



Help and Advice

Northern Synod Office, 4 College Lane, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 8JJ (0191-232 1168)

Bulletin 66: TRUSTEES

The Help & Advice Group was set up by Synod in 2009, to support local churches in being informed and effective in their life and mission. The group was disbanded in 2014, as part of a simplification of Synod committees, and its work continues through the Trust Officer, under the oversight of the Trust's Property Subgroup. We are willing to try to provide specific advice on particular topics. Please get in touch if you have questions or suggestions.

This article is part of a series giving an overview of particular subjects of interest for local churches. We also circulate general updates from time to time. Bulletins will also be posted on the website <http://urc-northernsynod.org/help-advice-bulletins>, with direct links to other websites.

Where readers are directed to web-based resources, the Synod Office is willing to respond to reasonable requests for printed out information for readers without web access, although they may find it more satisfactory to follow up their interest through their local library's web access.

Charity Trustees' Welcome Pack

The Charity Commission has produced a short guide for new charity trustees, which they will email to newly-appointed trustees of registered charities. It clearly summarises trustees' duties and what you need to know when you first become a trustee. Some churches have registered charities, but in most cases, the Elders' Meeting will act as trustees for the church's general funds as an excepted charity. The welcome pack can be downloaded from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charity-trustee-welcome-pack>

To recap, the Charities (Exception from Registration) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 currently exempt smaller church charities from the requirement to register with the Charity Commission. Banks and others who ask for your charity number should be given this information instead. However, the Government's long-term aim is for most church charities to be registered. Currently, all those with gross annual income from all sources exceeding £100,000 should register. The URC has published updated guidance on how to do this, at [https://urc.org.uk/images/General/Guidance_Local_Church_Registration - March 2018.pdf](https://urc.org.uk/images/General/Guidance_Local_Church_Registration_-_March_2018.pdf). Please contact Andrew Atkinson at Synod Office if you need further help.

Automatic Disqualification Rules

The Charities (Protection and Social Investment) Act 2016 introduced new powers for the Charity Commission to suspend or disqualify individuals from serving as trustees or senior managers of charities.

Accordingly, when recruiting new trustees, elders, church secretaries and treasurers, churches should ask them to confirm that they are not disqualified. You should check at periodic intervals that they remain qualified. The Charity Commission has provided a link to a template in its guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/automatic-disqualification-rule-changes-guidance-for-charities>

There are also some official registers that you can check online.

NCVO has produced a clear and concise overview:

<https://knowhownonprofit.org/governance/improving-your-governance-practice/trustee-recruitment-and-induction/trustee-disqualification>

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