



Code of Governance

The Heart of Variety (Ireland) CLG

T/A Variety – the Children’s Charity of Ireland

Also known publicly as “Variety Ireland”

Company Registration Number: 25393

Registered Charity Number: CHY5739

Table of Contents

Governance.....	3
Heart of The Variety (Ireland) Constitution	3
About Heart of The Variety (Ireland)	3
Mission Statement.....	4
Projects Worth Noting.....	5
Recycle Mobility	5
All Ireland Cycling Partnerships	6
Heart of Learning.....	7
Trikes & Trees	8
Executive	9
Patron.....	9
Organisational Structure.....	9
Legal & Financial Understanding	10
Financial Reporting	10
Financial Controls	10
SORP	12
Core Standards	12
Triple Lock	13
Resources	13
Continual Review.....	13
Strategic & Associated Operational Plans.....	14
Plan Evaluation	14
Sustainability Policy	15
Risk Assessment.....	16
Insurance	16
Upholding Legal Requirements.....	17
Regulatory Requirements	17
Guidelines for Charitable Organisations on Fundraising	18
Fundraising Codes	18
Charities regulatory Authority	19
Charities Governance Code	19
Safeguarding Children	19
Whistleblowing Policy.....	20
Complaints Procedure	20
Public Communications.....	20
ADDITIONAL PRACTICES.....	21-27

Governance

Charities must be accountable and transparent in order to be effective. Significant advances have been made in recent years to standardise and establish regulation within the sector. A number of initiatives have been developed to facilitate this process and support charities to practice good governance.

Governance refers to how an organisation is run, directed and controlled. Good governance means that an organisation makes every effort to design and implement policies and procedures that will ensure it can operate effectively and efficiently, with integrity that honours the people whom it serves and who have made that possible through their donations.

The Heart of Variety (Ireland) is fully committed to this work and to ensuring that we have the best possible governance structures in place so that we are being accountable to our donors and beneficiaries.

Constitution of The Heart of Variety (Ireland)

The governing instrument of a corporate charity, previously known as a Memorandum and Articles of Association, is called a Constitution. A copy of the Constitution can be viewed here: [Variety Ireland Constitution](#)

About The Heart of Variety (Ireland)

We are clear about the purpose of our charity and be able to explain this in simple terms to anyone who asks. Founded in 1951, the charity is a volunteer led environmentally aware (not for profit) organisation, with a core focus on helping children between the age of 6 months up to their 19th birthday.

Our focus is on helping children who are sick, disadvantaged or have special needs. We provide children with vital equipment including mobility trikes, digital learning devices and access to learning that is not supported or funded by any other government body or organisation.

The families and children we help do not have full financial access to funding to help their children. This is where the Heart of Variety (Ireland) steps in to co-fund or supply equipment to families with children with special needs or have financial constraints. This not only contributes to improving each child's own mental and physical well-being, but also supports inclusion and equality inside and outside of the homestead. It allows them to participate in family activities that they would normally be excluded from given their own disability. This promotes equal opportunity to each child we help. In line with our constitution, The Heart of Variety (Ireland) operates across the 32 counties of the island of Ireland.



Mission Statement

The main object for which the Charity is established is to benefit the community by providing direct help to children and young people throughout the 32 counties of Ireland up to their 19th birthday who are living with illness, disability or financial disadvantage.

The Charity will step in where statutory healthcare, support and funding ends to ensure that children have the support they need to reach their potential and thrive, regardless of their health, mobility, abilities and economic background.

Projects Worth Noting

The Heart of Variety (Ireland) run several initiatives to help provide services and education to children who need it most. Our main three programmes all have environmental themes that are targeted at contributing to a better environment.

Recycle Mobility

This programme is designed to provide mobility equipment for children in Ireland with mobility issues. Our “Recycle Mobility Programme” ensures that all new trikes or scooters which we provide to children, are then passed onto another person once the child has outgrown it.

