

Governance Annual Report 2025

Charity Status

- Reporting for both the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) and England & Wales Charity Commission is underway (due at the end of December 2025 and the end of January 2026 respectively).
- Following HELOA's registration of intention to the Charity Commission of Northern Ireland in 2020, we are still on the waiting list awaiting an invitation from the commission to progress with the application. As we are established outside of Northern Ireland but operate for charitable purposes in Northern Ireland we are classed as Section 167 under the Charities Act Northern Ireland 2008. Following the independent review of charity regulation in Northern Ireland, the Department for Communities will be reviewing and potentially amending Section 167 to clarify the organisations that fall within its remit and other practical arrangements. Section 167 institutions cannot be called forward by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland for registration until the department has completed its review. In the meantime, HELOA (Section 167 institutions) can continue to operate in Northern Ireland.

Elections & Appointments

- Three national elections were run for the posts of UK Vice-Chair (Group Development), UK Vice-Chair (Finance) and UK Chair and six new trustees elected as Group Chairs. See 5.1 Elected Officers Report for further details.
- Four new members of the UK Committee (UKC) were appointed to the Partnerships Manager role, National and Professional Development Conference Manager roles, as well as the Vice-Chair (Communications) which is no longer a trustee position following the UK Committee Structure vote that came into effect in July 2025. See 5.2 Appointed Officers Report 2025

Changes to policies

- To improve cost effectiveness, adapt to changing roles and reduce trustees in line with Charity Commission guidance, the UKC structure was reviewed and changes presented to members in July 2025. The membership approved the reduction of trustees from 17 to 11 and the amendment to the trustee election process with the introduction of an informational interview before being put forward for election.

Following the UK Structure vote, the UK Executive and Committee reviewed and updated the Standing Orders, to reflect the new changes and processes.

- At the time of writing, the HELOA UK Executive and Committee are reviewing the HELOA Standing Orders 2.005: Removing Officers, to bring accountability to the UK Committee and ensure post-holders are meeting the expectations of their HELOA role. By updating this process and responsibilities, the revised Standing Orders aim to protect the well-being of volunteers and uphold professional standards.
- As recommended by the Charity Commission, we are currently developing a formal policy to guide the Association's use of social media.

Strategy

- During the 2024 AGM, the HELOA Strategy 2024-2026 was approved and in 2025, the UK Committee continued to implement this based on the progress made through 2024, as well as new objectives that the charity deemed a priority.
- Progress against the 2024-26 strategy will be reviewed in December 2025 by the HELOA Executive and UK Committee in readiness to prepare the next strategy in February 2026.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

- In line with our ongoing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) commitments, we reviewed and refined role descriptors as new positions arose. This process ensures that descriptors provide clear and accessible

information about the expectations and responsibilities of the role and that they align with brand guidelines. This approach enhances transparency and supports fair recruitment practices.

- The election and appointment process was reviewed as part of the UK Committee structure review which introduced an informational interview prior to election. This step provides prospective trustees with information to ensure clarity around the roles and offer a supportive space for candidates from diverse backgrounds to understand how they can contribute meaningfully to the Association.
- Interview question templates were developed for use across the Association, incorporating a standardised set of approved questions and a structured scoring system. These templates were designed following the EMBED (our EDI consultant) consultation to ensure fairness and consistency.
- Each area within the Association has been progressing on their EDI objectives as set out in the HELOA Strategy ensuring that EDI activities are embedded across all activities and contribute to a more inclusive Association.
- Over the next year, we will be working on the following areas:
 - Implement and refine the new election and appointment processes,
 - Review the EDI objectives met in the HELOA 2024-26 Strategy and incorporate our priorities in the next strategy.
 - Update the Constitution in line with the Standing Orders.

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November 2025