5.0 Governance and Trustees

Recruitment, Selection and Induction

Overview

1. **Introduction**
2. **A five stage recruitment and induction process**
3. **Resources**
4. **Further information**

Introduction

Recruiting, selecting and inducting the people who sit on your board or management committee is one of the most important processes that a voluntary organisation can undertake.

A well balanced and diverse board will provide direction and possess the skills that are needed to develop the organisation.

Image: Recruitment interview

NB: For ease of reference, GB members of voluntary organisations and registered charities will be referred to as '**trustees**' in this information sheet. They may be called something different in your governing document, but we mean the people who have ultimate responsibility for running the organisation.

An effective board is central to good governance. For this reason the **Charity Governance Code** places great emphasis on managing the recruitment, selection and induction process in a structured way.

'The board has a key impact on whether a charity thrives. The tone the board sets through its leadership, behaviour, culture and overall performance is critical to the charity's success. It is important to have a rigorous approach to trustee recruitment, performance and development, and to the board's conduct. In an effective team, board members feel it is safe to suggest, question and challenge ideas and address, rather than avoid, difficult topics.'

Charity Governance Code, Principle 5: Board Effectiveness

The **Charity Commission** has placed a particular importance on this topic in their comprehensive core guidance, **Finding New trustees (CC30)** which states the following:

Trustees play an essential role in the governance of charities. They also have a lot to contribute to their success. For example they can:

- Serve as a means of communication with communities that a charity exists to serve;
- Bring valuable professional or other experience to charities; and
- Help to ensure that charities are well-managed through the appointment of senior executive staff.

Start as you mean to go on – Trustee recruitment and induction (RS10) also states:

In our experience, boards of trustees are more likely to:

- Recruit successfully if they do so openly and transparently, taking care neither to overstate nor understate the responsibilities involved;
- Operate successfully if they offer a comprehensive induction programme during which new trustees are provided with the key information they need to run the charity; and
- Command confidence and respect from their client base and wider community if they demonstrate diversity in the widest sense of skills, age, sex, race and background.

Many reasons for, and approaches to, recruiting trustees exist, but it is important to retain sight of the essential nature of trusteeship. The qualities that make a good trustee are well summarised in **The Seven Principals of Public Life** which were set out by the **Committee on Standards in Public Life**, chaired at the time by Lord Nolan:

- Selflessness
- Integrity
- Objectivity
- Accountability
- Openness
- Honesty
- Leadership

Further information on governance and the duties of trustees can be found in our information sheets:
5.1 Principles of Governance

A Five Stage Recruitment and Induction Process

The old fashioned method of 'word of mouth' recruitment has, in more recent years, given way to a more formalised approach to recruiting trustees which is now strongly recommended.

Various factors have brought this about including the need to target trustees with specific skills, the importance of creating a diverse board, greater demand for trustees generally, and concerns over personal liability. Adopting a formal approach to recruitment and induction can help you find the trustees you want, and ensure that you carry out the process within the requirements of the law and your governing document.

External Link
The charity **getting on board** provides excellent guidance on trustee recruitment:
Trustee Recruitment Guidance - Getting On Board

Stage 1 – the Planning Process

- Identify the need for new trustees. This may be because vacancies have arisen through resignations, because the existing trustees have decided that specific additional skills and/or increased diversity are needed to help run the organisation more effectively, or because wider stakeholder representation is required on the board.

> **NB**: No one under 18 can be the trustee of a charitable trust or unincorporated association, but they can be directors of a charitable company

- Assess the skills of the existing trustees and identify any 'skills gaps' by means of carrying out a **Skills Audit**. In smaller organisations this can be relatively informal, but in larger ones a more formal structured process should be adopted. Trustee skills, experience and input should be reviewed on a regular basis and advance planning put in place for expected vacancies.
- Agree what skills, experience and knowledge are needed, and write it down in the form of a short role description and person specification, setting out a realistic breakdown of the expected duties and time commitment.
- Think about accessibility and diversity. How will you encourage a wide range of people from different backgrounds to apply for the roles? Do you want to encourage people from particular backgrounds (where your board lacks representation) to apply?

