

Federation Trustee E-Learning Transcript - Module 1

Slide 1 – Welcome



Welcome to the Federation Trustee E-learning Programme!

We are delighted to have you here and hope you find this training both informative and valuable in supporting your role as a Federation Trustee.

This e-learning complements the WI Core Module Programme and is designed to enhance your understanding of the responsibilities that come with your trustee role. The Core Module Programme consists of three modules that cover key areas, including; an introduction to the WI, an overview of the Constitution, and an in-depth look at the Policies and Procedures established by the NFWI.

For a seamless experience, we recommend completing the WI Core Modules before beginning the Federation Trustee training, as they provide helpful context and serve as a useful refresher. You'll find the link to these modules just below the video.


This training is a mandatory part of your responsibilities as a trustee, with this module specifically focusing on the trustee role. All resources referenced in the modules, as well as a transcript, are available under the 'Helpful Links' section below the video.

At the end of the module, you'll complete a short knowledge test. Upon successful completion of all six modules, you'll receive a certificate recognising your achievement.

Thank you for your commitment to maintaining good governance and reducing risk as a Federation Trustee. Your role is invaluable.

Slide 2 – Introduction to Trustee Training

Introduction to Trustee Training



This course aims to make sure you will:

- Feel confident in undertaking your role
- Know where to access support
- Ensure you find being a trustee a rewarding experience
- Better understand the legal and technical requirements
- Reduce risk to both yourself and the federation board

This course is designed to give you confidence in your role, show you where to find support, and ensure your experience as a trustee is a rewarding one. By completing this course, you'll gain a clear understanding of the legal and technical requirements of your trustee role, which helps protect both you and your federation board.


As a trustee, you carry the important responsibility of overseeing your federation's management and long-term growth. This training is here to help you feel confident in these key responsibilities.

Completion of this course will also:

- Enable federations to ensure that they maintain their internal training records and support the identification of future training needs to inform discussions with the NFWI.
- Ensure that the federation is able to evidence that all of their trustees have undertaken Trustee Training and are aware of the roles and responsibilities, should your regulator or another legal body require evidence of this.

Slide 3 - Introduction to Module 1

Introduction to Module 1



In this module we will look at:

- The Charity Commission's guide to the role of a trustee
- The NFWI role description for a trustee
- The NFWI person specification for a trustee
- Identified skills you may wish to develop in your role

In this module, we'll explore:

- The Charity Commission's guide to trusteeship.
- The NFWI role description, outlining key tasks.
- The NFWI trustee person specification, to help you reflect on your strengths and skills and identify areas to develop.

We hope that by the end of the session you will have a greater understanding of what is required in your role as a trustee.

Slide 4 – Key aspects of a Trustee's responsibility

Key aspects of a Trustee's responsibility

The Charity Commission outline key aspects of responsibility:

- Ensuring your charity is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit
- Complying with your charity's governing document and the law
- Acting in your charity's best interests
- Managing your charity's resources responsibly
- Acting with reasonable care and skill
- Ensuring your charity is accountable

The Essential Trustee
6 main duties

The Charity Commission outline the following key aspects of a trustee's responsibility:

1. Ensuring your charity is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit
2. Complying with your charity's governing document and the law
3. Acting in your charity's best interests
4. Managing your charity's resources responsibly
5. Acting with reasonable care and skill
6. Ensuring your charity is accountable

Along with these key aspects, we know that a range of skills are needed to be a trustee, such as: being a good communicator, being a facilitator, having an independent mind, showing initiative, always being ready for a challenge, the ability to listen to members' voices, being a team player, having a clear and focussed vision for the future and being driven to make a difference in your role. We talk a lot within the WI about the balancing act required for our Trustees; ensuring there is a good

balance between meeting the needs of your members now and focussing on reaching new audiences to ensure your charity has a sustainable and strong future.

The Charity Commission document 'The Essential Trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do', is a useful document for all charity trustees. And the NCVO website has a range of help and guidance resources. A link to these resources are available in the 'Helpful Links' section under this video.

Charity Commission - 'The Essential Trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do' (Section 2 'Trustees duties at a glance' in particular)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66290919b0ace32985a7e6c3/CC3_fe_b24.pdf

Charity Commission - The Essential Trustee Diagram

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/544220/Jigsaw.pdf

NCVO – Help and Guidance

<https://www.ncvo.org.uk/help-and-guidance/>

Slide 5 – Act in your charity's best interests

Act in your charity's best interests

You are required to make decisions in the best interest on your federation focusing on:

- Carrying out purposes or objects
- Short and long term plans
- Avoid conflict of interest

You must also not receive any tangible personal benefit from the charity unless it is properly authorised and is clearly in the charity's interests.

This includes anyone who is financially connected to you (partner, dependent child or business partner).

As a trustee you are required to act in the best interests of your federation.

This means that you, alongside your co-trustees, must:

- Decide what will best enable the federation to carry out its purposes or objects.
- Make balanced and adequately informed decisions, thinking about both the short and long term.