This value for money approach not only ensures the charity does not have to keep buying new trikes for children, but also ensures that old trikes do not end up in landfill sites around Ireland. We also pass on our preloved special adapted trikes to special schools, where a number of children with disabilities can then get to experience the same enjoyment of freedom as able-bodied children do.

Our Recycle Mobility Programme is supported by Minister Anne Rabbitte and The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth and Minister Eamon Ryan and Jack Chambers and The Department of Transport, and the HSE,

Full details here. <https://varietyireland.org/recyclemobility/>



All Ireland Cycling Partnerships

This programme is designed to unite families from different communities both north and south of Ireland, who have children with disabilities.

Variety Ireland's All Ireland Disability Cycling Partnerships is designed to break down barriers and unite children with disabilities from across various communities who can now integrate with other children with disabilities both north and south of Ireland, which is great for both their mental and physical wellbeing.

Full details here: <https://varietyireland.org/allirelanddisabilitycyclingpartnerships/>



Heart of Learning

Our iPads for Schools programme see our charity provide upcycled iPads to children who are unable to attend full time schooling and helps them with remote learning.

We also supply these iPads to SNAs in Primary schools throughout Ireland to assist pupils in the classroom. This has been invaluable to a lot of schools, especially since many have welcomed Ukrainian students within the past two years and may need extra help with translations.

Full details here: <https://varietyireland.org/ipads-for-schools/>



Trikes & Trees

Our Trikes & Trees Programme is designed to create pesticide-free Variety Ireland Nature Gardens around Ireland, whilst also helping us provide Specially Adapted Mobility Trikes to children across the disability spectrum.

Our aim is to build a better future for all children. By creating safe environments that let children experience and enjoy natural habitats close up, we can help nourish and enhance their mental wellbeing. This together with the benefits our Special Mobility Trikes can provide, which can enhance a both child's physical and mental wellbeing, means that children regardless of their ability have equal access to enjoy our great outdoors.

Through this, we hope to promote a better understanding of nature and what we can do to protect it for all our futures.

Full details here: <https://varietyireland.org/trikestrees/>



Executive

The executive team is comprised of a Chief Executive who oversees and liaises with other board members or contractors in looking after the organisation's finances, fundraising and operations.

All members are jointly responsible for implementing the strategy and running the day-to-day activities of the company. All board members are volunteers and are non-paid.

Patron

The patron of The Heart of Variety (Ireland) is a voluntary, unpaid position held by a public figure to represent the charity.

The patron acts as an official public spokesperson on behalf of the charity.

The patron of The Heart of Variety (Ireland) is actor and TV presenter Simon Delaney.



Organisational Structure



Legal & Financial Understanding

The charity trustees understand the legal and regulatory framework for our charity and are satisfied that our charity meets its legal, regulatory and contractual obligations as well as any constitutional requirements. We are fully compliant with all legal and regulatory requirements, including:

- [Charities Act](#); [Companies Act](#);
- [Revenue Commissioners](#); [GDPR](#);
- [The Charities Regulator](#)

The charity also records required minutes of every monthly meeting and also submit Annual reports to the Charities Regulator as part of the mandatory recording of the charity's financial statement and activities. This also includes filing fully independently audited tax returns to both Revenue and the Register of Charities for each financial end of year which is September of each year.

We have a comprehensive [Privacy Policy](#) publicly displayed on our website.

Financial Reporting

The Heart of Variety (Ireland) receives government co-funding for our Recycle Mobility Programme. During 2023 co-funding was received from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, who will continue funding for 2024. From 2024 the Department of Transport will also help co-fund this programme.

Every year we hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) where our annual accounts are presented to the members for approval. These accounts are also included in our Annual Report which is available in a number of formats and is published on our website. We also ensure that our historic annual reports for the past 10 years are also made available upon request.

Financial Controls

We have strict financial controls in place to manage and account for our charity's money and other assets.

