

# Good Governance – resource list

## Summary

This resource list provides details of guidance and help available to support charities and not for profit groups in developing good governance. It contains links to sources of support and introductory guidance on topics relating to governance.

## Who is this resource for?

This resource list intended for community / volunteer groups who are working to save or revive a theatre in their area.

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## **Good governance**

Developing good governance in your organisation will ensure that it is well run, creating a strong foundation enabling your organisation to achieve its goals. Good governance can help reduce risk, improve planning and decision-making and make your organisation better equipped to deal with change. It also protects the reputation of your organisation and gives confidence to key stakeholders such as funders and the public.

Governance is defined as:

The systems and processes concerned with ensuring the overall direction, effectiveness, supervision and accountability of an organisation.

(The Governance of Voluntary Organisations, Cornforth 2003)

Governance is a big topic. It includes legal and regulatory requirements, roles and responsibilities, decision-making, strategic planning, financial management and risk management. While this may seem daunting, help is available to guide you through these topics and build good governance in your organisation step by step.

## **Advice from your regulator**

Depending on where your organisation is based and the type of legal structure that your organisation has adopted, you will have a regulator that will be able to provide information and advice. We have listed the main regulator details below:

### **Charities**

[The Charity Commission for England and Wales](#)

[The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland](#)

[Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator](#)

### **Charities that are also companies**

[Companies House](#)

### **Community Interest Companies**

[Office of the Regulator of Community Interest Companies](#)

### **Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies**

[Financial Conduct Authority](#)

## Sector support

There are support organisations that provide advice and information to community groups and charities, including help with governance matters. We have put links to the national support bodies below.

For England – National Council for Voluntary Organisations [NCVO](#)

For Scotland – Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations [SCVO](#)

For Northern Ireland – Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action [NICVA](#)

For Wales – Wales Council for Voluntary Action [WCVA](#)

For Co-operatives across the UK [Co-operatives UK](#)

These organisations are membership bodies but do provide some guidance and information for free.

There may also be a voluntary support organisation local to your local area or region that can provide advice and information on governance topics and assist with trustee and volunteer recruitment.

In Wales, local organisations form a network called the [Third Sector Support Wales](#) and whilst their resources are written for organisations in Wales, much of the content is also applicable to organisations in England. If you are based in Wales, you can use their website to find your local support body and access a free resource centre called the [Knowledge Hub](#). You will need to register via the website to access their free resources.

## Essential reading for trustees

Learn more about your responsibilities as a trustee with our pick of essential introductory reading.

From the Charity Commission (England and Wales)

- [Charity trustee welcome pack](#)
- [The essential trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do \(CC3\)](#)
- [Charity governance, finance and resilience: 15 questions trustees should ask](#)

From the Charity Commission (Northern Ireland)

- [Running your charity](#)

From the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR)

- [Legal duties and responsibilities of trustees](#)

## Charity Governance Code

The Charity Governance Code is a practical tool to help develop high standards of governance. The Code is intended for use by charities registered in England and Wales but much of it will also apply to other not-for-profit organisations that deliver a public or community benefit and those with a social purpose.

The Code sets out seven principles of good governance. Each principle in the Code has a brief description, a rationale (the reasons why it is important), key outcomes (what you would expect to see if the principle was adopted) and recommended practice (what a charity might do to implement the principle). The Code also includes a diagnostic tool to help you work towards achieving the principles.

You can download the code and associated tools here - [Charity Governance Code](#)

## Policies

A central aspect of governance is ensuring that you comply with your legal obligations and have appropriate policies and procedures in place. Good policies will help your organisation run smoothly, and also protect the organisation if something goes wrong. The range of policies that you will need will depend upon the size and nature of your activities but we have highlighted some below and provided some links to useful resources. Please note, this is not an exhaustive list and you must make sure that you put in place the policies that are relevant and appropriate for your organisation.

