

BOARD ROLE - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Time Commitment

How often, when and where do the Board meet?

The Board meet approximately seven times a year. Most formal meetings take place on a Saturday but some shorter meetings take place on a weekday evening. Our meetings are hybrid, meaning that they can be attended in person at Amnesty International United Kingdom Section's London office or online.

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

It is expected that you attend our Annual General Meeting. You are likely to be asked to join one of the Board's subcommittees, which meet roughly four times a year.

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. Much of this takes place in the two weeks before a Board meeting. Additional conversations are sometimes necessary and you will need to regularly check email for correspondence on particular issues.

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

You are elected for a three-year term. You may then stand for re-election for a further three-year term. After serving for six consecutive years on the Board you must take a break of at least three years before you may stand again.

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

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) takes place in different parts of the UK, usually over a weekend. Board members are expected to attend but we understand if personal circumstances prevent this.

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, childcare and travel to attend meetings are reimbursed.

What expenses can I claim?

All receipted travel expenses to attend meetings are reimbursed. Accommodation reasonable subsistence and childcare can also be claimed, if required. Other out-of-pocket expenses (such as stationery) may also be reclaimed. 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 members of Amnesty International United Kingdom Section are Directors of a limited company. There is a separate 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 but most members of the Board 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 or address those that are proposed by members. Support will be offered if you need it 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 guided by the Amnesty International United Kingdom Section AGM, particularly the strategic plan that it has adopted, and the long-term strategic goals of the Amnesty International global movement. 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 discussed by the Board 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/directorsresponsibilities>

Training

What kind of induction takes place?

You will receive induction meetings from the Chair, the Chief Executive and the Head of Governance. They will go through the responsibilities of the role, the current

focus of the Board, essential dates and review any skills gaps. You will have access to training to help develop your confidence and skills as a Board member.

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

You will need to be proficient in email, as there will be many email discussions. Board packs and reports will be delivered via an online application but you will receive training on how to use this, if needed.

Do I need to know Company Law?

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

Will I have to go on training courses?

There are a number of training courses, such as data protection training, which you must take. Most can be taken online, in your own home at a time that is convenient for you. For Board members who are new to a governance role, we will support you to attend an in-depth introduction to the role provided by an external training agency.

Do I need to understand Company finances?

Yes, you will need to acquire 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?

Board meetings are usually attended by the Chief Executive, Senior Management Team, Company Secretary and Staff Representative. However, the Board may sometimes meet on its own or with only specific members of staff present.

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. If you would like to be a Chair but don't feel confident, we can provide you with training. You will not have a line-management role with anyone unless you become the Chair of the Board.

Not Suitable

Who can't become a Board member?

You are ineligible if:

- You have been “banned” or 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.

Will you do any checks on me?

We will conduct statutory checks to ensure that you have not been disqualified as a company director. We will also require a basic criminal record check. Having a criminal record does not automatically prevent someone from joining the Board but it may be that a conversation with the Chair, Company Secretary or Safeguarding Manager is required to determine suitability.

What if I become ineligible?

If you become ineligible or it comes to light that you are ineligible, then you will need to resign from the Board.

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.

Personal Information

Will my personal information be disclosed if I join the Board

Yes, some of it will. Companies House require that Board members name, age, occupation, nationality and country of residence are publicly available to view on their website. They will also require disclosure of your private address but this will not be publicly disclosed. We will also put our Board members names on the AIUK website.

Some of our suppliers, including financial services organisations and retail partners also require proof of identity from our Board members. This information is not publicly disclosed.

Collective Responsibility

If I disagree with a Board decision, can I tell other people that I oppose it?

No. In the UK, Boards operate under the principle of collective responsibility and AIUK Section is no different. You are expected to maintain the confidentiality of Board discussions and Board papers. Even if you disagree strongly to a proposal in a Board meeting, you must avoid criticising it if it becomes a Board decision. If you disagree with something very strongly, you should resign.