- Avoid putting yourself into a position where there is a conflict of interest or loyalty to another person or body.

You must also not receive any tangible personal benefit from the charity unless it is properly authorised and is clearly in the charity's interests. This includes anyone who is financially connected to you (partner, dependent child or business partner).


Slide 6 – Manage your charity's resources responsibly

Manage your charity's resources responsibly

- Support charitable objects
- Don't take unnecessary risks
- Be transparent
- Avoid over commitment
- Take care when investing/borrowing
- In line with strategic plan
- Comply with spending restrictions
- Ensure adequate operating reserves
- Take appropriate professional advice

Resources include, but are not limited to, federation property, financial portfolio, equipment and reputation.

Ensure you know what resources your federation has and, as such, what you have responsibility.



When reviewing and making decisions about your charity's resources you must act at all times as guardians of the charity. Resources include, but are not limited to, federation property, financial portfolio, equipment and reputation. It is important to ensure you know what resources your federation has and, as such, you have responsibility for.

Here are some key points to ensuring you and your fellow trustees manage your charity's resources responsibly:

- Ensure assets are only used to support or carry out your charitable objects.
- Ensure you don't take inappropriate or unnecessary risks with your federation's assets.
- Be transparent in all your decisions, with a focus on the long term sustainability of the charity, the needs of current members and the reputation of the organisation.
- Consider ways to use your current resources to secure the future of the organisation and make sound investment decisions.
- Ensure you have not overcommitted charity resources.
- Take special care when investing or borrowing, or when exposing your charity to any form of financial risk.
- Ensure you know what your members, who are the charity's beneficiaries, want and do your best to use the resources to meet their needs in line with your strategic plan for the charity.

- Comply with any restrictions on spending, your treasurer can provide specific information relevant to your federation.
- Ensure you have adequate operating reserves and can always meet any commitments you have made on behalf of the charity.
- Ensure you take the appropriate professional and technical advice as required. Advice of this nature may come at a cost, but this is considered an appropriate use of charity funds if it supports the effective management of the charity and reduction of the level of risk it is exposed to.


Slide 7 – Act with reasonable care and skill


Act with reasonable care and skill

Advice and information is available from:

- Your Charity regulator
- The NFWI
- NCVO (National Council for Voluntary Organisations)
- Your federation professional advisers (solicitor, auditor etc.)

When deciding to take on the role of trustee you are committing to allocating sufficient time, thought and energy to your new role.





Each trustee brings valuable skills and experience to benefit the charity. However, it's also vital to know when to seek additional guidance from resources such as the Charity Regulator, the NFWI, or NCVO. You may also appoint specialist advisers or staff in your federation to guide you on matters that require specific technical skills and expertise. Any costs related to the provision of specialist advice is a reasonable charitable expense as it helps you make stronger and more informed decisions on behalf of your charity.

When deciding to take on the role of trustee you are committing to allocating sufficient time, thought and energy to your new role. This includes planning for trustee meetings as well as ensuring you remain up to date with charity legislation, governance and developments in the wider charity sector.


Slide 8 – Charity Reporting


Charity Reporting

- Operating within appropriate legal frameworks
- Making decisions relating to charity resources
- Comply with legal and regulatory reporting requirements
- Transparent access to documents

The main reporting requirements for charities:

- Annual accounts
- Trustees' annual report
- Annual return form





As well as adhering to the appropriate legal and regulatory frameworks and making sound decisions relating to charity resources, trustees must also comply with the relevant reporting requirements for their charity.

These requirements ensure that all charities are transparent in their activities and that members and beneficiaries of those charities and the wider public can access these documents to understand how the charity is managed.

This is a key element of charitable status and important in terms of both compliance but also the external reputation of the charity.

The reporting requirements of your charity will vary depending on your legal model (and constitution) and what is required by the regulator in the jurisdiction in which you are operating.


The main reporting requirements for charities are:


- Annual accounts. All charities whether registered with their regulator or not must prepare accounts and make them available on request. The requirements for the filing of these will depend on your constitution and regulator.
- Trustees annual report. Registered charities must prepare a Trustees annual report and make it available upon request.
- Annual return form. An annual return form is made available for each registered charity from the regulator shortly after its financial year end. In all cases, the annual return should be completed online.

Slide 9 – Collective Responsibility

Collective Responsibility

- Everyone on a Board of Trustees has equal responsibility
- You must feel comfortable to ask questions
- Challenge and explore options
- Listen to different perspectives and voices
- You must be satisfied with the course of action you are agreeing to




INSPIRING WOMEN

Everyone on a Board of Trustees has equal responsibility. Even though some people hold specific roles, such as Treasurer, you are all collectively responsible for all aspects of the charity's management. If you are not sure about something that your Board of Trustees are looking to approve, then you must feel comfortable to ask more questions.

Your role is to challenge and explore options, and the importance of having a wide range of trustees is to ensure that the board is hearing different perspectives and voices. You must be satisfied with the course of action you are agreeing to and feel comfortable in providing appropriate challenge.