We remain up to date with best practice in financial management and have very stringent financial controls in place, as outlined below:

We have an experienced **Finance Manager** who provides consultancy expertise and works with our staff to regularly review our management accounts, improve our Financial reporting and budgeting, improve our financial

process and help with Governance items. The Finance Manager frequently attends Staff, Audit Subcommittee and Board meetings by invitation.

We have implemented an in-house **accountancy software**, to ensure that we have accurate and high-quality financial reporting to our CEO, Board and Funders.

Our annual accounts are available in the second quarter of every year.

We have a **Financial Processes Policy** which has been reviewed and approved by our Finance Committee. This will ensure excellent internal controls of our budgeting, payments and financial procedures.

We prepare detailed **annual budgets** which are reviewed by our board and Finance Committee and that is approved by the Board.

We have a regularly reviewed **Payment Approval Matrix**, which documents spending limits and lines of approval for budgets, payments and invoice spend. Anything falling outside spending limits, must go to the Audit Subcommittee for approval.

Our **management accounts** are reviewed and compared to budget on a monthly basis by the Financial Manager and CEO and key variances are explained to the Staff and Finance Sub-Committee. We are very focused on adhering to our expenditure budget and getting value for money. **Summary Accounts** are presented at Board meetings

Internal financial controls for income, expenditure, banking, assets and investments in line with the Charities Regulator's 'Internal Financial Controls Guidelines' have been agreed and implemented with regular review

Documented financial policies and procedures which are regularly reviewed and monitored. Approval matrix and finance policies are documented carefully and training for executive given.

Evidence to support this:

- Audit Subcommittee Minutes Board Minutes
- Finance Policies (see Company Handbook)
- Monthly Management Accounts Audited Accounts
- Approval Matrix for Payments and Expenses Induction for any consultancy carried out on behalf of charity

SORP Reporting

Charities SORP refers to the Statement of Recommended Practice of general accounting practice which has been interpreted for specific charity operations. Our Annual Accounts are prepared and audited according to SORP Guidelines. More [information on SORP for charities can be found on The Wheel's website](#).

It is important to note that The Heart of Variety (Ireland) doesn't have any direct employees at present. Any outside contracted help that the charity requires is paid in accordance and in line with standards published by **The Wheel**, the representative body for community and voluntary organisations and charities in Ireland. We have a carefully managed budget with strict spending guidelines to ensure that we are as cost effective and vigilant as we can be when expending resources.

Core Standards

We have an agreed achievable plan for at least the next year that sets out what we intend to do to advance our purpose

Planned activities and campaigns are agreed in advance through discussion between the executive and their relevant subcommittee. Associated budgets are detailed and presented to the Audit Subcommittee who then make suitable recommendation to the Board.

The charity completes our annual budget and associated annual team workplan – with assigned resources -for each year. The budget is completed by the Finance Manager and the Workplan is completed by the CEO.

The workplan is driven by the strategic plan and it identifies and allocates all of the tasks required to achieve the goals for the year.

The budget and team workplan are both reviewed and agreed by the board. Board adopt the Budget for the year.

Evidence which supports this:

- Minutes of Board Meeting
- Minutes of Subcommittee Meetings, Fundraising committee
- Business Plan and department goals for the Budget for the coming year.

Triple Lock

As a member of the [Charities Institute Ireland](#), we are proud to have been awarded Triple Lock status.

Triple Lock status is awarded to charities that uphold the highest standards in transparent reporting, ethical fundraising and strong governance structures. This recognition is the gold standard for Irish charities to offer assurances to donors, members and the general public.

Resources

We ensure we are well resourced.

The Board regularly reviews the charities resources (financial, human and non-financial) at board meetings.

The Board discusses and assess how best to maintain or increase resources including any fundraising activities planned to achieve this.

The annual plan and associated budget is regularly reviewed and the progress tracked by the board and its subcommittees.

