Frequently Asked Questions About Becoming a CAMRA National Director

What is the National Executive (NE)?
CAMRA is governed by a Board of Directors known as the National Executive (NE). The NE is responsible for setting the strategic direction of the organisation and ensuring that CAMRA delivers its charitable and organisational objectives.

National Directors are elected directly by CAMRA members through the Annual General Meeting (AGM) process. All Directors serve as unpaid volunteers. To maintain continuity while allowing for renewal, approximately one-third of the Board retires each year and those positions are then available for election. The Board elects its own Chair and Vice-Chair annually from amongst its members.

What are the key responsibilities of a CAMRA National Director?
National Directors are both volunteer leaders and company directors. Collectively, they are responsible for:

- Setting CAMRA's strategic direction and priorities.
- Ensuring effective governance and compliance with legal obligations.
- Overseeing the organisation's financial health and long-term sustainability.
- Monitoring organisational performance and delivery against agreed objectives.
- Making decisions in the best interests of CAMRA and its membership.
- Reviewing policies, proposals and recommendations from volunteers, committees and staff.
- Chairing committees, working groups or project teams where required.
- Acting as ambassadors for CAMRA and promoting its values.

As company directors, NE members also have legal duties under company law and must act responsibly, ethically and in the best interests of the organisation at all times.

CAMRA has a Chief Executive – isn't the Chief Executive in charge?
CAMRA is a volunteer-led organisation governed by its elected National Executive.

The Chief Executive leads the paid staff team and is responsible for the day-to-day management and operational delivery of the organisation. The Chief Executive and Senior Leadership Team provide professional advice, expertise and recommendations to the Board.

The National Executive is responsible for governance, strategy and major organisational decisions. Examples include approving the strategic plan, setting the annual budget, overseeing organisational performance, determining policy positions, approving significant investments, and ensuring that CAMRA meets its legal and regulatory obligations.

The Chief Executive and staff are responsible for implementing the National Executive's decisions and managing the organisation's day-to-day activities. Examples include managing staff and volunteers, delivering campaigns and events, administering membership services, managing supplier relationships, operating within the approved budget, and overseeing routine operational decisions.

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In practice, the National Executive determines what CAMRA is seeking to achieve and provides oversight of organisational performance, while the Chief Executive and staff determine how those objectives are delivered on a day-to-day basis.

What is the time commitment? Can I be a National Director while having a full-time job, family or other commitments?
Yes. Many existing and former National Directors have balanced the role alongside full-time employment, family responsibilities and other commitments.

The time commitment varies depending on:

- Committee responsibilities.
- Specific portfolio areas.
- Current projects and strategic priorities.
- The number of meetings and papers requiring review.
- National Directors should expect:
- Regular email correspondence throughout the week.
- Reading and reviewing meeting papers.
- Participation in monthly Board meetings.
- Attendance at committee meetings where relevant.
- Occasional attendance at CAMRA events, conferences or regional meetings.

For 2026, all formal National Executive meetings are scheduled to take place online. Additional virtual meetings may occasionally be required.

The role typically requires 30-60 hours per month, with the actual commitment varying according to business needs. Prospective candidates should be willing and able to dedicate sufficient time to participate fully and discharge their duties as Directors.

It is also generally recommended that National Directors do not undertake additional major CAMRA roles during their term of office to ensure they can focus fully on their governance responsibilities.

Will being a National Director leave me out of pocket?
No.

National Directors are unpaid volunteers; however, CAMRA will reimburse reasonable expenses that are incurred as a direct result of carrying out approved National Executive (NE) duties, in line with the CAMRA Expenses Policy.
This typically includes approved travel, accommodation and other authorised expenses incurred whilst conducting CAMRA business. However, only expenses that are necessarily incurred and claimed in accordance with the Expenses Policy will be reimbursed.

Prospective and serving Directors are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the Expenses Policy before incurring or submitting any claims.

What skills and experience do I need?

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There is no single "ideal" background for a National Director.
CAMRA benefits from having a diverse Board with a range of professional experiences, personal perspectives and skills. Useful qualities include:

- Strategic thinking.
- Sound judgement and decision-making.
- Leadership and team-working skills.
- Financial awareness.
- Governance or committee experience.
- Ability to analyse complex information.
- Communication and relationship-building skills.
- Commitment to CAMRA's aims and values.

