

## **BOARD ROLE - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS & ANSWERS**

### Time Commitment

#### **How often, when and where do the Board meet?**

Board meet seven times a year, usually for the day on a Saturday at the Human Rights Action Centre, Amnesty International United Kingdom Section's London office.

#### **What other meetings I have to attend as a Board member?**

It is expected that you attend your local, annual regional meeting as well as our annual national conference. Once you are confident in the role, you may be allocated a subcommittee, which meets around four times a year and where remote attendance, e.g. via conference calls are common.

#### **How much time is needed outside of meetings (and to do what)?**

There is always a lot of reading to do as a Board member. There are lots of reports to read to inform decision making at Board meetings. There are often conversations by phone or email on particular issues.

#### **How long will I serve on the Board (and can I be re-elected)?**

You are able to serve on the Board up to three years and you are able to be re-elected for one more three-year term.

#### **Do I have to attend every AGM (and when are they)?**

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) and National Conference are usually in central England for three concurrent years, with a visit to Belfast, Swansea or Edinburgh every four years. Board members are expected to attend.

### Financial

#### **What is the salary of a Board member?**

The role of a Board member is a voluntary and unpaid role, though expenses like accommodation and travel to attend meetings are paid.

#### **What expenses can I claim?**

All receipted travel expenses to attend meetings are reimbursed. Accommodation and reasonable subsistence can also be claimed, if required. Only claims with receipts can be reimbursed.

### Day to Day

#### **How much fundraising is involved?**

There is no fundraising involved in the role of Board member, though you can continue to do that

with your local group or as an individual. Activist work does not need to stop when you become a Board member, but it does not form part of being a Board member.

### **Will I meet prisoners of conscience/politicians?**

It is unlikely that you will meet a prisoner of conscience or politician as part of your role as Board member.

### **Will I be on a Company Board or Board of Trustees?**

The Board of Amnesty International United Kingdom Section are directors of a limited company. There is a registered charity arm to Amnesty International United Kingdom Section, which has its own board of trustees.

### **Do I have to also sit on a subcommittee?**

It is not obligatory for every member to sit on a subcommittee of the Board. Most members of the Board, once confident, do sit on a subcommittee for at least part of their term as a Board member.

### **Is there a lot of public speaking?**

There is very little public speaking, except at our AGM where Board members are expected to propose resolutions brought from the Board. Support and training will be offered and you would not be asked to do it until you feel confident.

### **Can I influence what Amnesty International United Kingdom Section globally campaigns on?**

The Board is directed by the Amnesty International United Kingdom Section AGM and the long-term strategic goals of Amnesty International. One or two Board members are sent to the annual Global Assembly to negotiate future long-term goals and policies. However, their negotiating position is agreed in advance.

### **What legal responsibilities am I taking on?**

It is important that you understand the full legal responsibilities as a director of a limited company. See the link for more information: <https://www.gov.uk/running-a-limited-company/directors-responsibilities>

### Training

#### **What kind of induction takes place?**

You will be given a handbook and the Chair of the Board and Company Secretary will go through the responsibilities of the role, the current focus of the Board, essential dates and review any skills gaps. You will have your own training plan.

#### **Do I need to have basic IT skills, in email and Office?**

You will need to be proficient in email, as there will be many email discussions. Board packs and

Reports will be delivered via email and you will need to be able to read and refer to these reports.

### **Do I need to know Company Law?**

Amnesty International United Kingdom Section employs a Company Secretary and occasionally employs other advisors in specific legal matters. They advise the Board. It is useful, but not essential, for Board members to have understanding on company and charitable law.

### **Will I have to go on training courses?**

Yes, there are a number of training courses, such as data protection training, which you must attend. These are carried out by staff members at Human Rights Action Centre, Amnesty International United Kingdom Section's London office. Any other training will be agreed with you during your induction.

### **Do I need to understand Company finances?**

Yes, you require a basic understanding. But if you don't currently have the skills, training will be offered.

## Support

### **How many Board members altogether?**

There can be up to 15 Board members at any one time.

### **Who else is at the Board meetings?**

Senior staff members also attend the Board, including the Chief Executive and Company Secretary. Staff representatives and Amnesty International United Kingdom Section activists are sometimes invited to give their views.

### **Will I be responsible for managing people?**

If you are appointed to chair a subcommittee, you will need to manage the group dynamic and chair meetings. However, you will be offered training and will not be expected to take on this role until you feel confident.

## Not Suitable

### **Who can't become a Board member?**

You are ineligible if:

- You have been "banned" disqualified as a director in the past
- You have been an Amnesty International United Kingdom Section staff member in the previous two years

- You have been a registered volunteer office worker with Amnesty International United Kingdom Section in the previous two years
- You are under 16 years old
- You have previously served as a Board member and not taken a three-year break

**What if I become ineligible?**

If you become ineligible or it comes to light that you are ineligible, then you will immediately cease to be a Board member.

**What if I feel like I am no longer adding benefit?**

There is a lot of support for Board members and they will offer guidance or training so that you feel better able to contribute. If you feel you cannot continue in the role, then you may resign at any time.