



Aniridia Network UK

Trustee role

You are probably reading this because you have just become, or are about to become, a trustee for the charity Aniridia Network UK (ANUK). If so, we welcome you and congratulate you. Your skills and energy will help to make a difference to the charity. You will become responsible for the charity's aims and direction, for its property, finances and anyone doing its activities. Without good and committed trustees, no charity can hope to succeed.

We wish you well as a trustee, and hope that you will gain real satisfaction from making a contribution to society.

This document sets out a summary of your new responsibilities and duties, and also how you can get support and assistance.

In this guidance, where we use 'must' we mean it is a specific legal or regulatory requirement affecting trustees or a charity. We use 'should' for items we regard as minimum good practice, but for which there is no specific legal requirement. Trustees should follow the good practice guidance unless there's a good reason not to.

Who are trustees?

Trustees are the people who form the governing body of ANUK. They are responsible for controlling the management and administration. Trustees serve as volunteers, and receive no payment (other than to repay necessary out-of-

pocket expenses incurred). Trustees should work together as a team, and have collective responsibility for their charity.

Being a trustee can be hard work, but by contributing you should also gain. Trusteeship should be rewarding, providing opportunities for personal development. As you give your skills to the running of ANUK, you will at the same time gather new skills and experience.

What are the duties of trustees?

Trustees have, and must accept, ultimate responsibility for directing the affairs of ANUK, ensuring that it is solvent and well-run, and delivering its charitable outcomes for the benefit of the public for which it was set up. You need to keep in mind the following areas of responsibility.

Ensuring compliance

Trustees must ensure that their charity complies with:

- Charity law, and the requirements of the Charity Commission and HM Revenue and Customs. You can find more information in our publication *The Hallmarks of an Effective Charity (CC10)*.
- The requirements or rules, and the charitable purpose and objects, set out in ANUK's constitution. All trustees should have a copy, and be familiar with this.
- The requirements of other legislation and other regulators (if any) which govern the activities of the ANUK.
- The requirement for trustees to act with integrity, and avoid any personal conflicts of interest or misuse of charity funds or assets.

Duty of prudence

Trustees must:

- Ensure that ANUK is and will remain solvent; this means that you need to keep yourself informed of the ANUK's activities and financial position.
- Use ANUK funds and assets wisely, and only to further the purposes and interests of ANUK.
- Avoid undertaking activities that might place ANUK's property, funds, assets or reputation at undue risk.
- Take special care when investing the funds of the ANUK, or borrowing funds for the ANUK to use.

Duty of care

Trustees must:

- Exercise reasonable care and skill as trustees, using personal knowledge and experience to ensure that ANUK is well-run and efficient.
- Consider getting external professional advice on all matters where there may be material risk to ANUK, or where the trustees may be in breach of their duties.

To fulfil these responsibilities properly, trustees should make sure that they keep up to date with what ANUK is doing. You should give enough time and energy to the business of the charity, and meet regularly enough to make the decisions needed.

Further details on the powers and proceedings of trustees can be found in the ANUK constitution,

There are three trustees are known as officers. They have special responsibilities:

- The Treasurer will ensure that proper accounts are kept, and help set financial and investment policies.
- The Chair plans and chairs trustee meetings,

- The Secretary carries out administrative tasks

However, when it comes to making decisions about the charity, the trustees must take them together.

Aniridia Network UK trustees

Usually there are about seven people on the ANUK trustee board. The minimum is 3 and there is no maximum.

All trustees are expected to attend monthly board teleconferences. There are also usually about two face to face, all day meetings each year

Because ANUK has very little human and financial resources trustees are also expected to perform a variety of other practical activities such as those described in the ANUK volunteer roles.

Who oversees and supports trustees?

The Charity Commission is the independent charity regulator for England and Wales. Its job is to work with charities to ensure that they are accountable, well run and meet their legal obligations. It also aims to promote public trust and confidence in charities. It provides a wide range of advice and guidance to charities.

Because ANUK has a small annual income it is not eligible to register with the Charity Commission. However it is registered as a charity with HM Revenue & Customs for tax purposes. This has the same status but means different and less reporting requirement than larger charities.

What happens if things go wrong?

Trustees are personally liable for any debts or losses that the charity faces. However this is rare, and trustees who have

followed the requirements summarised here will generally be protected.

The Charity Commission offers information and advice to on both legal requirements and best practice to help them operate as effectively as possible and to prevent problems arising.

Where can I find out more?

This is only a summary of the responsibilities and duties of a trustee. You can find out more on the Charity Commission website. There to is guidance and resources that trustees can use to help them carry out their duties.

Adapted from "The Essential Trustee" by the Charity
Commission