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Template · 6 min read

A one-page AI policy for a small charity

Most charities now use AI, and most small ones have no policy. This is one page your staff, volunteers and trustees can read in five minutes and agree at your next meeting.

Why a small charity needs one

The Charity Digital Skills Report 2026 found that most charities now use AI, but only about a third of small charities have a policy for it. Staff and volunteers are working it out alone.

A policy doesn't have to be long. It has to answer the questions a volunteer would ask on their first day: which tools, what never goes in, and who to tell if something goes wrong. Copy the page below, fill in the [brackets], and take it to your trustees.

THIS IS A STARTING POINT, NOT LEGAL ADVICE

Your safeguarding and data protection policies come first. If this page disagrees with them, they win.

The page to copy

How we use AI at [charity name]

1. **Why we use it.** To save time on writing and admin, so more of our time goes to [the people we support].
2. **Tools we use.** [Tool, e.g. Microsoft Copilot through our charity accounts]. Please ask [name] before using any other AI tool for our work.
3. **People come first.** We never put anything into AI that could identify someone we support: no names, addresses, case notes, health details, immigration details or photos. The same goes for donors, staff and volunteers.
4. **Make it safe first.** Need help with a real situation? Describe it in general terms, such as "a parent in this situation", and change the details. If someone could still be recognised, leave it out.

5. **A person decides.** AI never decides who gets help, and never gives advice to the people we support without a trained person reading it first.
6. **We check everything.** AI makes confident mistakes. Whoever sends something out has read it and checked the facts and figures.
7. **Honest funding bids.** We can use AI to plan, edit and tidy an application. The facts, numbers and stories in it are ours and true. If a funder asks whether we used AI, we say so.
8. **Real voices stay real.** We don't use AI to make up quotes, case studies or pictures of the people we support.
9. **If something goes wrong.** Tell [name] the same day. We would rather know.
10. **Trustees agreed this on [date]. We look at it again on [date, six months from now].**

Take it to your trustees

1. Ask staff and volunteers one question first: "What do you already use AI for?" Bring the answers.
2. Put the page on the agenda as a ten-minute item, sent round beforehand.
3. Ask trustees two things: is anything missing for the people we support, and who is the named person?
4. Minute that it was agreed, with a review date.
5. Add it to your volunteer welcome pack.

Questions trustees usually ask

- **Does it cost anything?** The big tools have free versions. Charity discounts exist for Microsoft and Google work accounts, which usually come with stronger privacy promises.
- **Is our data safe?** That depends on the tool and its settings. The rule above, never put in anything that identifies a person, protects you whichever tool you use.
- **Will funders mind?** Some funders now publish their view. Check each funder's guidance before you apply, and keep your own voice in every bid.
- **What about the people we support?** Some will be using AI themselves, and some will be wary of it. Ask them. The same report found that only 6% of charities had.

PROMPT 1

Make the policy fit your charity

You want the page rewritten for your own cause and size.

> Here is a one-page AI policy for a small charity: **[paste the ten points]**. Rewrite it for a charity that **[what you do]** with **[number]** staff and **[number]** volunteers. We work with **[who, in general terms]**. Keep it to one page, in plain English a new volunteer could follow. Keep all ten points.

Tip: Describe your work in general terms. Don't paste case notes or names.

PROMPT 2

Write the trustee paper

You need a short cover note for the board.

> Write a half-page paper for charity trustees asking them to approve a one-page AI policy. Explain why we need one now, the main risks it covers (privacy, accuracy, honesty with funders), and what we are asking the board to decide. Plain English, no jargon, under 250 words.

PROMPT 3

Five "Is this OK?" questions for volunteers

You're adding the policy to an induction.

> Write five short "Is this OK?" questions to help volunteers understand our AI policy. Use everyday situations from a small charity that **[what you do]**. Give the answer and a one-line reason after each. Our policy is: **[paste the policy]**.

Want your whole team on the same page?

doingit.today maps how your team works, then teaches everyone the AI steps in the tools you're allowed to use. Start with one job of your own.

Free to start. No tech background needed.

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Read more

- The Information Commissioner's Office on AI and data protection

- [x] The UK's National Cyber Security Centre on ChatGPT and large language models: what's the risk?
- [x] Our guides: AI for charities: 12 prompts and What never to paste into AI

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