



Officer duties

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As an officer your biggest responsibility is to act in the best interest of your charity, making sure it remains focused on its purpose and the benefit it provides to the public.

This resource is a starting point to help you understand your role as an officer and how you can contribute to governing your charity well.

Understand your rules and your role

To be an effective officer, you need to understand your charity's [legal structure](#) and [how you fit in](#). Your [rules](#) (constitution or trust deed) describes the purpose of your charity and how your charity can achieve its purpose. You can read your rules on the [Charities Register](#).

Know your legal obligations

Charities have different obligations depending on their structure, their rules, the services they offer and their funding. They may also have different tax responsibilities. For more on your legal duties, check out [Community Law's Community Toolkit](#).

Report annually to Charities Services

Registered charities must file an [annual return](#) and a financial statement or a performance report six months after their balance date. Financial statements and performance reports must meet the [reporting standards](#) designed for charities.

Update your charity's details

It is essential to keep your contact details up to date so we can stay in touch and send you reminders of when you need to file. You need to [update us](#) within three months when there is a change to your charity's details on the Charities Register. A customisable [handbook](#) is available to help you keep track of the information you need to run your charity.

Manage risks carefully

It is your duty to make sure your charity has adequate policies and procedures in place to manage risks. Check if you have a [conflict of interest](#) policy for your charity, and [policies for when a dispute happens](#).

CommunityNet Aotearoa have useful [policies](#) and procedures and [risk management](#) resources.

Look after your finances

It is your duty to know that your charity's money is being used to advance your charitable purpose. This means ensuring financial controls are in place. CommunityNet Aotearoa has an online resource for [financial management](#).

Keep good records

Good record keeping is important. You should keep accurate records of your charity's meetings, what your charity earns, what you spend, what you do and your volunteers. CommunityNet Aotearoa has an online resource for [record keeping](#).

Be strategic and sustainable

One of the greatest challenges for any charity is planning for the future and achieving sustainable funding. Use [NZ Navigator](#), an online self-assessment tool to monitor your charity's governance and identify your strengths and weaknesses.

More on governance

For most charities, it is worth taking time to understand your duties and to learn about how to improve your charity. Community Net Aotearoa has a governance resource called [The Good Governance Code](#), that defines good governance for community organisations in Aotearoa.

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