Evidence to support this:

- Board and Subcommittee Minutes

Continual Review

From time to time, we review what we are doing to make sure we are still acting in line with our charity's purpose and providing public benefit.

From time to time, we review what we are doing to make sure we are still acting in line with our charity's purpose and providing public benefit.

Our activities and governing document are regularly reviewed to ensure we continue to act in line with our charitable purpose and provide public benefit.

When creating a new Strategic Plan, we engage with all Board members and hold strategic planning meetings.

The CEO provides an update at every board meeting, outlining what has been done in the period since the last board meeting and identifying to which of the charities' goals each update relates.

Evidence to support this:

- Board Meeting Minutes
- Annual review of AGM
- CEO Update at Board Meetings (Standard Item at board meetings)
- Annual Accounts Report

Strategic and Associated Operational Plans

Developing our charity's strategic plan and associated operational plans.

The Heart of Variety (Ireland) has developed a Strategic Plan with departmental purpose, targets, objectives and measures. The targets and outcomes are approved by the board every three years and regularly reviewed with observation by the relevant subcommittees.

The Strategic Plan is supported by operational plans and budgets, as well as defined Key Performance Indicators.

The CEO presents a simple rolling list of KPIs at board meetings which use a “traffic light” system for easy reference of where each item is.

Evidence to support this:

- Strategic Plan 2023-2024
- Operational Plan
- Monthly Budget Reviews
- Board Meeting Minutes

Plan Evaluation

We ensure there is an appropriate system in place to monitor progress against our plans and evaluate the effectiveness of the work of our charity.

Strategic Plan is included as an agenda item and document provided as necessary. Subcommittees work with the executive in the relevant department to ensure the document is current and reasonable. The board has established a working group to support the development and review of the Strategic Development Plan.

Regular updates and reports provided to the Board on progress as well as highlighting of any challenges identified.

The board of directors, through the detailed work of the Audit and Fundraising Subcommittees, regularly review the sustainability of income sources against short, medium and long term. It identifies areas of risk and also examines opportunities for diversified income streams.

All our decisions going forward are based on studies conducted on behalf of The Heart of Variety (Ireland) that assess the impact and influence any donation provided by our charity has directly had on an individual child/organisation.

All research is carried out by professional bodies. i.e. [RCSI University of Medicine and Health Science](#).

Evidence to support this:

- Board Meeting Minutes
- Working Group Activities Audit
- Subcommittee Minutes
- Fundraising Subcommittee Minutes
- Risk Register
- Fundraising Operational Plan
- Research Documentation

Sustainability Policy

The Heart of Variety (Ireland) is committed to sustainable business practices, ensuring that ethical, environmental and social considerations are always at the core of our business and charitable decisions. It is key to our charitable strategy and the way the charity performs and conducts its business.

The Heart of Variety (Ireland) commits to:

- Provide and promote sustainable products to help the physical and social development of children.
- Look at the full life cycle of all products that it provides. Our aims, are when possible to up cycle, reuse, and to recycle. With a view to limiting our carbon footprint.
- The national biodiversity plan is an integral part of our charity's ethos. Educational and practical projects which align with this document will be planned and delivered.
- Our policy is to put the child first, and to deliver projects that have multiple benefits to both the child's physical and mental health needs and to the environment.
- To provide goodwill and acknowledge publicly the organisations who support our charity.
- To promote wellbeing in the communities that we operate.
- Education programmes will be child appropriate and where will possible have a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) promotion

Our sustainability strategy is managed, delivered and measured in line with our finances. Actions that we have taken will be noted in our board meetings and summarised in our annual report.

Risk Assessment

We are able to Identify any risks our charity might face and how to manage any problems.

A detailed Risk Register is maintained by The Heart of Variety (Ireland) which identifies specific risks faced by the organisation and analyses them in terms of likely occurrence and severity of impact with time-stamped action plans and requirements as appropriate.

