p>

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

Other comments and observations:

Name

Title

Date

If you would like to discuss any matter arising from this example policy please contact MHA on info@mha-uk.com or your usual MHA contact.

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.