

CHECKLIST FOR BOARDS

The Board needs a variety of back-up papers, linked to its constitution and legal framework. The following is a helpful checklist. Some papers can be combined together and it is also helpful to bring them all together in a Board handbook.

1. BOARD POLICIES AND PAPERS REQUIRED TO HELP A CHARITY ENSURE IT IS WELL RUN.

Board policy and plans	Information	Action required
1. Governance model	It is helpful to set down understandings of the governance responsibility of the Board compared to the more executive and managerial role of staff. There are several useful models available or a charity can develop its own based on some of the principles and expectations of good practice in governance and Charity law.	
2. Role and responsibility of the Board	Based on any governance model used, there should be a paper setting out the overall role of the Board, with a clear list of the responsibilities of the Board. It should also clearly identify in more depth what are staff responsibilities and help the Board not interfere in management decisions.	
3. Role Description for Chair, other officers and sub-committees	The role of the chair is key and needs to be set down clearly. Many charities also operate through committees of the Board, or joint Board/staff committees. The respective roles and responsibilities should be set out clearly and linked to the overall role and responsibilities of the Board document and can often be part of that paper.	
4. Board qualities, skills, expertise and checklist for skills	This should be based on a process that has identified the personal qualities, skills and expertise needed for a Board to fulfil roles and responsibilities of the Board. It should also include a skills analysis form so that skills required within the Board are covered by different Board members. It should also cover the issue of diversity and any representational requirements.	

5. Board eligibility, board appointments, board resignations and removing Board members, plus declaration of Eligibility to Board.	This needs to take into account any current legal eligibility issues, and what is contained in the governing document on eligibility, appointment and retirement. It is recommended that there is one overall summary document integrating any legal restrictions, conditions in the governing document and any additional internal rules. It should also cover terms of service of Board members and how to deal with non-attendance and other matters.	
6. Conflict of Interests Policy and Declaration	There is guidance on this issue available from the Charity Commission and is a legal requirement.	
7. Board Code of Conduct and confidentiality policy	There is guidance on this issue available from the Charity Commission and the Nolan Report is also a helpful guide. In addition, where confidentiality is a key part of the ministry or service, there may need to be a separate policy on this. Otherwise confidentiality may just need a note and be integrated into the Code of Conduct.	
8. Review/Appraisal of the Board	Many Boards are now looking at reviewing and appraising their meetings and their overall performance. This is a helpful procedure to review each Board meeting and also provide for an annual review of the Board performance.	
9. Board Induction Process	It is helpful to have a clear induction process for new Board members. This should cover all Board policies, vision, strategic plan, understanding of history and meeting key staff. It can also involve visits to programmes and projects.	
10. Board expenses and payments	There should be a clear policy on what expenses can be claimed, the level of those expenses and how this is done. Unless authorised by the governing document, trustees cannot be paid for any services provided.	

Board Annual Work Plan: It is helpful to ensure that there is an annual plan for the review of policies, as well as working through the strategic plan and external information. It is also helpful to build in annual retreats and times for prayer and reflection. Most policies should be reviewed on an annual basis. In addition there needs to be a clear list of operational policies which are required (or asked for) in the Annual Trustee Reports or as part of the Annual Return to the Charity Commission which should also be in the Board plan.

2. OPERATIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Depending on the size of the organisation, there will be a variety of operational policies and procedures. Usually these are formulated and produced by the relevant staff, but will need to be signed off by the Board.

Operational Policy	Information	Action required
Data protection policy	If data is held then a data protection policy is required. This is particularly needed when confidential information is held. It should form part of the staff handbook.	
Dealing with complaints	There should be clear policy with associated procedures for handling complaints.	
Ethos statement	An ethos statement which covers trustees, staff and Board is a useful statement to have and links into the equal opportunities policy	
Equal opportunities policy	If there is a statement of faith to which staff would normally need to subscribe, this needs to be clearly justified within the overall framework of the equal opportunities policy. Each role should be assessed to see if there is a justified occupational requirement.	
HR policies and contracts	<p>The Board needs to ensure that contracts, conditions of service and staff handbooks are up to date in terms of HR law. It is advised that legal advice is sought. This should cover policies such as:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal Opportunities Policy • Personal conduct including ethos statement, staff code of conduct, anti-bribery and whistleblowing policies • Performance reviews, disciplinary and dismissal procedure, and grievance procedure • Health and safety policy and procedures • Information and data including data protection, IT policy, use of internet and information security policy • Flexible working, home and remote working, sickness, annual leave, time off for dependents in an emergency and compassionate leave and TOIL • Maternity, paternity and adoption leave and pay • Giving notice, redundancy procedure and retirement policy 	

Investment Policy	If there are investments, it is a legal requirement to have an investment policy explaining the basis of investments in terms of risk, return and ethics. Usually the investment company can assist with this.	
Money laundering and fraud	There needs to be clear policies and procedures to ensure that fraud and money laundering is prevented, especially if money is sent overseas.	
Risk assessment	There should be a policy to ensure that risks are well managed with an annual risk assessment.	
Reserves Policy	The reserve policy needs to be clearly written down and stated in the annual trustees report.	
Safeguarding policy	If the charity works with children or vulnerable adults, a safeguarding policy is required. This also applies to work overseas.	
Volunteer policy	If the charity has volunteers, then a volunteer policy is useful and requested by the Charity Commission in the Annual Return.	

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