Equally important is a willingness to listen, collaborate constructively and contribute positively to Board discussions.

The Board is strongest when members bring different experiences and viewpoints.

Do I need previous CAMRA experience before standing for election?
No.

Many National Directors have previously held roles such as Branch Chair, Branch Officer, Regional Director or Committee Member. However, others have joined the National Executive without holding formal positions within CAMRA previously.

Relevant experience gained through employment, volunteering, charity governance, community involvement or other organisations can be equally valuable.

What matters most is your ability to contribute effectively at a strategic level and your commitment to CAMRA's objectives.

I'm not a confident public speaker. Will that prevent me from being an effective National Director?
Not at all.

National Directors may occasionally be asked to represent CAMRA at meetings, conferences, festivals, member events or in the media. However, effective governance requires a wide range of skills and not every Director is expected to be a regular public spokesperson.

Support, guidance and training are available where needed, and Directors are encouraged to develop their confidence over time.

The effectiveness of the Board comes from the collective strengths of its members rather than any single individual.

What support and training will I receive if elected?
Newly elected Directors receive an induction designed to help them understand:

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Their legal duties as company directors.

- CAMRA's governance structure.
- Financial responsibilities.
- Board procedures and decision-making processes.
- Key strategic priorities.
- The roles of staff, volunteers and committees.

Additional training and ongoing support are available throughout a Director's term of office.

What is "collective responsibility" and can I still express my own views?
Yes.

National Executive decisions are made democratically, and open discussion is encouraged. Directors are expected to challenge constructively, ask questions and contribute their views during Board discussions.

Once a decision has been made through the proper governance process, Directors are expected to support and uphold that decision when acting in their official capacity or representing CAMRA publicly.

This helps ensure consistency, accountability and effective governance.

"What happens if I disagree with a decision made by the National Executive?"
Directors are encouraged to challenge constructively, ask questions and express their views during discussion. Decisions are made collectively by the Board. Where a Director disagrees with a decision, they may ask for their dissent to be recorded where appropriate.

Once a lawful decision has been made through the proper governance process, Directors are expected to support its implementation when acting in their capacity as National Directors, while continuing to fulfil their legal duties as company directors.

How are conflicts of interest managed?
Like all company directors, National Directors are required to declare any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest.

Where appropriate, Directors may be required to withdraw from discussions or decision-making relating to matters where a conflict exists.

This helps ensure decisions are made fairly, transparently and in the best interests of CAMRA.

Can I continue to hold other CAMRA roles if elected?
Yes, although National Directors should carefully consider whether holding additional CAMRA roles would affect their ability to fulfil their responsibilities as a Director. Many National Directors have previously held, or continue to hold, other volunteer positions within CAMRA. However, the role of National Director carries significant

governance responsibilities, including preparing for Board meetings, reviewing papers, participating in committees and supporting strategic decision-making.

Where a Director holds another CAMRA role, they must:

- Ensure they have sufficient time to discharge both responsibilities effectively.
- Avoid any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest.
- Comply with CAMRA's Conflict of Interest Policy and declare relevant interests where required.
- Be prepared to step back from discussions or decisions where their other role could create a conflict.

In practice, it is generally recommended that National Directors do not take on additional major CAMRA roles during their term of office unless there is a clear organisational need and they are confident, they can devote sufficient time to both responsibilities.
The primary duty of a National Director is to act in the best interests of CAMRA as a whole, rather than representing a particular branch, region, committee or other CAMRA body. Holding another role should not compromise that responsibility.

Will I have access to confidential information?
Yes.

National Directors are likely to receive confidential information relating to governance, finances, staffing, legal matters and strategic discussions.

All Directors have a responsibility to handle confidential information appropriately and in accordance with CAMRA policies and legal requirements.

If elected, can I choose which committee or portfolio I oversee?
Specific responsibilities are allocated by the National Chair following elections and Board appointments.

Whilst personal interests, expertise and preferences are taken into consideration wherever possible, Directors cannot be guaranteed a particular portfolio, committee chairmanship or area of responsibility.

The overall needs of the organisation must come first.