- **Health and safety policy**  
If you employ staff or have control of a building, you have specific legal responsibilities that are set out in Health & Safety at Work legislation. Even if you don't have staff, you will still have a general duty of care to volunteers and visitors. The legal position is set out on the [HSE website](#) where you can also find guidance on creating your [policy](#).
- **Data protection and privacy**  
There is legal obligation on organisations to have clear policies in place if they store any personal data. The Information Commissioner's Office has a range of [guidance and resources](#) on all issues to do with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and a section dedicated to the needs of [small organisations](#).
- **Employment policies**  
[ACAS website](#) has a range of templates relating to employment issues.
- **Volunteer code or policy**  
If your organisation has volunteers, then you should put in place a volunteer policy or code of conduct to set out the role of volunteers in your organisation and how they will be treated. National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) has a section on its website dedicated to [Involving volunteers](#). You can also find templates relating to volunteer management topics on the [Third Sector Support Wales \(TSSW\) Knowledge Hub](#).

- **Safeguarding policy**

Safeguarding is the term we use to refer to the work that we do to keep people safe and prevent incidents of harm, neglect or abuse from occurring. Safeguarding is relevant to all organisations but particularly those that work with or are open for visits from any persons that may be at risk. National Council for Voluntary Organisation's (NCVO) website explains the key safeguarding documents that you may need and provides [useful links for creating policies and procedures](#). There are also resources available on the [Third Sector Support Wales \(TSSW\) Knowledge Hub](#). Organisations based in Wales can also benefit from Wales Council for Voluntary Action's (WCVA) free [Safeguarding Advice service](#).

## Financial management

The governing body of your organisation is responsible for managing its finances. Even if you are lucky enough to employ an accountant, finance manager or have a qualified financial trustee, all trustees need to know and understand the organisation's finances. You will need to have sound budgeting and monitoring processes, keep appropriate records and comply with all reporting and accounting requirements.

We have set out some links to guidance to help you understand your responsibilities:

For England and Wales -

Charity Commission guidance [Managing Charity Finances](#)

For Scotland

OSCR [Charity Finances](#)

For Northern Ireland

Charity Commission for Northern Ireland [Annual reporting guidance](#)

The Third Sector Support Wales (TSSW) Knowledge Hub includes a free online learning module called [Financial Oversight and Guidance for Trustees](#).

The [Charity Finance Group](#) helps voluntary organisations with all aspects of financial management. Whilst you need to be a member to access some support they do have a range of guides aimed at small organisations which you can access on their website for free in the [Guides for Small Charities section](#). This includes information on topics such as banking, records management and gift aid.

## Decision-making and managing risk

The governing body of your organisation needs to work together to make effective decisions. There are legal and practical things that you will need to do to make sure that decisions are made properly. You will also need systems in place to deal with conflicts of interest and manage risk. The guidance that we have selected below will provide you with an introduction to these topics. While the guidance has been written for charities it will also be useful for other types of not-for-profit organisations.

[Making decisions at a charity](#)

[It's your decision: charity trustees and decision making \(CC27\)](#)

[Charities and meetings \(CC48\)](#)

[Managing conflicts of interest in a charity](#)

[Charities and risk management \(CC26\)](#)

## **Recruitment**

You will need to develop recruitment processes to ensure that you have enough people to join your governing body, and that they have the skills needed to govern your organisation successfully.

National Council for Voluntary Organisation (NCVO) has a range of guidance relating to the recruitment and induction of trustees including a skills audit template and guidance on building the diversity of your board of trustees. You can find this information here - [Trustee Recruitment](#)

You can also make use of Reach Volunteering's [Trustee recruitment cycle](#). This information will take you right through the process of recruiting trustees including a sample trustee role description, how to write your advert and how to evaluate the process afterwards.

Getting on Board also has a helpful webpage that lists a range of online sites where you can advertise trustee vacancies (some for free) - [Advertise a Trustee vacancy](#)

## **The role of Theatres Trust**

Theatres Trust is the national advisory public body for theatres and is a statutory consultee on theatres in the planning system. We provide a free advice service for anyone looking to save, restore or revive theatres or undertake a capital project in an existing theatre, including governance advice.

Contact us at [info@theatrust.org.uk](mailto:info@theatrust.org.uk) with information about your theatre and how we can help.

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