



Consultation response

The essential trustee consultation response – commentary and next steps

Thank you to everyone who participated in the consultation via the online survey, by email or by attending one of the workshops. We are pleased with the good response rate for this consultation, reflecting the significance of the Essential Trustee as a source of information and guidance for trustees.

[The infographic](#) gives a visual summary of the key findings from our consultation. It reflects the full range of feedback we received. Here are the main points that we're taking from that feedback.

1. Support for the new draft. Overall the support for the new approach was strong; many respondents also emphasised how much they value the current version.
2. Awareness of guidance. A small number of trustees said they had never read the Essential Trustee before. We believe this may reflect a wider issue. We want to do more to raise trustees' awareness of their responsibilities. We can't do this alone and need to work with sector umbrella bodies and advisors. Many organisations and advisors highlighted what they already do to raise awareness of trustees' responsibilities. Others suggested things the Commission could do, or made offers of additional help. We will consider these suggestions.
3. Clarity. Most people found the new draft clearer in terms of layout and language, and easier to navigate to associated guidance. Some people suggested additional topics that they felt need to be included; others felt that the guidance is long enough already. We will consider how to balance these perspectives.
4. Tone. Most people said the guidance strikes the right balance between reassuring trustees who act responsibly and emphasising the potential consequences of acting negligently or in bad faith. However, a number of respondents (including lawyers and umbrella bodies) had concerns about the overall tone. These concerns were strongly linked with views on the explanation of what trustees 'must' do and what they 'should' do.

We plan to improve the draft, by:

- developing the summary section as an 'at-a-glance' statement of the basics
- clarifying which parts of good practice it is vital for trustees to get right, and what the Commission expects of trustees
- providing clearer reassurance to the vast majority of trustees who discharge their duties responsibly and to the best of their ability

These are the areas we will focus on. We will also consider the specific and detailed feedback that many respondents have helpfully provided.

We hope to publish the updated version early this summer.