All board members bring their own personal background and experiences to their position in the boardroom. Each individual offers unique ideas, solutions and strategies. It is the responsibility of the person chairing the meeting to ensure everyone has a voice and a fair opportunity to speak.

Trustees make decisions about their charity together, working as a team. Decisions don't usually need to be unanimous as long as the majority of trustees agree. Every trustee is then responsible for the collective decisions the board makes. Trustees must act by majority decision, regardless of their own personal views and once a decision is made this is the course of action to be taken and all trustees must take cabinet responsibility for supporting and implementing it. Any differences of opinion expressed within the discussion should not be shared more publicly.

Slide 10 – Role Description



A standardised Federation trustee role description has been developed based on the Charity Commission's 'Essential Skills of a Trustee' but it has been tailored to the WI to make it relevant for all federation trustees. This document is applicable regardless of what regulatory jurisdiction your charity falls within.

It includes the key tasks that you will be required to undertake. This document is for all federation trustees and does not include any specific additional tasks that federation officers or other specialist roles within your board may take on.

Slide 11 – Person Specification



A person specification outlines the ideal candidate profile for a particular role, highlighting the key qualities and experience needed. This specification is based on the role description and offers a guide to help you identify trustees with the skills that will benefit your federation now and into the future. It also serves as a helpful tool for creating advertisements within your federation when seeking new trustees.

The specification includes essential qualities for the role. Under the *Experience* section, it notes the relevant work or volunteer background required, along with any additional experience that might enhance a trustee's effectiveness. For *Skills and*

Abilities, it lists the specific talents or capabilities necessary for success in the role, as well as additional skills that would add value. And in the *Knowledge* section, it outlines the required level of understanding in particular areas to effectively fulfil the responsibilities detailed in the role description.

This tool supports well-informed succession planning by helping you target the right skills for a strong team of trustees. When you are visiting WIs and encouraging more women to come forward to support the federation it is always useful to be able to articulate what skills are required and what the board is looking for, and these documents will help you do that.



Slide 12 – Summary of learning

Summary of Learning

- Key responsibilities
- Considered the Charity Commission's guide on being a trustee
- Looked at the role description and person specification
- Looked at many tasks which can be broadly divided into: 'Must do' and 'Should do'

This is a good time to reflect on yourself as a Federation Trustee. What essential or desirable skills do you have?

Which ones might you need to develop within your role?



Thank you for joining this module! We hope you've gained new insights into your responsibilities as a Federation Trustee.

In this Module you have:

- Considered the Charity Commission's guide to the role
- Looked at the NFWI role description outlining the key tasks
- Reflected on your own skills and strengths according to the NFWI person specification
- Identified skills you may wish to develop in your role

You have looked at many tasks which can be broadly divided into:

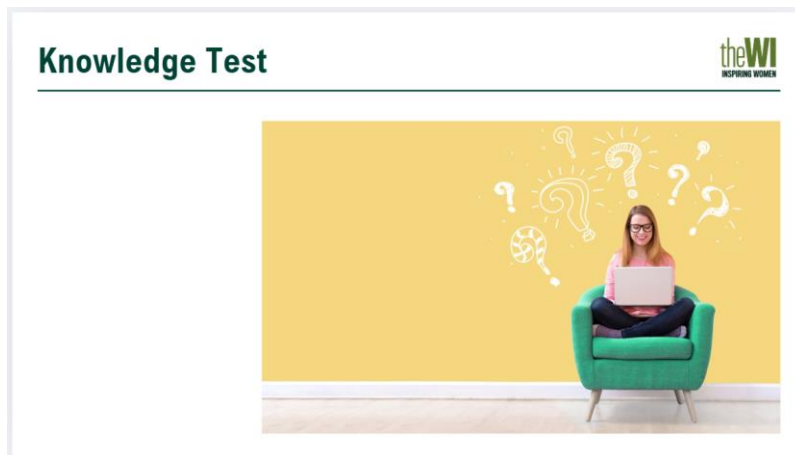
- **'Must do'** – something that is a legal or regulatory requirement or duty that trustees must comply with.
- **'Should do'** – something that is good or best practice that your regulator would expect trustees to follow. If good or best practice is not followed your regulator would expect trustees to be able to explain and justify why they weren't followed.

This is a good time to reflect on yourself as a Federation Trustee. Which of the essential or desirable skills do you have?

Which ones might you need to develop within your role or request more training or support for?

Don't forget, nobody will have everything! You are part of a team and so what is more important is that collectively you have the right skills, experience and approach to successfully lead your federation.

Slide 13 – Knowledge Test



Congratulations on completing this module! Now, it's time for the knowledge test. There are five questions based on the material covered. If needed, feel free to review the slides to refresh your understanding.

Thank you for your dedication as a Federation Trustee. If you have any questions, please reach out to the NFWI for support. We appreciate your time and commitment in this role.