It prioritises those risks, determines their likely impact, considers the likelihood of them occurring, assigns ownership of them, determines actions to be taken to mitigate them and tracks progress over time.

The risk register addresses financial risks, staffing risks and specific projects related risks. It is regularly reviewed by the Senior Management Team, Audit Subcommittee, Board of Directors, a number of whom have developed risk registers for larger organisations.

Evidence to support this:

- Risk Register
- Audit Subcommittee Minutes
- Board Meeting Minutes

Insurance

We ensure our charity has appropriate and adequate insurance cover.

The charity has appropriate and adequate insurance cover which is examined, refreshed and renewed annually.

It is a fully comprehensive policy that covers all relevant items, including the following: Directors' Liability, Public Liability, Employers' Liability Travel and Events.

Evidence to support this:

Variety – the Children’s Charity of Ireland have private and public liability commercial insurance in place which is renewed annually. Cover is issued by AIG Europe Ltd, through O’Leary Insurance, Cork, and AVIVA Ireland Ltd, through Marsh Ireland Brokers Ltd respectively. Full details of insurance cover is available from the charity upon written request.

Upholding Legal Requirements

We ensure our charity’s current legal form and governing document are fit for purpose.

Our governing document is regularly revisited to ensure current activities fall within the defined objectives and the charity’s purpose remains relevant and valid.

The Board established a Constitution Review Working Group of the Board to review the Constitution to ensure that it is fit for purpose. This group worked with legal advisors to ensure that the Charity trustees can be satisfied that our current legal form and governing document are best suited taking into account our charitable purpose, planned activities and how we propose to fund these activities.

We review and update our Constitution regularly with the approval of the board. The last constitution change was in 2017

Evidence to support this:

- Minutes of Board Meetings
- Nominations Subcommittee Meeting Minutes Working Group recommendations to the Board Legal advice notes
- All updates to the constitution have been appropriately lodged with the Charities Regulator

Regulatory Requirements

We ensure that laws and regulatory requirements are relevant to our charity and comply with them.

The charity trustees understand the legal and regulatory framework for our charity and are satisfied that our charity meets its legal, regulatory and contractual obligations and any constitutional requirements. We are fully compliant with all legal and regulatory requirements, including:

- Charities Act; Companies Act
- Revenue Commissioners
- GDPR
- The Charities Regulator

Evidence to support this:

- Keep all record of Minutes of Meeting
- Audit Subcommittee reviews this as part of the Risk Register
- Annual reports to Charities Regulator Financial statements
- Tax filings
- Register of Charities
- Governance Code Compliant
- Audited Accounts available upon request from info@varietyireland.org

Guidelines for Charitable Organisations on Fundraising

We adhere to the Charities Regulator's 'Guidelines for Charitable Organisations on Fundraising from the Public'.

The Charities Regulator's 'Guidelines for Charitable Organisations on Fundraising from the Public' have been discussed and considered by the board of Charity Trustees. The board of charity trustees is committed to complying with the principles set out in the Guidelines. The board of charity trustees regularly monitors compliance with the fundraising guidelines. Our fundraising committee/ volunteers are provided with appropriate training and support.

Evidence to support this:

- Board Meeting Minutes
- Fundraising Subcommittee Minutes
- Training and induction records

Fundraising Codes

We operate all of our fundraising according to careful and accountable systems that protect and honour the generosity that is shown to us and the donations entrusted to us by private individuals, community groups, corporate supporters, industry partners, public funding and the wide range of income streams that we are grateful to have in pursuing our goals on behalf of children living with disabilities/disadvantage.

The primary code that we adhere to is the [Charities Regulator Fundraising Guidelines](#).

A copy of our policy can be found here: [Variety Ireland Fundraising Policy](#)

Charities Regulatory Authority

The Charities Regulatory Authority (CRA) was created as an independent statutory body in 2014 under the Charities Act 2009. It aims to build public trust and confidence in the management and administration of charitable organisations. The Heart of Variety (Ireland) is registered with the CRA and as such is required to report on its activities and finances to the Regulator on an annual basis.

