

POLITICAL STUDIES ASSOCIATION

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR TRUSTEES

1. Introduction

Those who serve on the Executive Committee (board of trustees) of the Political Studies Association have responsibilities both under company law as directors and under charity law as trustees. In addition, given our aims and objectives, we have a duty to provide a model of best practice. As part of this each trustee is asked to agree to abide by the code of conduct which is set out in this document and to sign the attached declaration accordingly.

2. Purpose of the code

The code aims to define the standard expected of the Political Studies Association's trustees in order to ensure that:

- the organisation is effective, open and accountable;
- the highest standards of integrity and stewardship are achieved; and
- the working relationship with the executive director and other staff is productive and supportive.

3. Code of conduct

3.1 SELFLESSNESS

Trustees have a general duty to act with probity and prudence in the best interest of the Political Studies Association as a whole. They should not act in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, their friends or the organisation they come from.

3.2 INTEGRITY

The Political Studies Association's trustees should conduct themselves in a manner which does not damage or undermine the reputation of the organisation, or its staff. More specifically they:

- should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their role;
- must avoid actual impropriety and any appearance of improper behaviour; and
- should avoid accepting gifts and hospitality that might reasonably be thought to influence their judgement.

3.3 OBJECTIVITY

In carrying out their role, including making appointments, awarding contracts, recommending individuals for rewards and benefits or transacting other business, the Political Studies Association's trustees should ensure that decisions are made solely on merit. In arriving at decisions in areas where they do not have expertise themselves trustees should consider appropriate professional advice.

3.4 ACCOUNTABILITY

The Political Studies Association's trustees:

- have a duty to comply with constitutional and legal requirements and to adhere to best practice in such a way as to preserve confidence in the Political Studies Association; and
- are accountable to the organisation members and other stakeholders for their decisions, the effectiveness of the board and the performance of the organisation.

3.5 OPENNESS

The Political Studies Association's trustees should ensure that confidential information and material, including material about individuals is handled in accordance with due care; so that it remains confidential. In addition they should be as open as possible about their decisions and the actions that

they take. As far as possible they should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider interest clearly demands.

3.6 HONESTY

The Political Studies Association's trustees have a duty to avoid any conflict of interest so far as is reasonably practicable. In particular they must make known any interest in any matter under discussion which: creates either a real danger of bias (that is, the interest affects them, or a member of their household more than the generality affected by the decision); or, which might reasonably cause others to think it could influence the decision. They should declare the nature of the interest and withdraw from the room, unless the remaining trustees agree otherwise.

3.7 LEADERSHIP

The Political Studies Association's trustees must:

- promote and support the principles of leadership by example;
- strive to attend all meetings regularly, ensuring they prepare for and contribute appropriately and effectively; and
- bring fair and open minded view to all discussions of the Executive Committee, and senior staff, ensuring that the honorary officers, the board, and their senior staff work effectively and cohesively for the benefit of the organisation, and develop a mutually supportive and loyal relationship.

4. Trustee's declaration

I declare that:

- I am over the age of 18.
- I am not an undischarged bankrupt.
- I have not previously been removed from the trusteeship of a charity by a court of the charity commissioners.
- I am not under a disqualification order under the Company Directors' Disqualification Act 1986.
- I am, in the light of the above, not disqualified by the Charities Act 1993 (Section 72) from acting as a charity trustee.
- I undertake to fulfil my responsibilities and duties as a trustee of the Political Studies Association in good faith and in accordance with the law and with the Political Studies Association's objectives.
- I do not have any financial interests in conflict with those of the Political Studies Association (either in person or through family or business connections) except those which I have formally notified in a conflict of interest statement. I will specifically notify any such interest at any meeting where trustees are required to make a decision which affects my personal interests, and I will unless agreed otherwise absent myself entirely from any decision on the matter and not vote on it.
- I will abide by this code of practice for trustees of the Political Studies Association.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Name of Trustee: _____

Acknowledgement: This document follows the 'Model Code of Practice for Charity Trustees' prepared by Shirley Scott, Chief Executive of the Charity Finance Directors' Group, which is published each year in the *Charity Finance Yearbook*.