

News story: IPO customer visit programme 2016 to 2017

The IPO customer visit team has published its annual report.

The Intellectual Property Office (IPO) customer visit programme is part of a wider schedule of stakeholder engagement. It provides us with an opportunity to meet our customers, share information on our services and collect a wide range of feedback.

The 2016 to 2017 report summarises the issues that were raised this year and provides further information from the IPO.

[Customer visit programme 2016/17](#) (PDF, 722KB, 24 pages)

If you would like us to visit you, please contact:

Reports from [2015](#), [2014](#) and [2013](#) are also available.

Press release: Charities must do more to promote diversity on their boards, new research shows

New research recommends that charities do more to promote diversity on their boards and encourage applications from women, young people and people from ethnic minority and socially diverse backgrounds.

The report was commissioned by the Office for Civil Society and the Charity Commission, and delivered by a consortium led by Cass Business School and the Cranfield Trust.

The research finds that men outnumber women trustees on boards by two to one. The majority (92%) of trustees are white, older and above average income and education.

The research also finds that charity trustees, who are overwhelmingly volunteers, feel positively about their role and about the personal reward and satisfaction it gives them. It also highlights that trustees' contribution to charities amounts to a monetary equivalent of around £3.5 billion a year.

The researchers surveyed a sample of 19,064 trustees, via a national survey

in January 2017. Around 3,500 trustees responded to the survey.

The report finds that:

- 71% of charity chairs are men and 68% of charity treasurers are men
- the average age of trustees is 55-64 years; over half (51%) are retired
- 75% of trustees have household incomes above the national median
- 60% of trustees have a professional qualification; 30% have post-graduate qualifications
- 71% of trustees are recruited through an informal process
- in 80% of charities trustees play both a governance role and an executive role – they have no staff or volunteers from whom they can seek support
- 70% of trustees are involved in charities with an incomes of less than £100k a year
- trustees report lacking relevant legal, digital, fundraising, marketing and campaigning skills at board level
- trustees are concerned about their skills in dealing with fraud and external cyber-attack
- trustees seek support and advice from one another – 80% of all respondents regard this as their most important internal source of advice and support, with only 6% seeking guidance or training from an external provider
- on average, trustees donate almost 5 hours a week to their trustee roles

The report also recommends that guidance and support for trustees should be reviewed and enhanced and should draw on developments in digital technology.

The Charity Commission, the regulator of charities in England and Wales, has published a [formal response to the research](#), which points to the growing importance of charities to our society, as charities perform a wide range of public functions – such as medical research and animal welfare – and take increasing responsibility for the delivery of public services.

Helen Stephenson, the Commission's chief executive, says that the research findings offer encouragement, but also point to systemic issues around the diversity of and recruitment to trusteeship:

Trustees make a vital contribution to our society and communities up and down the country rely on their voluntary efforts. It is heartening that, despite the demands on their time and expertise, trustees are overwhelmingly positive about their role.

But there is no room for complacency about the state of trusteeship. Trustees do not reflect the communities charities serve. Charities are therefore at risk of missing out on the widest range of skills, experience and perspective at board level – indeed trustees themselves report lacking key skill areas, including digital. Uniformity at board level also puts charities at risk by creating a culture of “group think” where decision making can go unchallenged – something our casework bears out. Diversity of

experience, approach and personality helps guard against such problems and enables any organisation to foster a culture that is conducive to good governance.

I welcome this extensive and rigorous research and hope its findings act as a catalyst for action by charities to promote diverse trusteeship, and to better support existing trustees in their work. Trustees tell us that they enjoy their roles and I want more people from different backgrounds to benefit from this important experience

Lead researcher Professor Stephen Lee, Cass Business School said:

This is the first comprehensive research of the Charity Commissions register of trustee roles. The findings contained in this report dispel a number of previously prevailing myths about charity trusteeship.

Contrary to earlier research, over 85% of trustees reported that they were fully or mainly aware of their responsibilities when they were appointed, and this increased to 90% being fully or mainly aware of their legal responsibilities as a board member.

The vast majority of trustees (80%) are located in very small charities with no staff to support them. In practice, this means that these trustees must address both managerial and governance demands if the charities that they represent are to sustain themselves effectively.

Despite this, most charity trustees find the role personally rewarding (90%) and regard it as important or very important to them (94%). The monetary value that their voluntary service delivers to society is estimated at £3.5 billion per annum.

Also published today, as part of the [same research programme](#), is a report by The Cranfield Trust and National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) which examines the advice and support available to charity trustees.

The report finds that the uptake of formal support by trustees is low, and that trustees report finding difficulty in identifying appropriate support. Organisations providing trustee services confirm the findings of the Cass research that trustee recruitment is largely informal, and raise questions about whether existing support offerings are tailored to the needs of trustees.

Amanda Tincknell, CBE, CEO of The Cranfield Trust says:

The study of organisations providing services to trustees and boards identifies opportunities which are also highlighted in the

survey of individual trustees. Informal trustee recruitment is the norm, and joining a board is a point when people becoming trustees could be most receptive to information and learning about the role.

Encouraging charities to use open recruitment approaches and improving signposting among support organisations will help trustees and the organisations they serve to develop their knowledge and skills. There's a real opportunity to reach many more trustees and strengthen individuals and boards in their critical role.

The two reports were commissioned by the Charity Commission and the Office for Civil Society.

Report I: Taken on Trust, the awareness and effectiveness of charity trustees in England and Wales was partly funded by the Worshipful Company of Management Consultants. The authors are Professor Stephen Lee, Professor of Voluntary Sector Management, Centre for Charity Effectiveness, Cass Business School, Dr Bob Harris, Pro-bono Consultant, Worshipful Company of Management Consultants, Nikki Stickland, Charity Commission, and Silvani Pesenti, Cass Business School.