You can [find out more on the CRA website](#).

Charities Governance Code

We are aligned with the [Charities Governance Code](#) when it comes to all aspects of how the charity is managed and operated. The CRGC helps us to ensure that we are consistently working to achieve our goals and charitable objectives with the highest degree of integrity, transparency and efficiency in all matters. It involves a set of standards that should be met by non-profit organisations in its systems. These are centred on the following six guiding principles:

1. Advancing charitable purpose
2. Behaving with integrity
3. Leading people
4. Exercising control
5. Working effectively
6. Being accountable and transparent

Safeguarding Children

Child Safeguarding means ensuring safe practice and appropriate responses by workers and volunteers to concerns about the safety or welfare of children, including online concerns, should these arise. Child safeguarding is about protecting the child from harm, promoting their welfare and in doing so creating an environment which enables children and young people to grow, develop and achieve their full potential.

A copy of our policy can be found here: [Variety Ireland Safeguarding Children Policy](#)

Whistleblowing Policy

The [Protected Disclosures Act 2014](#) aims to protect people who raise concerns about possible wrongdoing in the workplace. The Act, which came into effect on 15 July 2014, is often called the whistle-blower legislation. It provides for redress for directors who are dismissed or otherwise penalised for having reported possible wrongdoing in the workplace.

Complaints Procedure

Situations can arise that someone may wish to make a complaint about the charity. The Heart of Variety (Ireland) has a formal complaints procedure (for both internal and external scenarios) whose purpose is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently and wherever possible resolved to the complainant's satisfaction. It is the charity's responsibility to deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint, and to take action where appropriate.

Good governance is a cornerstone of The Heart of Variety (Ireland) and we work carefully to ensure that we are accountable and transparent in all of our dealings.

A copy of our policy can be found here: [Variety Ireland Complaints Policy](#)

Public Communications

We as a charity take communications very seriously and have strong communications with our members through regular emails newsletters. We also have strong communications with wider via our social media channels and website. We also revise and update all our website content regularly to ensure it is a useful resource.

Our communications' procedures are agreed and implemented with a strong Communications Strategy. We are clear about who our beneficiaries and how the charity supports them.

We produce an annual report with details of our organisational purpose, accounts and activities every year with public information that we published on our website and social media channels.

A copy of our policy can be found here: [Variety Ireland Communications Policy](#)

Evidence to support this:

Website: <https://varietyireland.org>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/varietyirl>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/VarietyIrl>

Twitter: https://twitter.com/Variety_Ireland

ADDITIONAL PRACTICES

We have adopted additional good practice standards that are relevant to the particular work that our charity does.

The charity prepares a trustees annual report and fully audited financial statements in full compliance with the Charity SORP (Statement of Recommended Practice) and these are supplied to our Members and made easily available on our website.

The Board has formally adopted the Guidelines for Charitable Organisations on Fundraising from the Public. Trustees, volunteers and anyone else fundraising on our behalf are fully trained on the requirements and we have implemented controls to ensure that all of our fundraising practices are fully in line with the guidelines and related codes of practice. We review and report annually on compliance.

The Board has formally adopted the Charities Governance Code as devised by the Charities Regulatory Authority meaning that the Heart of Variety (Ireland) complies with the six principles of governance, has reached the core standards expected and has attained additional standards as listed in this document that reflect our more complex structure.

Evidence to support this:

- Financial Statements and Audited Accounts
- Board Meeting Minutes Audit Subcommittee Minutes
- Fundraising Subcommittee Minutes
- Code of Practice for Dealing with Industry

We can identify charity trustees with the necessary skills to undertake: any designated roles set out in our governing document; and other roles as appropriate within the board.

The existing range of skills and experience of charity trustees is considered regularly by a designated Nominations Subcommittee who devise and recommend a skills matrix to the Board which identifies any significant gaps which they then act on to fill.

