

EXPECTATIONS AND POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES OF TRUSTEES OF AvMA

Introduction

All trustees are required by law to undertake the core role of leading and overseeing AvMA. Trustees must lead the charity consistent with the requirements of the Charity Commission. Trustees must ensure that AvMA remains viable (or is wound up in an orderly manner) and complies with its legal responsibilities (which include those specific to its operations as a charity, company, employer, provider of legal services, landlord, holder of personal data, and so on). These responsibilities are those accepted on appointment, and must be discharged with due diligence.

Beyond this core trustee role there is further opportunity for trustees to carry out a range of activities to support the work of the charity. These would be wholly at the trustee's own volition, and undertaken according to trustees' skills, interests, and availability. Whilst such activity is deeply appreciated, it is not a mandatory part of the role.

Core expectations

- **Strategic leadership, and oversight of the charity's performance**

All trustees share responsibility for strategic leadership of the charity.

Trustees are expected to oversee the sound management of the charity according to the rules of the Charity Commission for England & Wales and the Office of the Scottish Charities Regulator, with whom AvMA is registered. This includes ensuring that the charity pursues its charitable objectives to the best of its ability, operates within charity law, and so far as possible remains financially viable.

Guidance from the Charity Commission and other useful material is provided to each trustee in an information pack and in their induction. As AvMA is a limited company, every trustee is also a director of the charitable company and has similar responsibilities under company law.

A central way in which trustees deliver their core responsibilities is through participation in meetings of the Council of Trustees. This is where key strategic decisions about the charity are made and where trustees monitor the work and finances of the charity. This requires careful reading of the papers provided in advance of the meeting and participation in the meetings themselves. Trustees bring their own experience, knowledge, and principles to AvMA's process of decision making. Trustees are expected to provide constructive challenge, exercising their judgment in the interests of the charity and its beneficiaries.

To be able to carry out their strategic remit, trustees are expected to keep up to date with the issues relevant to AvMA's charitable mission of patient safety and justice and with the work of the charity itself. This requires reading or viewing material which AvMA may send out to trustees between trustee Council meetings.

Council meets four times a year, currently from 1pm to 5pm. Lunch is provided, and trustees are encouraged to socialise following the meeting.

All trustees are expected to attend board development or strategic review days as required. It is likely that these will require a minimum of one full day each year in addition to Council meetings. In 2016-2017 trustees have attended two additional half day meetings prior to Council to consider urgent strategic issues, as well as the annual full day of discussion.

Trustees are also invited to serve on AvMA's two sub-committees. These are the finance and investment committee (already established) and the quality and outcomes committee (in development).

In 2017, we are particularly eager to recruit trustees with an interest in serving on the quality and outcomes committee.

- **Fundraising and promotion**

AvMA cannot carry out its charitable activities without the funds to do so. All trustees are asked to take an active interest in fundraising. This includes helping to generate support for fundraising activities (e.g. making contacts aware of fundraising events that may interest them), attending events to meet our supporters and helping the charity to build and sustain relationships with supporters and potential donors.

In 2017 we are particularly eager to recruit a trustee with professional knowledge of fundraising.

- **Acting as an ambassador for AvMA**

Trustees have a vital role to play in promoting AvMA in their professional and other networks. Trustees are expected to seek opportunities to make the charity's work known, for example through drawing attention to its activities across a range of audiences, publicising its work on social media, or helping initiate collaboration with other organisations.

Additional potential activity

- **Honorary officer positions**

The trustees elect a Chair, vice-Chair, and treasurer annually at the general meeting. They provide advice to the Chief Executive and other senior managers between Council meetings and are members of AvMA's executive committee. The treasurer has oversight of financial matters and Chairs the finance and investment committee.

- **Volunteering in AvMA's beneficiary services**

Trustees are most welcome to spend time volunteering on the AvMA helpline or other support services. Trustees are encouraged to sit in on helpline sessions during their induction, and several have afterwards taken the opportunity to undertake regular sessions. This is of real value to the Council, as it gives trustees insight into the issues facing our beneficiaries.

Helpline volunteers are provided with training on helpline skills and to build essential knowledge such as complaints procedures; basics regarding clinical negligence; patient safety investigations and patients' rights. Volunteers then sign up to a regular 1.5 or 2 hour session (supervised) either at Croydon or from their own home.

