

Charity Trustee Checklist

In our conversations with charity Trustees it often becomes apparent that some of the more fundamental issues are not being addressed. In some cases this will be in relation to the documentation governing the charity itself, in others it concerns the use of funds and other resources.

With input from the Commission, we have developed a checklist of 15 questions that Trustees should be asking of themselves, their fellow trustees and their charities, which we hope will guide the all important discussions around these areas.

If you would like to discuss any of the questions, the answers you arrive at or any other aspect of your charity, please contact one of our charity team on 01775 842500.

1. What effect is the current economic climate having on our charity, funding support, resourcing volunteers and activities?
2. Are we financially strong enough to continue to provide services for our beneficiaries in terms of cash flow, debts and obligations and what is our policy on reserves and is it reasonable in the context of our charity's flow of income?
3. Do we know what impact the social and/or economic climate is having on our current donors and future support for our charity?
4. Are we satisfied that our banking arrangement and services are appropriate and competitive, and does our investment policy reflect our needs?
5. Are we aware of and as organised as we should be in terms of our deeds and records – constitutional documents, property records, contracts and employment arrangements, etc?
6. Have we reviewed our contractual commitments; should we locate and review to ensure they competitive or unreasonably onerous?
7. Have we recently reviewed any contracts to deliver public services for areas of risk, and are they manageable?
8. If we have a pension scheme, are we clear as to the risks and liabilities?
9. Do we know what funds are permanent endowment and how can we make best use of these investments; should we consider spending permanent endowment?
10. Are we an effective and 'charity-skilled/educated' trustee body without unmanageable conflicts of interest; should we consider further training?
11. Do we have adequate safeguards (controls and procedures) in place to prevent the current risks of fraud or misuse of personal data?
12. Are we making the best use of the financial benefits we have access to as a charity in terms of gift aid, tax relief and financial help, and does our organisational structure allow us to maximize such benefits?
13. Are we making the best use of our staff and volunteers and are we clear as to our obligations as employers?
14. Have we considered collaborating with other charities in order to be more effective or even a formal merger?
15. Are we making the best use we can of our property in terms of usage or return on investment?