

Trustee role description

Being a trustee

Trustees of the Society are responsible for the strategic direction, governance, policies, and performance of the Society. Trustees have and must accept ultimate responsibility for directing the affairs of the charity, ensuring that it is solvent, well-run, and delivering charitable outcomes for the beneficiaries for whom it was set up. They must equally recognise and respect the domain of staff responsibility. The [Charity Commission booklet The Essential Trustee \(CC3\)](#) explains all this in more detail.

Trustees of the Society are also company directors, and therefore have duties under both charity and company law. In a nutshell those duties are as follows:

Trustee duties:

- Ensure they are eligible to act as a trustee (i.e. are not disqualified)
- Ensure the charity is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit
- Comply with the charity's governing documents and the law
- Act in the charity's best interests
- Manage the charity's resources responsibly
- Act with reasonable care and skill
- Ensure the charity is accountable

Director duties:

- Follow the company's [Articles of Association](#)
- Promote the success of the company
- Exercise independent judgement
- Exercise reasonable care, skill, and diligence
- Avoid conflicts of interest
- Not accept benefits from a third party that are offered to them because they are a director
- Tell the other directors and members if they might personally benefit from a transaction the company makes
- Not misuse the company's property
- Apply confidentiality about the company's affairs

The [public benefit obligations](#) of the trustees are particularly important and explained in detail in Charity Commission guidance documents that all trustees must read and have regard to. Trustees are required every year, in the charity's annual return, to declare that they have had regard to this guidance in their decision making.

The role of a trustee is voluntary. Except in exceptional circumstances, where allowed by a charity's constitution and the law, trustees are not paid and do not receive any personal gain from their role. Trustees should not, however, be out of pocket for the work they do and can receive reimbursement to cover appropriate, auditable out-of-pocket expenses associated with carrying out their duties.

Ethics and conflicts of interest

The Society's trustees have a duty to further the purposes of the Society impartially, declaring any potential conflict of interest, and withdrawing from any related decision-making processes in accordance with the Society's conflicts of interest.

The trustees believe that research should be ethical at all times and that any relationships (financial or otherwise) between students, researchers, or trustees and industry (either directly or via any industry-supported research body or advisory committee or board) is a potential conflict of interest depending on the precise nature of the relationship. Such relationships (prior or existing) should therefore be declared in all applications so that the board can assess whether the conflict would unduly influence the application.

Trustee role description and person specification

General duties and responsibilities

The following is a high-level summary of the general duties, conferred on the trustees by charity and company law:

- Ensuring that the organisation pursues its stated objects (purposes), as defined in its governing document, by developing and agreeing a long-term strategy
- Ensuring that the organisation complies with its governing document (i.e. its Articles of Association and byelaws), charity law, company law, and any other relevant legislation or regulations
- Ensuring that the organisation applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its charitable objects (i.e. the charity must not spend money on activities that are not included in its own objects, however worthwhile or charitable those activities are) for the benefit of the public
- Ensuring that the organisation defines its strategy and goals and evaluates performance against agreed targets
- Safeguarding the good name and values of the organisation
- Ensuring the effective and efficient administration of the organisation, including having appropriate policies and procedures in place
- Ensuring the financial stability of the organisation
- Protecting and managing the property of the charity and ensuring the proper investment of the charity's funds
- Following proper and formal arrangements for the appointment, supervision, support, appraisal and remuneration of the Chief Officer

Additional duties and responsibilities

The following have been adopted by the Society to complement the formal duties and responsibilities above:

- To abide by the Society's policies and procedures
- To join one or more of the sub-committees or advisory panels, according to your skills and experience

- To encourage non-trustees with the right skills or experience to join committees or advisory panels
- To be available to offer advice and support to other trustees and staff and to carry out day-to-day duties, such as the approval of payments
- To endeavour to attend all Board meetings (missing three consecutive meetings could result in you being asked to vacate your position)
- To endeavour to attend the Society's events when invited to do so
- To represent the Society at events and actively promote the Society amongst its key audiences
- To respect the role of the staff and understand the extent of the trustees' powers to delegate to them

Person specification for trustees

General requirements

All trustees need to exhibit the following:

- A commitment to furthering the purpose and strategy of the Society
- A commitment to Nolan's seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership.
- A willingness to devote the necessary time and effort to the role
- Expertise in an area that is important to the achievement of the purpose and strategy
- Respect and influence within networks that are important to the achievement of the purpose and strategy
- An ability to think strategically
- An ability to work as part of a team and respect the nature of collective decision-making
- Impartiality and fairness
- An ability to respect confidences
- A willingness to contribute individual skills, knowledge, and experience without acting as a representative of any external interest

Skills, knowledge, and experience

The Society has determined that, collectively, its trustees need to have one or more of the following types of skills, knowledge, and experience:

- Academic research relating to addiction
- Business management and/or networks within the corporate world
- Clinical or medical practice relating to addiction
- Development of public health policy and/or practice
- Marketing and communications
- Finance (charity and/or other relevant practice)
- Governance

Expected Time Commitment

- Three full days per year to prepare for and attend board meetings
- Two full days per year for the SSA's Annual Conference
- Two to four hours per month to prepare for and attend sub-committee meetings
- Two to four hours per month of non-meeting work on SSA activities

Exclusions

You cannot be a trustee of the SSA if you:

- are under 18 years of age
- are disqualified from acting as a trustee