Report II: Taken on Trust, the provider perspective on advice and support for charity trustees was delivered by NCV0 with the Cranfield Trust.

Ends

Notes to Editors

The Charity Commission is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales. To find out more about our work, see our [annual report](#).

[Cass Business School](#), which is part of City, University of London, is a leading global business school driven by world-class knowledge, innovative education and a vibrant community. Located in the heart of one of the world's leading financial centres, Cass has strong links to both the City of London and the thriving entrepreneurial hub of Tech City.

[The Cranfield Trust](#) is the UK's leading provider of free management support to the voluntary sector. Working with a register of 1,000 professionals from the commercial sector, the Trust supports over 400 voluntary organisations with strategic, tailored consultancy projects each year. Services also include online HR information and advice, and a national series of masterclasses and learning events.

[The Worshipful Company of Management Consultants \(WCOMC\)](#) is a modern Livery Company in the City of London, founded in 1992. Its members have extensive experience in the management consultancy profession. WCOMC was instrumental in establishing the Cass Centre for Charity Effectiveness (Cass CCE) and has worked with Cass CCE on many initiatives over the past decade. As well as providing grants from a modest Charitable Fund, the WCOMC also has a vibrant Pro-Bono Programme whereby experienced management consultants provide pro-

bono support to charities and other not-for-profit organisations in London, the UK and internationally. This research study was supported by the WCOMC Pro-Bono Programme.

[News story: New MOT reminder service launches in beta](#)

The GOV.UK service, developed by the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA), makes it easy to get a reminder every year when your vehicle's MOT is due.

When you sign up, you'll get a reminder:

- 4 weeks before your MOT is due
- 2 weeks before your MOT is due, if you still haven't had it tested

You'll also get alerts that your vehicle no longer has an MOT.

You just need the vehicle's number plate (registration number) and a mobile phone number or email address.

You'll get a reminder every year until you unsubscribe.

The service is in 'beta' stage, which means it's still being continually tested and improved by DVSA.

What email MOT reminders look like

What text message MOT reminders look like

No excuse for forgetting

Research by DVSA has revealed that around 28% of cars will be overdue at any one time. Most of these are down to drivers forgetting to get it done, rather than deliberately avoiding having the test done.

If you drive a vehicle without a valid MOT, you're breaking the law. The only exceptions are to drive it:

- to or from somewhere to be repaired
- to a pre-arranged MOT test

You're also risking your own life and the lives of your passengers and other road users.

You can be fined up to £1,000 for driving a vehicle without a valid MOT.

Helping you keep your vehicle safe to drive

The [2016 reported road casualties report for Great Britain](#) showed that roadworthiness of vehicles was a factor in 1,687 accidents.

Transport Minister, Baroness Sugg, said:

We have some of the safest roads in the world, but we are always looking at ways to make them even safer.

Booking your next MOT is easy to overlook but it plays an important role in making sure the vehicles on our roads are safe and meeting high environmental standards.

Getting a text or email will serve as a useful prompt to make sure people get their vehicle checked out time.

DVSA Chief Executive, Gareth Llewellyn, said:

DVSA's priority is to help you keep your vehicle safe to drive.

The annual MOT checks that important parts of your vehicle meet the legal standards at the time of the test.

Motorists should also remember that to be a safe and responsible driver, and reduce the risk of your vehicle's condition causing an accident that kills or seriously injures someone, you need to check your vehicle all year round.

Make sure that:

- brakes work smoothly and that the vehicle doesn't pull to one side
- tyres are correctly inflated, have no cuts or bulges, and that they all have at least 1.6mm of tread
- headlights and other lights work – give them a tap to check they're not loose or damaged and check the colours are correct and match
- windscreen wipers and washers work
- the driver's view of the road is clear of any obstruction, such as stickers, toys or air fresheners

A new way of building digital services

The MOT reminder service uses [GOV.UK Notify](#), which is a platform to make it easier to keep people updated, and help government service teams send text messages, emails or letters to users.

The government is creating a set of shared components, service designs, platforms, data and hosting, that every government service can use.

This frees up teams to spend their time designing user-centric services rather than starting from scratch, so services become easier to create and cheaper to run.

Press release: Foreign Secretary Statement on the Situation in Lebanon.

I spoke today to Foreign Minister Bassil on the latest developments in Lebanon. I reiterated to him the United Kingdom's full support for the sovereignty and independence of Lebanon.

Prime Minister Hariri has been a good and trusted partner for the UK, and we hope that he will return to Beirut without further delay, not least in the interests of Lebanon's political stability.

We urge all parties with an interest in Lebanon to do all they can to encourage this, and to work more broadly to reduce recent tensions.

I reassured the Foreign Minister that the UK will continue to support the people and institutions of Lebanon at this challenging time.

The Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) is the only legitimate authority within Lebanon, and no militia groups or foreign forces should aim to challenge the LAF as the ultimate guarantor of the Lebanese people's security.

We echo the concerns of the United States and our European partners that Lebanon should not be used as a tool for proxy conflicts, and that its independence and integrity should be respected by all parties – within the country and beyond.

News story: Brokenshire: no place in our society for those who want to pull us back to the past

Speaking earlier following the Remembrance Day Service at Enniskillen, Mr Brokenshire said:

I condemn unreservedly those who are responsible for the placing of the device in Omagh earlier this morning. It is a despicable act on the day that we gather to honour those brave men and women who paid the ultimate sacrifice.

Let me be clear there is no place in society for these faceless people who want to drag us back to the dark days of Northern Ireland's past.'□