- **Representation at meetings**

AvMA receives more invites to meetings than staff can possibly attend. It helps raise AvMA's profile and ensures we keep up to date with developments if with trustees' help we can be represented at all important relevant meetings. It also does AvMA's reputation good for other stakeholders to see involvement in our work from a variety of people rather than just the staff they are used to seeing. Trustees will benefit from learning more about the issues; keeping up to date; meeting key stakeholders etc.

There may be ongoing bodies/meetings on which trustees can represent AvMA, or trustees can volunteer to represent AvMA on one-off occasions. Staff will brief trustees on policy issues in question. Trustees are expected to keep to the existing AvMA 'line' on issues unless agreed otherwise and to report back on any significant issues arising at meetings attended. Expenses are paid (either by the organisation hosting the meeting or by AvMA).

- **Speaking engagements**

AvMA is invited to make presentations at a wide range of conferences and seminars. Usually this function is undertaken by the Chief Executive or another senior manager. However, we would welcome additional input from trustees who are capable public speakers.

- **Research and writing**

AvMA would benefit from further research to inform our policy work and raise our profile. Trustees with research experience and skills could make a valuable contribution either through identifying research funding opportunities and supporting AvMA to develop proposals, or by conducting their own research activity.

AvMA publishes opinion pieces on its website, and trustees' help is sought with generating content. This could be through contributing material or eliciting content from others within a trustee's network.

- **Writing consultation responses**

There are numerous consultations held each year. The Chief Executive seeks guidance from trustees on major consultations or complex issues, and it is not possible for staff to respond to all. Trustee input is vital as it helps AvMA to compose robust responses and potentially respond to more consultations.

- **Project work**

Where trustees have particular knowledge, expertise and/or contacts in certain aspects of our work, it may be appropriate for them to 'lead' on certain pieces of work (whilst keeping in touch with staff and fellow trustees). For example trustees have contributed significantly to development of fundraising processes; helped develop ideas for conferences; promoted AvMA to particular professional groups, and provided advice to the lawyers service and advice & information departments.

Trustees in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland

AvMA is committed to promoting patient safety and justice in all parts of the UK. It is recognised that due to devolution of some power and the differing health and legal systems in different parts of the UK this poses AvMA some difficulties. Trustees from countries other than England can help AvMA considerably by spreading the word about AvMA; making introductions for AvMA staff to key stakeholders; representing AvMA at meetings staff are unable to get to; keeping the AvMA office and fellow trustees briefed on issues and developments in their country. It may be possible that such trustees could actively facilitate and develop our support base in those countries by facilitating meetings with supporters etc, and ensuring AvMA's communications include updates on their country.

Support of trustees & expenses

AvMA is committed to offering support and where appropriate, training to help trustees develop their full potential in supporting AvMA.

AvMA encourages trustees to attend its conferences, seminars and other training events. Attendance is free. Trustees are expected to cover their own travel and subsistence at these events, unless they are contributing to the event or have been specifically asked to attend in order to promote the charity.

AvMA recognises that the more a trustee does for the charity the more expense they may incur. All reasonable out of pocket expenses are reclaimable by trustees for agreed duties, and no trustee should feel awkward about claiming expenses which are due to them.

Appraisal of trustees

AvMA appraises trustees every two years. Appraisal serves as an opportunity for trustees to reflect on their contribution to the charity and on board performance, and supports succession planning in Council. One third of the Council stands for re-election each year. AvMA does not have fixed terms of appointment for trustees, but there is now an expectation that, consistent with good governance principles, trustees will ideally not serve for a period in excess of nine years. Outside of appraisal and re-election, if there is a concern that a trustee is not performing effectively the Chair of Council will raise this with the trustee. If the situation does not improve, the Chair may ask the trustee to consider resignation.

There is an expectation that trustees will attend at least three of the four Council meetings a year. A record is kept of attendance and this will be considered as part of the process of considering re-election of trustees on a rotation basis, as per AvMA's constitution. AvMA takes steps to facilitate the participation of trustees who may be prevented by distance, disability or other reason from participating in meetings, for example by arranging teleconference facilities.

Chair and Chief Executive 2017