

Model Letter to be sent to a Trustee of an Unincorporated Charity on Appointment

Overall Purpose

This Guidance Note offers an example of a model letter to be sent to a new trustee of an unincorporated charity; as such it is an outline for charities to amend to suit their needs. Charities are urged to ensure that all relevant factors pertaining to their organisation are included in such letters.

This Guidance Note covers charities registered in England and Wales. Whilst principles of good governance should transcend national borders, it is important to bear in mind the specific differences in charity legislation for those charities operating in Scotland, Northern Ireland, and elsewhere.¹

Model Letter

Dear *[name of appointee]*

I write to confirm your appointment as a trustee of *[name of charity registered in England and Wales; registration number]* with effect from *[date]*.

Although you will have seen the charity's governing document you should have your own copy to retain, and this is enclosed. I also include a schedule setting out the dates of the *[trustee, council, management or executive committee]* meetings for the rest of this calendar year together with details of the basis on which you may claim out-of-pocket expenses for attendance. An agenda with supporting papers will be circulated approximately one week before each meeting.

As a trustee you will be required to sit on a committee or sub-committee. Copies of terms of reference for the standing committees are included in the enclosed induction pack along with a schedule of dates of forthcoming meetings.

In addition to the specific statutory duties imposed on a trustee by the Charities Acts 1993 and 2006, and any other relevant legislation, you are under a general duty to act reasonably and make decisions in accordance with your duty of care and duty to act prudently and in good faith and to exercise your powers for the benefit of the charity as a whole. Consequently your personal interests must not be allowed to conflict with your over-riding duty to act at all times for the benefit of the charity² and must not cause harm to the charity. As such I enclose the charity's conflicts of interest policy, along with a blank copy of the register of interests for you to complete and return to me.

You will note in clause *[x]* of the governing document the provisions relating to your period of service as a trustee and the *[re-election/re-appointment]* process.

If you require any information concerning the charity, I will endeavour to provide you with it as soon as is practicable. A summary of the principal duties and responsibilities of a trustee is included in the enclosed induction pack. Please read and familiarise yourself with this information as soon as possible, and read and sign a copy of the trustee declaration letter enclosed.³ Please retain a copy for your records.

¹ Further Guidance Notes for charities registered and operating in Scotland and Northern Ireland will be available in due course from the ICSA website.

² For further information refer to the ICSA Best Practice Guide *Managing Conflicts of Interest in the Not-for-Profit Sector* and the Charity Commission's Operational Guidance *A Guide to Managing Conflicts of Interest for Charity Trustees*.

³ See ICSA Guidance Note 070609 for a model charity trustee declaration.

The charity's [*governing document/standing orders/by-laws*] outlines the normal procedures for the request of agenda items and meeting notification.

In conclusion, may I take this opportunity to congratulate you on your appointment and welcome you to the board. Being a charity trustee can be both challenging and rewarding and I would therefore invite you to contact me at any time you may require such support and information as you may need to fulfil your responsibilities effectively.

Yours sincerely,

Charity Secretary

Enclosed:

Charity's governing document
Schedule of trustee meetings/times/venues
Terms of reference for committees/sub-committees and calendar of meetings
Induction pack
Expenses policy and form
Conflict of interest policy
Register of interests form
A summary of charity trustees roles and responsibilities
CC3 – *The Essential Trustee*
Trustee declaration letter x2 (copy to be signed and retained by trustee)
Standing orders/by-laws

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