



Trustee onboarding pack

Supporting trustees and strengthening committees

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Amendments

Version	Date	Changes
1.4	23 Mar 26	Changed Wing HQ name and email address to Regional HQ name email address
1.3	25 Jan 26	Added link to recruitment page on the wing website within 'overview' page. Clarified step 2 DBS and Background Check by separating it into two sections. Added an FAQ relating to identifying a personal referee for the background check form.
1.2	11 Dec 25	Added 'ammendments' page. Updated 'Step 1 Apply to Join' to reflect new invitation email. Added new FAQs 'Why do I need to go through this onboarding process?' and 'Who has access to my data?'
1.1	21 Aug 25	Added a reference to the platform used in 'Step 2 Background check'. Expanded FAQ 'Why do I need an RAF Air Cadets email address?'
1.0	8 May 25	Created

Overview

Thank you for considering becoming a Squadron Trustee. If you have not yet read what the role entails, please first click [here](#) before reading on.

This pack explains the full onboarding journey from application to induction. It complements the emails you'll receive at each stage, offering a complete view of the process – including who does what, why it matters, and what happens next.

Trustees play a vital role in supporting squadrons through governance, fundraising, and community engagement. As part of the Ministry of Defence, our onboarding process ensures that all trustees meet national standards of safeguarding, data security, and organisational integrity.

1 **Apply to join**



2 **DBS and background check**



3 **ID verification**



4 **Subscribe to the DBS Update Service**



5 **Submit completed application**



6 **Welcome and system access**



Your main contact

West Mercian Wing Chairperson, Ryan Phillips: chair.wmw@rafac.mod.gov.uk

Frequently asked questions



1

Apply to join

Who's involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prospective Trustee
How long it'll take	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 minutes
What to do	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. You'll receive an email from RAFAC Join with a link to apply.2. Complete the application form, selecting:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Unit type: Squadronb. Unit: the squadron you're applying to joinc. Role: Civilian Committee Member3. Complete the remaining fields.4. Click 'submit your application'5. Click here to inform the Wing Chairperson.
Why it's needed	This is your formal expression of interest and is recorded on the RAF Air Cadets' internal systems.

2

DBS and background check

DBS

Who's involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant trustee • Wales & West Region Headquarters
How long it'll take	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 minutes for the applicant trustee
What to do	<p>Region HQ will invite you to complete an online DBS application. The email will come from 'uCheck' and may be in your junk folder:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the form within one sitting, as there is no option to save progress and return. • Five years of address history is required. • Three forms of ID are required. Click here to understand which ID is accepted. <p>If you are subscribed to the DBS Update Service with a valid certificate, you may be exempt from completing another DBS. Please click here to inform Wing HQ.</p>
Why it's needed	<p>As an MOD-sponsored youth organisation, we require a criminal records check for safeguarding and financial integrity.</p>

Background check

Who's involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant trustee • Two referees (please refer to the FAQs if needed): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Personal referee: someone of standing in the community who has known you for at least three years, e.g. medical practitioner, member of the clergy, teacher, bank manager, civil servant, lawyer, JP, professionally qualified person etc who is not related to you or a common-law partner. ◦ Employment referee: line manager or HR department who has known you for at least 1 year. If this is not possible, a second personal referee is required.
How long it'll take	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 minutes for the applicant trustee • 10 minutes for each referee

This is an MOD-standard nationality and reference check called a BPSS.

If you already hold BPSS or higher clearance, you may be exempt from completing this step. Please click [here](#) to inform Region HQ.

You have two options for completing this step. Most applicants choose the electronic route as it's quicker and easier to manage – however, you're welcome to use the manual option if you prefer.

Option 1: complete electronically (30 mins)

1. Click [here](#) to provide the details of two referees. You and your referees will receive a digital form to complete. (We use Jotform to facilitate this. You can read how they handle your data [here](#)).
2. You'll receive a link to complete your part of the form online.
3. Your referees will each receive their own link to complete their sections. Please prompt them to check their inbox/junk.

Once all sections are submitted, I'll be in touch about the next step.

Option 2: complete manually

If you'd rather not use the electronic option, you can download the background check form below and coordinate completion directly with your referees.

If you choose this route, please:

1. Click [here](#) to let me know you're completing the form manually.
2. Download the background check form [here](#) and coordinate completion directly with your referees.
3. Once completed, send the form to me [here](#).

What to do

Why it's needed

As an MOD-sponsored youth organisation, we require a nationality and integrity check for data security and access to MOD assets and establishments.

