

**Becoming a diocesan trustee**

At this time, new trustee boards are being elected across Mothers' Union. But what does it mean to be a trustee of Mothers' Union in your diocese?

In Britain & Ireland, Mothers' Union dioceses are charities registered with the relevant charity regulatory body. For most dioceses, this is the Charity Commission for England & Wales. Similar bodies exist in Scotland, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and the Isle of Man. All the charity regulators in Britain & Ireland have similar rules and requirements.

What does a trustee do?

Trustees have a collective responsibility for the overall control of a charity and are responsible for making sure that it is doing what it was set up to do. Being a trustee of a Mothers' Union diocese means making decisions about how Mothers' Union operates in the diocese and the ways in which that can benefit family life in your diocesan area.

Who can be a trustee?

There are no specific qualifications – trustees are expected to use the range of skills and experience they have gained for the benefit of Mothers' Union. However, there are some basic requirements that have to be met:

* to be aged 18 or over
* to meet any requirements stated in the diocesan constitution/governing document, for example, being a Mothers' Union member.
* not to be legally disqualified from acting as a trustee

Trustees of charities that have activities involving children, young people and adults at risk may need to have a criminal records (DBS) check.

What is expected of a trustee?

In brief, as a trustee you will be expected to:

* attend trustee meetings and prepare for them by reading papers sent out in advance
* contribute your ideas and views to discussions in trustee meetings
* ask questions about anything you are unclear about
* make decisions collectively as a trustee board for the benefit of Mothers' Union in the diocese

Being a trustee is a commitment, but it is also a joy and a privilege as you learn so much more about Mothers' Union and are able to make a positive contribution to achieving the aims of the organisation in your diocese.

What help is available?

A range of information and guidance for trustees is available on the Mothers' Union website, with links to more detailed information from the various charity regulators.

Training is provided at the start of each triennium by the central charity for all Mothers' Union trustees and on-going support is available from the Provincial Presidents and the staff team at Mary Sumner House.