

Regulator's new "5-minute guides" will support charity trustees to meet duties

The Charity Commission, the charity regulator for England and Wales, has launched a new set of simple, easy to understand guides, designed to help trustees run their charities in line with the law.

The new guides cover five key aspects of charity management – a 'core syllabus' covering the basics that the regulator expects all trustees to be aware of.

They explain the basics of:

This 'gateway' level guidance will make it easier and quicker for all trustees to check what is expected and to find more detailed information if needed, which is all the more important as charities respond to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Commission's research and testing with trustees have helped shape their design and content.

The publications come as part of the Commission's programme, outlined in its [2020/21 Business Plan](#), to deliver updated core guidance and an improved website, so that it is easier for trustees, who are overwhelmingly unpaid volunteers, to access the information they need. This is in line with the Commission's strategic priority of ensuring trustees have the tools and understanding they need to succeed, and helping them maximise the difference they make.

The new tools have been launched to coincide with [Trustees' Week](#), the annual celebration of charity trustees and the contribution they make to society.

Helen Stephenson CBE, Chief Executive of the Charity Commission, said:

Volunteer trustees are the bedrock of the charity sector. Without their commitment and dedication charity would simply not be possible. When I started at the Commission, I said our guidance and advice needed to become more available and accessible to trustees, to help them deliver on the causes they support and champion. These new 5 minute guides are an important milestone in our delivery on that promise.

The Commission stresses that whilst the guides may be basic, they are designed to serve the needs of experienced trustees as well as those new to the role. It says that years of experience cannot immunise even the very best trustees from running into questions or problems.

In a [blog](#), Helen Stephenson sets out how she hopes the new guides will aid

trustees, particularly as they face unprecedented challenges presented by the pandemic.

Helen Stephenson added:

Our 5-minute guides are designed with real trustees and real situations in mind. They recognise that good governance is not a bureaucratic detail – it underpins the delivery of a charity’s purposes to the high standards expected by the public – and is all the more important in the midst of this pandemic which is impacting civil society so heavily. I hope trustees, both new and experienced, read and use them to help them fulfil their charity’s purpose for the public benefit.

Trustees’ Week runs from 2-9 November 2020. More details can be found at www.trusteesweek.org.

Ends.

Notes to editors:

1. In preparing and refining the guides, the Commission has undertaken both qualitative and quantitative user testing with trustees, including via a representative online survey and via targeted focus groups. It has also engaged with charity sector bodies.
2. The Charity Commission is the registrar and regulator of charities in England and Wales. Its purpose is to ensure charity can thrive and inspire trust so that people can improve lives and strengthen society. The Commission is an independent, non-ministerial government department.