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The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland has published its latest report, detailing some of the common concerns it has received about charities in Northern Ireland.

The report '*Lessons learned: Focus on charity trustees*', available below, is the latest in a series of publications focusing on good governance issues in charities.



20141219 Lessons learned: Focus on charity trustees

Download [PDF \(430 KB\)](#)

Myles McKeown, the Commission's Head of Compliance and Enquiries, explained: "Being a charity trustee is a rewarding but also a responsible role and it's important trustees understand their obligations to the charity and under the law.

"Reports such as this provide an overview of some of the common concerns we receive, including guidance on how to resolve them and, preferably, how to avoid making the same mistakes in your charity.

"I would encourage all trustees to make good use of the report to help ensure their charity is in good governance – while we can step in to help to put things right, prevention remains the best cure."

The report provides an overview of four key concern themes, each one with a specific focus on charity trustees – the people who are legally responsible for the control and governance of a charity.

The themes covered include ensuring your charity has sufficient trustee numbers, with one single person not dominant, as well as looking at longevity of trustees, the criteria for trusteeship and adherence to governing documents.

In addition, the report provides confidential case studies based on concerns the Commission has received, providing a deeper understanding of the strong powers the Commission has when taking remedial or protective action to resolve mismanagement or misconduct within charities.

Mr McKeown continued: "At the heart of all effective charities is good governance and, as well as ensuring they are complying with the law, all charities should ensure they are adhering to their governing document and both know, and are working to achieve, their charitable purposes.

"In fact compulsory charity registration, which is now ongoing, provides an ideal opportunity for charities to review their governing documents to ensure they are up to date and meeting the requirements of charity law.

"The people of Northern Ireland are generous, supporting local charities with their time, skills and money, and trustees can repay that confidence by ensuring their charity is open, accountable and well run."

As at 15 December 2014, the Commission had received almost 370 concerns about charities since gaining its powers of investigation in February 2011, of which almost 320 have been concluded.

Each concern the Commission receives is assessed, which allows the Commission to decide the best course of action to take based on the evidence available and the level of risk involved.

For more information on how the Commission deals with the concerns it receives, to download a copy of its latest report '*Lessons learned: Focus on charity trustees*' or to find out how you can submit a concern about a Northern Ireland charity visit www.charitycommissionni.org.uk

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For more information please contact Shirley Kernan, Charity Commission Communications Officer, on telephone: 028 3832 0169, mobile: 07827338978 or email: shirley.kernan@charitycommissionni.org.uk

Notes to editors

The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland is the independent regulator of charities in Northern Ireland. It was established under the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.

The Commission has statutory objectives to ensure trustees comply with their legal obligations in managing charities, and to increase public trust and confidence in charities. This includes a statutory function to identify and investigate apparent misconduct or mismanagement in the administration of charities, and to take remedial or protective action.

Like most modern regulators, the Commission will take a risk-based and proportionate approach to regulating charities. This means targeting resources at the highest risks to charities' beneficiaries, services and assets and where intervention will have the greatest impact.

The Commission also follows the principles of best regulatory practice, ensuring our actions are proportionate, accountable, consistent, transparent and targeted.