

Guidance on how and where to recruit trustees

Not sure how to recruit new trustees or committee members or where to advertise? This information sheet will help you.

How to recruit great trustees (the following information is provided courtesy of [Reach Skills](#))

There are four basic stages that will help you recruit great trustees:

1. Prepare
2. Recruit
3. Induct
4. Review

1. Prepare

- **Plan the process:** Ensure you have planned and communicated the process, laying out the timetable for recruitment, the preparatory activities, who is going to be involved, what budget is available to support the process, the closing date for applications, date for interviews.
- **[Carry out a skills audit](#):** To understand the current skills and experience within your board, identify gaps and look at what skills you may be losing if a trustee is stepping down or retiring. Consider what skills you will need to carry out your strategy.
- **Assess current representation:** Consider the diversity of your board and whether it is broadly representative of the community, users and members your organisation serves. An effective board will have an understanding of the needs and wishes of the groups of people that form it, support it and benefit from it.
- **Agree who you are looking for:** Decide what kinds of skills, experience and background you are looking for in candidates. What is essential, and what is desirable? This may sound like an obvious thing to do but it is surprisingly common for boards to gloss over this decision only to find out that there is disagreement later – often at the appointment stage. If you agree from the outset about what skills, qualities and experience you are looking for, you are also much more likely to attract candidates who have the right qualities.

When considering diversity, think of recruiting to stimulate debate on the board. A strong board has a mix of backgrounds, approaches and perspectives. This is proven to lead to better decision making – a balanced approach to risk, for example.

Check the legal restrictions to see what you can and cannot do. This may include a limit on the number of trustees, the process for nomination, terms of office, special provisions. There are also specific restrictions in law about who can and cannot be a trustee and payments to trustees for example.

2. Recruit

- **Create an information pack:** Develop an information pack to give to potential trustees who want to consider the vacant position with your organisation. This should include a summary of the role description covering the duties of a charity trustee and the specific skills and experience being sought, an outline of the organisation and its priorities for the next 2-5 years, how to apply for

the role and details on the appointments process being used.

- **Think about your audience:** Consider how to reach those groups you want to attract to the trustee role and how to promote the vacancy to catch their attention. Make use of all avenues available to you including free advertising, brokerage agencies, social media, volunteer agencies, press advertising, local notice boards, your website, word of mouth.
- **Shortlist and interview:** Review applications to create a shortlist. Meet and [interview](#) prospective candidates to sell your organisation, and to establish their capability and fit to your needs. Remember that this is a two way street – prospective candidates will be exploring whether they want to join your board so give them plenty of opportunity to get to know more about your organisation, its work and other board members. Some charities hold open days, others offer informal meetings with the chief executive and / or chair.
- **Appointment:** The final part of the recruitment stage is to complete the processes for joining the board:
 - take up references and carry out appropriate checks
 - arrange a visit to the organisation to meet the people
 - arrange for the potential trustee to observe at a board meeting
 - confirm the formal appointment at the appropriate board meeting and register with the Charity Commission, if appropriate
 - issue a press release
 - complete the induction and carry out a review with the new trustee after 3-6 months

3. Induct

New trustees need to feel welcomed and informed. Giving them some time to learn about the organisation and some key information will help them become a contributing and effective member of the board more quickly.

A good induction is often reported as one of the main reasons charity trustees become engaged with the organisation and stay as a trustee. Poor induction and limited time given to helping trustees learn about the organisation and build their skills is one of the most cited reasons for individuals stepping down prematurely.

Consider offering the new trustee a 'buddy' – an existing board member who can mentor them through the first few months.

A good induction should include an information pack of key documents containing:

- The governing documents
- Your strategy
- Latest annual report and accounts
- Frequency/timings of board meetings and committees
- Minutes of previous year's board meetings
- List of current trustees plus short biographies
- Organisational structure and senior staff biographies
- Background history of the organisation
- The current organisation strategy/operating plans
- Applicable policy documents including:

- Expenses policy
- Conflict of interest declaration
- Volunteering policy etc
- Summary of funding and projects
- Outline of main relationships with other organisations
- Information about trustee training and development
- Useful resources such as The Code of Good Governance and The Essential Trustee

Examples of the organisation's marketing literature, business cards, publications the organisation may have issued may also be useful to include as part of the induction pack.

4. Review

Review the process for recruiting. What worked well, what could have worked better? What will you change next time? How well is the new board working? Are there changes that are needed? Are the skills and experience of each trustee being used effectively?

Also ensure that you review how your new trustee is settling into their role after 3-6 months. This should highlight any issues they have, their thoughts about the induction process and whether they feel this is this right role for them. It should also help inform your process when you next recruit a trustee.

Where to advertise for trustees

There are a variety of methods which you can use to recruit new trustees. Our experience and research shows that the traditional methods for recruiting new trustees e.g. personal recommendation and word of mouth, remain the most popular. However, research also shows that whilst these methods are still widely used, they are not necessarily the most effective ways of finding the people with the skills which you need, as they limit the field from which trustees can be drawn. Using wider and more inclusive methods of searching for new trustees, such as advertising and using trustee brokerage services, can help you to access a wider range of applicants and we recommend that you consider these methods. Click on the links provided below.

Local Resources

[Community Works](#)

Our volunteer centre can advertise your trustee or committee member vacancies. We can also give advice on writing the advert, role description and others aspects of recruitment.

Tel: 01273 234826

Email: volunteercentre@bhcommunityworks.org.uk

[Community Base](#)

Community Base can advertise your board positions on their website and in their reception.

Tel: 01273 234000

Email: reception@communitybase.org

[CUPP trustee network](#)

This online network run by the University of Brighton enables you to advertise your position to university staff who are looking for trustee positions.

Tel: 01273 644145

Email: volunteering@brighton.ac.uk

University of Brighton

Active Student is a service at the University of Brighton that can help you recruit students to support the running of your organisation.

Tel: 01273 644145

Email: activestudent@brighton.ac.uk.

SCIP email list

This is a local list that anyone can sign up to and which lots of community-focused information is circulated on. Either [join](#) or if you're already a member of the list, email your advert to scip-discussion@yahoogroups.com

Brighton and Hove Jobs

Your organisation can post volunteer vacancies for free on this recruitment website.

The Argus

If you have any budget to pay. Call 01273 544700

Leaflet drop

Consider a leaflet drop in your area if you operate from a specific location.

Don't forget! Personal Recommendation and Word of Mouth

Make a list of all of your connections and exploit them as much as possible. For example, if you have a community development worker contact them to ask to help push the message. Make sure your advertisement accurately reflects the charity and the skills and experience that you are looking for.

National Resources

Small Charities Coalition trustee recruitment resources

Lots of national resources for trustee recruitment, including the [trustee finder service](#) that allows you to post a vacancy that will be added to a national database.

Reach Volunteering online service

Run by national charity Reach, their free matching service allows you to post an advert to their register of skilled volunteers.