By virtue of their senior posts in relevant organisations and their range of backgrounds, our diverse Board cover all the essential skill sets, spanning sustainability, environment, counselling, strategy, finance, HR, governance, risk management, PR, policy and advocacy. They also have excellent sectoral knowledge in the areas of health research and health research charities.

Charity trustee roles and responsibilities discussed, agreed and documented. Any job descriptions for new posts are developed and advertised widely and openly.

Succession Planning is regularly covered by the Board and the designated subcommittee to ensure that all relevant skills and expertise are being utilised or sought.

Evidence to support this:

- Nominations Subcommittee Meeting Minutes Board Meeting Minutes
- AGM Minutes
- The Heart of Variety directors oversees strategy, finance, HR, governance, risk management, PR, policy and advocacy.
- Subcommittee Meeting Minutes Terms of Reference for Subcommittees
- AGM nominations and board rotation register

We hold regular board meetings along with providing enough notice before meetings and provide prepared agendas.

Board Meetings are held at least every two months, or more frequently if required (example: 2020 pandemic or Audit or AGM planning).

Board meeting schedule is agreed towards the end of each year for the following year. Calendar invitations are sent out for the full year to all board meetings.

Meeting notices, agendas and other relevant papers are provided to the board members by the secretary at least five days in advance of meetings. The agenda is agreed with the CEO and Company Secretary in advance. Meetings are called and run in accordance with our governing document and company law.

Evidence to support this:

- Board Meeting Minutes
- Governance Record (attendance at Board and sub-committee)
- Board Packs
- Secretary's copy of the Board papers for each board meeting for the past 12 months
- Copy of The Heart of Variety (Ireland) Constitution on hand at every meeting

At a minimum, our board agendas always include these items: reporting on activities; review of finances; and conflicts of interests and loyalties.

Declaration of Conflicts is a standing item on every Board agenda

Most recent Management Accounts are presented to the Board as recommended by the Audit Subcommittee as a standing item

An Executive Report is provided to each board meeting, with reports from the CEO and each department on their activities and results

Minutes are taken of board meetings and all other formal decisions of the board are properly recorded. Consistent minutes of meetings are kept that record attendance, decisions and actions

The standard agenda items at Board meetings are as follows:

- 1) Minutes of the previous meeting are approved and progress on actions reported
- 2) Conflicts of Interest Declaration
- 3) Governance Record (including attendance and updates)
- 4) CEO and Executive Report- A written report on activities since the last meeting, progress against strategic objectives and highlighting recent successes and any current challenges Subcommittee Report - Minutes and recommendations of Board subcommittees are presented by the Chairs of those committees and recommendations approved as appropriate.
- 5) (Audit, Research, Support, Advocacy, HR, Fundraising, Nominations)
- 6) Updates are provided on other The Heart of Variety managed groups (e.g. volunteer groups, fundraising groups).
- 7) Financial Review - The latest management accounts are presented and any financial issues discussed

A copy of our policy can be found here: [Variety Ireland Conflict of Interest Policy](#)

Evidence to support this:

- Board Meeting Minutes
- Minutes of meetings and records of decisions
- Standard Agenda items for all board meetings which is evident from minutes
- Minutes of the previous meeting Conflicts of Interest
- CEO Report- A written report on activities since the last meeting, progress against strategic objectives and highlighting recent successes and any current challenges
- Minutes and recommendations of Board sub-committee
- Updates on other/any The Heart of Variety Ireland managed groups
- Financial Review

Ensuring that our charity trustees have the facts to make informed decisions at board meetings and that these decisions are recorded accurately in the minutes.

