

Charity trustees' legal names must be displayed on charity register



Currently, charity trustees are able to use a 'public display name' on the charity register instead of their legal name.

However, from 1 September 2019 [but see update below] the Charity Commission will publish the legal names of all charity trustees on the public register unless a dispensation has been granted.

The reasoning behind this change is that charity trusteeship is a serious responsibility and they must be accountable to the public.

When will the Charity Commission grant a dispensation?

The Charity Commission will grant a dispensation where “*displaying an individual's name could put the relevant person or people in personal physical or mental danger.*”

One example given is a trustee of a domestic abuse charity who works with women seeking to escape domestic violence and there is credible evidence that the trustee will be at risk of physical harm if their name is put into the public domain.

Dispensations can be granted to an individual trustee or the whole trustee board.



How to apply for a dispensation

Full details on how to apply for a dispensation can be found in this [Charity Commission guidance](#).

Points to note:

- For individual applications, it will be the individual's circumstances that are considered and these may or may not relate to the charity itself. Where an application is made for a dispensation for the whole board, the Charity Commission will consider why being a trustee of that particular charity places any trustee of that charity in danger.
- If you have already been granted a dispensation prior to this change of policy, there is no need to apply for a dispensation again.
- Dispensations will not usually be granted where the trustee's name is public on the Companies House register or the trustee hasn't taken steps to protect their anonymity.
- Once granted, individual dispensations are reviewed annually. Dispensations granted to whole trustee boards are reviewed every 5 years.

Names in charity accounts and trustees' annual reports

These are available to the public on the register however where a dispensation has been granted you do not need to include this information. However, you must show in the document that there is information you have permission to withhold. For example, a trustee with a dispensation should be shown as:

XX – Trustee with a dispensation

N.B. It is the charity's responsibility to remove the information. The Charity Commission will not do this for you.

Addresses

The Charity Commission do not show trustees' addresses on the charity register unless the address of one of the trustees has been provided as the public contact address for the charity. The public contact address does not need to be the physical location of the charity but must be an address which is administered by the charity and receives communications '*in a timely manner*'.

Beware the digital service!

If your charity needs to update its governing document and it contains information to which a dispensation applies, do not use the digital service to make the change as you risk revealing the information to which the dispensation applies. Instead [contact](#) the Charity Commission for advice.

There are now just under four months before this policy comes into effect however applications for a dispensation take 30 days to process so any trustee affected by this change should aim to submit their application as soon as possible.

If you require any advice about the information displayed on the charity register or have any queries about the role of a charity trustee, please contact our [charities team](#).

Update – 7 August 2019

The Charity Commission has now [extended](#) the time in which trustees can apply for a dispensation to 1 April



2020.



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