

Our policies, templates and other documentation are provided as guides, for your charity personnel and trustees, to review and amend in order to best serve the needs of your organisation. Trustees in particular, should always be aware of any adopted policy, its wording and implications. Trustees are responsible for the charity's governance. Trust Advice exists to support trustees and charity personnel; we cannot accept any liability for any result of the use, or reliance on, these guides. **Please contact us if you would like help understanding Trustee responsibilities.**

Charity Policies

Updated: March 2021

Introduction

Policies and procedures will help you run and manage a charity well. Put simply:

“Policies are clear, simple statements of how your organisation intends to conduct its services, actions or business. They provide a set of guiding principles to help with decision making. Policies don't need to be long or complicated – a couple of sentences may be all you need for each policy area.”

<https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/organisation/operations/policies-and-procedures>

Procedures, on the other hand, describe in detail how each policy will be put into action and the steps to be taken.

Policies will:

- Ensure compliance with the law and regulation
- Provide appropriate controls, including a framework for delegation by the board of trustees to staff or volunteers, that set out how things should be done and what is expected of people
- Transparency and accountability that the board of trustees will be conducting the work of the charity appropriately
- Limit risk

The Charity Commission, in its annual reporting requirements, asks whether you have particular policies in place. If a serious incident is reported, they will ask to see any relevant policies early on.

Below you will find a list of policies that a charity might hold. The list is not in any particular order of importance. We suggest that you use it as a checklist to identify what is needed by your charity. Some policies will overlap with other policies, particularly risk, safeguarding, and employment.

Some of the policies are required by law and are essential; others are policies that might be appropriate for some charities but not needed by others to enable them to be effective. For example, a charity that hires out rooms in its building should have a robust policy to keep it safe and secure. Increasingly, insurers are expecting their clients to have appropriate policies in place. If they find that certain policies are absent or deficient it can affect cover in the event of a claim. Depending on the size, scope and complexity of your charity, you will need a variety of policies.

Please contact us at support@trustadvice.org.uk if you would like further advice, support or training, including details of membership which will unlock access to our library.

Essential Core Policies

The following are 'must haves':

1. **Health and Safety Policy** - You must have a written Health and Safety Policy if you employ five or more people. An organisation of any size must conduct a health and safety risk assessment.
2. **Safeguarding Policy** - for all ages, children and young people and/or vulnerable adults (whatever is most applicable). We recommend you visit <https://thirtyoneeight.org> for further comprehensive details.
3. **Privacy Policy** – also think about confidentiality, data protection etc. Please note, when it comes to GDPR the ICO requires a whole suite of policies covering all your data from website to manual records kept at home. Please see our section on GDPR near the end of this document.
4. **Equality & Diversity Policy** - with particular regard to anti-discrimination and harassment of employees and volunteers, as well as service users.
5. **Risk Management Policy** - incl. assessment and mitigation. A detailed risk assessment is required covering all aspects of the charity's operations. You will need a Risk Register.
6. **Financial Procedures Manual and a Reserves Policy** - [See Finance section for further details] Please contact us if you would like to know more about our Financial Procedures Toolkit, Financial MOT's and Reviews.
7. **Board Basics – a Trustee Code of Conduct; Conflict of Interest Policy; and Trustee Expenses Policy.** [Please contact us for details of our Trustee and Administrators Toolkit and for bespoke training]
8. **Complaints Policy** - For members, service users, supporters and/or public. This is a must. If you don't have one, the ICO or the Charity Commission would be concerned in the event of a complaint being made.

Common Financial Policies

This is worth a section on its own and here is a comprehensive list. However, it does depend on the size of your organisation and nature of your work when choosing appropriate policies. They are not in any particular order.

- Financial Responsibilities Policy – Delegation of Authority (also include reference to Reserves Policy, Conflicts of Interests Policy and Segregation of Duties Policy)
- Conflict of Interest and Anti-bribery Policy - Some of this will be contained in the charity's governing document but a separate policy will lay down clear guidelines on how a conflict can be identified and managed. You will need a Register of Interests form.
- Anti-fraud Policy
- Anti-money Laundering Policy

- Budget Control Policy
- Controls on Income Policy – due diligence policy on accepting funds, pricing, invoicing and debt control, grants, applications.
- Controls on Expenditure Policy – procurement, estimates and tendering, purchase orders and invoices,
- Controls on Financial Assets and Record Keeping Policy – bank account, making payments, cash handling, card transactions, accounting records, safety.
- Controls on Human Resources Costs Policy – staff salaries, recruitment, reviews, casual staff and consultancy, starters, leavers.
- Expenses Policy – eligible expenses, public transport fares, use of personal vehicle, taxis, subsistence, overnight accommodation, medical costs, making claims.
- Segregation of Duties Policy
- Corporate Credit Card Policy
- Controls on Physical Assets Policy – fixed assets, stock, insurance.
- Investment, Loans and Borrowing Policy – investment powers, investment objectives, risk, liquidity, time horizon, management, reporting, review.
- Delegated Authorities Form
- Fundraising and Donations Policy - acceptance and refusal practical guide.
- Reserves Policy - You should have one even if it's aspirational.
- Gifts and Hospitality Policy – incl. reciprocal agreements.
- Exercising Budgetary Control and Monitoring Policy – to include the annual plan and budget approval, reporting, monitoring.