This achieved by regular and clear reports are received on the charity's activities and finances. Board papers provide the level of detail that is necessary for the board to understand the impact of the charity's current position, and to make sound decisions

Evidence to support this:

- Minutes of Board Meetings
- Board Packs including Executive Reports
- Secretary's copy of the Board papers for each meeting held in past 12 months
- Documents/decisions needing approval sent out in advance and approved at subsequent meeting.
- All decisions are recorded in the Minutes with proposers and seconders
- All items of dissent are recorded in the Minutes with proposers and seconders

The Heart of Variety Ireland has term limits for your charity trustees, with a suggested maximum of five years in total.

Our Constitution has specific reference to terms of office (permitted to serve 2 terms of 3 years duration). In any event, no Director shall serve more than 9 consecutive years as a member of the Board.

Charity trustees are appointed, resign, or retire according to our governing document. We keep appropriate records regarding trustees with details of when their term is up and if they are eligible for re-appointment.

Evidence to support this:

- Minutes of Board Meetings
- Governance Record
- Our charity constitution
- AGM Minutes

How we recruit suitable new charity trustees as necessary and make sure they receive an induction.

Existing range of skills and experience is considered regularly with any significant gaps identified and filled as necessary. Potential charity trustees are aware of the time commitment of the role from the outset.

Board induction and training takes place for all board members. All recruitment and selection process discussed and documented. All potential trustees must be nominated by an existing member of the organisation and validated by a current director. Two other directors meet with the person to interview them and assess suitability for the role inline with current vacancies and skillsets.

All new directors must be presented at the next arising AGM with those who have been co-opted seeking approval from the Members. Due diligence carried out on all prospective charity trustees

Evidence to support this:

- Recruitment Policy/ Procedures Induction pack
- Board Meeting Minutes
- Nominations Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
- Nomination Forms

We ensure all of your trustees understand: their role as charity trustees; the charity's governing document; and this code.

Our governing document is regularly revisited to ensure that the board of charity trustees is aware of the specific powers laid down in our constitution. Key role descriptions for charity trustees are understood and documented. All charity trustees read and discussed the Charities Governance Code at a meeting of the charity's Board

Evidence to support this:

- Minutes of Board Meeting
- Approved key roles and responsibilities

We commit to resolving problems and emerging issues as quickly as possible and in the best interests of our charity.

Any problems are brought to the attention of the board and any actions and resolutions are agreed and documented. Unscheduled meetings are held where necessary.

We ensure that enough time is allocated for discussion. We ensure that all meetings are quorate. For example, the required minimum number of charity trustees for the meeting to go ahead are present, and our governing document sets out rules for making decisions in an emergency or when meetings are not quorate. Our chair has support, training and access to advice. Key issues are escalated to the board for decision and it is clear where decision making lies for each area of the charity's activities/business. On occasion the Board will set up a working group to address a particular challenge or body of work

A regular review of key issues and areas of interest to the board is undertaken. All problems and emerging issues are discussed at board meetings and at the appropriate subcommittee meetings. Actions are agreed to address the problem and ownership - with agreed timelines – is assigned to the appropriate individual(s).

If a problem is more complex, a subgroup of individuals often volunteers to take the action to address the issue. These subgroups meet between board meetings and report back at the subsequent meeting.

Actions are reviewed at subsequent board meetings. If a critical issue arises between meetings, the CEO or chairperson will communicate with the directors between board meetings and gain consensus on how to address the problem.

Evidence to support this:

- Board Meeting Minutes with actions, owners and timeframes
- Subcommittee Meeting Minutes Working Group Minutes
- Regular communication between board meetings as required

From time to time, The Heart of Variety (Ireland) board review how our Board operates and make any necessary improvements.

Annual board appraisal is carried out to address key areas of working. Particular areas for annual review are discussed and agreed. Future improvements considered and agreed.

Board performance is reviewed on a regular basis and includes an audit of skills, knowledge and experience of the board as a whole, the chair, individual board members, sub-committees, training and recruitment plans.

Evidence to support this:

- Board Appraisal Forms
- Board Meeting Minutes
- Board Performance Review Forms