

Question sets



Welcome

Good governance is fundamental to a charity's success. It enables and supports a charity's compliance with the law and relevant regulations. It also promotes a culture in which everything works towards fulfilling the charity's vision.

This Charity Governance Code, on which the question sets in this document are based, is a practical tool to help charities and their trustees develop high standards of governance.

In this document you will find seven sets of question sets to complete. Please complete them as honestly as you can.





Organisational purpose

Charities exist to fulfil their charitable purposes. Trustees have a responsibility to understand the environment in which the charity is operating and to lead the charity in fulfilling its purposes as effectively as possible with the resources available. To do otherwise would be failing beneficiaries, funders and supporters. The board's core role is a focus on strategy, performance and assurance.

1. We understand what the charity is here to achieve.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

2. We can demonstrate that the charity is achieving its charitable purposes.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

3. We periodically check that our charitable purposes are relevant.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

4. We can all explain the charity's public benefit.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

5. We regularly evaluate the difference the charity is making.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

6. We regularly review our financial sustainability.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

7. We know what we'd do if the charity wasn't needed any more or became unviable.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

8. We recognise our responsibility to the wider environment we operate in.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

9. We act in a way that's consistent with the charity's values.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

10. We have a clear set of aims and a plan for achieving them.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree



Integrity

Delivering the charity's purposes for public benefit should be at the heart of everything the board does. This is true even when a board's decision might be unpopular. Everyone who comes into contact with a charity should be treated with dignity and respect and feel that they are in a safe and supportive environment. Charity leaders should show the highest levels of personal integrity and conduct. To achieve this, trustees should create a culture that supports the charity's values, adopt behaviours and policies in line with values and set aside any personal interests or loyalties. The board should understand and address any inappropriate power dynamics to avoid damaging the charity's reputation, public support for its work and delivery of its aims.

1. We act with honesty, trustworthiness and care.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

2. We act in the best interest of our beneficiaries.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

3. We make objective and independent decisions.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

4. No one person or group has undue influence in the charity.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

5. All of our decisions are consistent with the charity's values.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

6. The charity follows the law, relevant codes and standards, and other good practice initiatives.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

7. We promote a culture in which everyone feels safe and respected.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

8. We have appropriate and regularly reviewed safeguarding policies and procedures.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

9. We understand how real and perceived conflicts of interests can affect a charity's performance and reputation.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

10. Trustees disclose any actual or potential conflicts and deal with these in line with the charity's governing document and a regularly reviewed conflicts of interest policy.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree



Leadership

Strong and effective leadership helps the charity adopt an appropriate strategy for effectively delivering its aims. It also sets the tone for the charity, including its vision, values and reputation.

1. We live the charity's vision and values.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

2. We take collective and individual responsibility for our actions.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

3. We have clear priorities, structures and processes.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

9. Staff or volunteers feel confident and able to provide the information, advice and feedback necessary to the board.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

10. We give sufficient time to the charity to carry out our responsibilities effectively.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree



Board effectiveness

The board has a key impact on whether a charity thrives. The tone the board sets through its leadership, behaviour, culture and overall performance is critical to the charity's success. It is important to have a rigorous approach to trustee recruitment, performance and development, and to the board's conduct. In an effective team, board members feel it is safe to suggest, question and challenge ideas and address, rather than avoid, difficult topics.

1. Our culture, behaviours and processes help us to be effective.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

2. We take decisions collectively and confidently.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

3. Once decisions are made, the board unites behind them and accepts them as binding.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

4. Where differences of opinion arise, we take time to consider the range of perspectives and outcomes, respecting all viewpoints.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

5. The board has, and regularly considers, the skills, knowledge and experience it needs to govern, lead and deliver the charity's purposes effectively.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

6. The board is big enough that the needs of the charity's work can be carried out and changes to the board's composition can be managed without too much disruption.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

7. We have a formal, rigorous and transparent procedure to appoint new trustees, which includes advertising vacancies widely.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

8. Trustees are appointed for an agreed length of time.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

9. Trustees receive a proper induction when they join the board that covers all areas of the charity's work.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

10. The board reviews its own performance every year, including that of the chair.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree



Equality, diversity and inclusion

Addressing equality, diversity and inclusion helps a board to make better decisions. This requires commitment, but it means that a charity is more likely to stay relevant to those it serves and to deliver its public benefit. Recognition and countering any imbalances in power, perspectives and opportunities in the charity, and in the attitudes and behaviour of trustees, staff and volunteers, helps to make sure that a charity achieves its aims. All trustees have the same responsibility for the charity, so they must have equal opportunity to contribute to decision making. Board diversity, in the widest sense, is important because it creates more balance decision-making. Where appropriate, this includes and centres

communities and people the charity serves. This increases the charity's legitimacy and impact. Equality and diversity are only effective and sustainable if the board works to be inclusive, ensuring that all trustees are welcomed, valued and able to contribute. Boards that commit to equality, diversity and inclusion are more likely to set a positive example and tone for the charity by following an appropriate strategy for delivering its purpose and setting inclusive values and culture.

1. The principles of equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded in the organisation and help to deliver the charity's public benefit.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

2. The board is more effective because it reflects different perspectives, experiences and skills, including, where applicable, from current and future beneficiaries.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

3. We assess our own understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion and identify any gaps in understanding which could be filled by discussion, learning, research or information.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

4. We regularly assess the charity's approach to equality, diversity and inclusion.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

5. The board assesses how it demonstrates inclusive behaviours in its decision making and how it engages with staff (where they exist), volunteers, members, service users and beneficiaries.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

6. We set a clear organisational approach to equality, diversity and inclusion in line with the charity's aims, strategy, culture and values.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

7. Our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion is supported by appropriate plans, policies, milestones, targets and timelines.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

8. We ensure that there are appropriate arrangements and resources in place to monitor and achieve the organisation's equality, diversity and inclusion plans and targets.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

9. We lead the organisation's progress towards achieving its equality, diversity and inclusion plans and targets and discuss updates on this.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

10. We periodically take part in learning and/or reflection about equality, diversity and inclusion and understand our responsibilities in this area.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree



Openness and accountability

The public's trust that a charity is delivering in public benefit is fundamental to its reputation and success and, by extension, the success of the wider sector. Making accountability real, through genuine and open two-way communication that celebrates successes and demonstrates willingness to learn from mistakes, helps to build this trust and confidence and earn legitimacy.

1. The organisation's work and impact are appreciated by all its stakeholders.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

2. The charity is seen to have legitimacy in representing its beneficiaries and stakeholders.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

3. The board identifies the key stakeholders with an interest in the charity's work.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

4. We make sure that there is a strategy for regular and effective communication with its stakeholders about the charity's purposes, values, work and achievements.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

5. Stakeholders have an opportunity to hold the board to account through agreed processes and routes.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

6. We speak to stakeholders about significant changes to the charity's services or policies.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

7. We get regular reports on the positive and negative feedback and complaints given to the charity.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

8. We learn from mistakes and use this learning to improve performance and internal decision-making.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

9. We have a transparent, well-publicised, effective and timely process for making, handling and resolving complaints.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

10. We publish the process for setting the remuneration of any senior staff, and their remuneration levels, on the charity's websites and in its annual report.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree



Decision-making, risk and control

The board is ultimately responsible for the decisions and actions of the charity but it cannot and should not do everything. The board may be required by statute or the charity's governing document to make certain decisions but, beyond this, it needs to decide which other matters it will make decisions about and which it can and will delegate. Trustees delegate authority but not ultimate responsibility, so the board needs to implement suitable financial and related controls and reporting arrangements to make sure it oversees these delegated matters. Trustees must also identify and assess risk and

opportunities for the organisation and decide how best to deal with them, including assessing whether they are manageable or worth taking.

1. We are clear that the board's main focus is on strategy, performance and assurance, rather than operational matters.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

2. We have a sound decision-making and monitoring framework which helps the organisation deliver its charitable purposes.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

3. We are aware of the range of financial and non-financial risk we need to monitor and manage.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

4. Our committees have suitable terms of reference and membership.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

5. The work of any third party suppliers or services is carried out in the interest of the charity, and in line with its values.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

6. Our operational plans and budgets are in line with the charity's purposes, strategic aims and resources.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

7. We regularly monitor and check performance against the charity's strategic aims, operational plans and budgets.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

8. We regularly review the charity's specific significant risk and make plans to mitigate and manage them appropriately.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

9. We review the effectiveness of the charity's approach to risk at least every year.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

10. We have an effective process for appointing and reviewing the charity's external examiners or auditors (if they are required).

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I disagree

I agree