3

ID verification

Who's involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applicant trustee• Squadron Commander
How long it'll take	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 15 minutes
What to do	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Arrange to meet with the Squadron Commander during the next parade night.2. Bring along the ID documents that you disclosed on your DBS application and background check form.3. The Squadron Commander will verify the ID documents, they'll:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Complete an ID verification form.b. Complete part 6 of the background check form.4. Once complete, click here to email the background check forms to Region HQ, copying in the Wing Chairperson.
Why it's needed	ID must be verified in-person by authorised RAF Air Cadets personnel for both legal and MOD security reasons.

4

Subscribe to the DBS Update Service

Who's involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applicant trustee
How long it'll take	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 minutes
What to do	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Once you receive your DBS application reference number, sign-up to the DBS Update Service here. It's free for voluntary positions.2. After subscribing, please inform the Wing Chairperson here.
Why it's needed	This ensures your DBS auto-renews in future – reducing admin for everyone involved and avoiding re-verification.

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Submit your completed application

Who's involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applicant trustee• Squadron Commander
How long it'll take	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 minutes
What to do	<p>Once you are informed that your DBS certificate has been issued and your background check has been processed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Visit Volunteer Portal.2. Log in with the RAF Air Cadets username created for you.3. Click 'submit application' on the homepage.4. Your squadron's Commander will receive a prompt to accept.
Why it's needed	<p>This is the final action to confirm your onboarding and activate your system access.</p>

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Welcome and system access

Who's involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trustee• Wing Chairperson
How long it'll take	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5 minutes
What to do	<p>You'll receive your official RAF Air Cadets email address. You'll be prompted to download the Outlook mobile or tablet app and login, or access your inbox online.</p> <p>You'll be invited to visit the wing's Trustee Hub, and explore the support that's available, including an induction section.</p>
Why it's needed	<p>This grants you secure access to the information and platforms you'll need as a trustee.</p>

Frequently asked questions

1. Why do I need to go through this onboarding process?

Completing the onboarding steps is what officially recognises you as a trustee of your squadron within the RAF Air Cadets. Once you're formally recorded:

- You're covered by RAFAC personal injury insurance during committee meetings, parade nights, and other squadron activities.
- You can be added to external events (e.g. fundraising days, community activities, off-site events), meaning you're fully covered by MOD insurance for those activities as well.
- You're protected by our trustee indemnity arrangements.
- You're recognised as part of the organisation's governance structure, which gives you appropriate access to official systems, documents, and communication channels.

In short, the onboarding process isn't just a formality. It's what allows you to operate safely, legally, and confidently as a trustee, with the organisation's full protection behind you.

2. How long does the onboarding process take?

The application, DBS, and background check forms can be completed in under an hour by the applicant. Each referee takes around 10 minutes to complete their part of the background check. ID verification is usually arranged within a week, depending on availability.

Once everything is submitted, processing times can vary from 1 to 4 weeks, depending on factors like referee response times, staff capacity, and whether the applicant has had a DBS before (which often speeds things up). In total, most trustees are fully onboarded within 2 to 5 weeks.

3. What if I already hold a BPSS, SC, or DV?

Click [here](#) to inform Wales & West Region HQ, as you may be exempt from completing the background check in step two.

4. What if I get stuck or have questions?

You'll receive support at every stage. The Wing Chairperson is your main contact. Your Squadron Chairperson and Squadron Commander are also there to help.

5. Why do I need an RAF Air Cadets email address?

Your RAF Air Cadets (RAFAC) email address must be used for all RAFAC-related correspondence - including anything to do with your role as a trustee. This ensures we meet our organisational policies, maintain appropriate security standards, and give you access to key resources like shared documents, meeting invites, and secure systems.

All RAFAC communications are subject to GDPR and the Freedom of Information Act. If trustee or committee business takes place outside official RAFAC systems (e.g. via private email accounts), the committee could be held liable in the event of a data breach or formal request.

Using your RAFAC email protects you, your fellow trustees, and the organisation.

6. Who has access to my data?

We recognise that the onboarding process requires you to share some personal information. This is because trustees are part of a Ministry of Defence–sponsored organisation, and certain checks are legally required so you can be granted access to MOD systems.

Your data is handled with great care:

- Only volunteers and staff who are suitably security-cleared, authorised, and trained can view your data.
- Your information is stored securely using MOD infrastructure.
- Access to your completed background check (BPSS) is limited strictly to permanent RAF Air Cadets staff.
- Under GDPR, you have the right to request deletion of your records once you leave the organisation.

We take data protection extremely seriously, and we ensure that your information is accessed only when necessary and only by those who are appropriately vetted.

7. What if I can't identify a personal referee?

The personal referee category covers a wide range of people - for example, a long-term friend who is a Parish Councillor, or a neighbour who is an engineer - as long as they have known you for at least three years.

If you're still unable to identify someone suitable, you may use your Squadron Commander as your personal referee. Please note that if you do this, they won't be able to act as your ID sponsor/verifier for the background check, so either I or your Sector Officer will arrange to complete this step with you instead.