Other Common Policies

The following areas are some of the more common policies that would benefit from being written down. You don't necessarily need to adopt all the policies listed below and some specific policies you might need may not be listed. This is for the trustee board to decide.

- Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Disciplinary Procedure Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Expenses Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Fire Safety Policy - This will cover what to do to minimise fire risk and what to do if there is a fire, including Fire Drill Policy.
- Grievance Policy and Procedure

- Information Technology Policy - acceptable use of IT/Email & Internet use, particularly data retention, disposal and destruction, and access and storage of electronic information. These policies will overlap with staff policies and GDPR.
- Insurance Policy
- Maternity Leave and Pay Policy
- Media Policy (include who can speak for the organisation)
- Paternity Leave and Pay Policy
- Pay Policy
- Redundancy Policy
- Retirement Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy
- Shared Parental Leave Policy
- Sickness Absence Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Staff Handbook
- Subject Access Request Policy
- Time Off for Public Duties Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy - The regulator has published detailed guidance on this issue. Take care to differentiate between paid staff and volunteers who have different levels of protection.

Further Policies to consider:

- Adoption Leave and Pay Policy
- Adverse Weather and Travel Disruption Policy
- Building/Room Hire Policy - To cover terms and conditions, alcohol etc.
- Compassionate Leave Policy
- CCTV Policy
- Emergency/Dependants Leave Policy
- Environmental Policy
- Ethical Policy
- Ethical Investment policy. Not essential but may be sensible if you hold investments.
- External relations
- Food hygiene - if there is a kitchen or area where food is prepared an appropriate range of policies is required, with any certification needed.
- Flexible Working Policy
- General Governance. This might cover memberships if you have members, relationship between board and executive.

- Gifts in Kind Policy
- Lone Working Personal Safety Policy - to cover staff and volunteers
- Personal, or associated group, use of facilities
- Remote Working policy
- Security Policy
- Supervision and Training Policy

Volunteer Management Specific Policies

- Code of Conduct Policy
- Insurance Provision for Volunteers Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Volunteer Policy - A policy is advisable together with an appropriate agreement in respect of each volunteer. Important that it is understood that there is no employer/employee relationship, but that rights and responsibilities on both sides are clearly defined.

GDPR

The mistake that is commonly made is to think about GDPR as a suite of policies. It isn't. GDPR is a *regulation* not a policy. GDPR is about demonstrating ongoing compliance to the regulation and will be a mix of policies, logs and registers. Some of our policies relate to GDPR and are vital to it but whilst we want you to have them and use them we would urge you not to make the mistake of thinking that GDPR would be covered by these policies in and of themselves. GDPR is a whole different entity and a constantly changing compliance. The ICO have a very comprehensive and helpful website and helpline which we recommend you go to the organisation page first. Please see www.ico.org.uk

At Trust Advice we offer GDPR training, manuals and compliance logs. Please contact us for any GDPR needs or questions at support@trustadvice.org.uk

Summary

This is an extensive list which will no doubt be added to from time to time. Some of the policies are covered in a few lines or one side of A4; others such as risk will need to be detailed and extensive. If you need help with anything, we are here to offer guidance and practical help. We are also on hand to review your policies to make sure that they are fit for purpose. For example, we reviewed a charity's equality policy which was well put together but would not have been accepted if it was challenged.

Be proportionate to your size and operational complexity; what's needed by a big charity may not be needed by a smaller charity. Policies should be signed off by the board and reviewed annually. Some policies will come from above if you are part of a wider network. For example, Trussell Trust has a handbook providing policies and operational guidelines and requirements for individual food banks. Churches that are part of a denomination will have their own sets of policies and guidelines.

If you want to read more about legal checklists for charities and voluntary organisations, see <https://www.grcc.org.uk/downloads/organisational-support-and-funding-advice/templates/legal-checklist-for-voluntary-organisation-boards-of-trustees.pdf>

Acknowledgements

<https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/organisation/operations/policies-and-procedures>

This is the end of the document:

We hope this has been helpful to you. Please get in touch if something isn't covered here you want to ask about. We will be very pleased to hear from you. If you would like more information, further details around membership or to upgrade your membership, visit www.trustadvice.org.uk Please also see our website for details of ways we can help you and services we offer.