- Agree responsibilities and a process for recruitment, taking care to comply with any specific requirements or restrictions set out in the governing document such as:
  - Eligibility criteria
  - Restrictions on who may be appointed
  - Elections
  - Rights of co-option
  - Notice periods
  - Institutional trustees.

Some of the work may be delegated to a sub-group of trustees, but the whole board remains responsible for the process and any decisions made.

Stage 2 – the Recruitment Process

Consider the best methods of attracting a diverse range of candidates with the skills that you have identified are needed by the organisation:

- Produce a recruitment pack with information about your organisation, the role descriptions and clear instructions about how to apply. Use plain language and make it clear what expenses, support and training will be provided.
- Advertise widely. This may include advertising in the local and/or specialist press and using trustee brokerage services. Consider using social media to promote the roles, especially if you are hoping to attract younger trustees. Consider holding a trustee open evening to enable interested people to find out more about your organisation.
- Carry out short-listing and interviews against agreed criteria. Interviews should be carried out by a small panel of trustees, and each candidate should be asked similar questions to ensure a fair and objective approach. The candidates can be scored against the person specification that you have drawn up (as mentioned above), and notes relating to each interview should be kept on file.
- Identify the preferred candidate(s) and invite them to accept appointment, subject to references, formal vetting and approval by the full board. Notify the unsuccessful candidates and thank them for their interest. Consider whether you could offer unsuccessful candidates another opportunity in your organisation, as a volunteer for example.

Top Tip
You can also advertise details of current trustee opportunities for free on the **Volunteering Wales website**

Stage 3 – the Selection Process

- Check that the candidates have not been **disqualified from acting as trustees** under sections 178-180 of the **Charities Act 2011**, and ask the candidates to confirm this in writing by signing a standard form of **Declaration, eligibility and responsibility**.
- Ask the candidates to consider and declare any existing or potential conflicts of interest in the above Declaration form.
- Seek any necessary criminal record checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service if your organisation works with young or vulnerable people.

Further information can be found in our information sheets :
4.9 Volunteering to work with vulnerable adults and children

- Make a decision to go ahead and formalise the appointment of new trustees if the checks, declarations and disclosures are all satisfactory.

External Link
ICSA (The Governance Institute) have useful guidance on trustee eligibility:
Trustee Eligibility Guidance - ICSA

Stage 4 – the Appointment Process

- Check the governing document to ensure that the new trustees are being appointed in accordance with the procedures and limitations set out in it.
- Write to the prospective trustees (this is usually done by the chair), setting out their duties (utilising the role description mentioned above) and the organisation's expectations. Ask them to sign and return a copy of the letter by way of acceptance.
- Send a full induction pack about the organisation. If there is a lot of material you may wish to stagger this over a period of time to avoid 'overloading' new trustees. While the specific contents of an induction pack will vary from organisation to organisation, such a pack will often include:

  • A short history of the organisation

  • A copy of the governing document

  • Name, contact details, term of office and short biographies of the trustees, honorary officers, and company secretary where relevant

  • Any agreed role descriptions and a code of conduct for trustees

  • A list of committees and their membership, with copies of their terms of reference

  • A schedule of meetings for the current year

  • A copy of the organisation's strategic or business plan

  • Copies of the most recent annual report and accounts, the latest management accounts, and a copy of the auditor's or examiner's letter to the trustees on the completion of the last audit together with any reply or action document

  • Minutes of the last three trustee meetings

  • An organisation chart and list of employees (if any)

  • Copies of current policies and standing orders

  • Contact details for professional advisers used by the organisation, together with relevant banking information

  • A summary of the organisation's investments and insurance cover, and details of major property holdings

  • Details of major funders and contracts

  • Details of any affiliations or networks, and a list of useful support and training organisations

  • Copy of the **Charity Commission** booklet titled **The Essential Trustee: what you need to know (CC3)**

  • Copy of or link to the **Charity Governance Code**

- Notify all relevant parties, such as funders, the organisation's solicitors and auditors, of the new appointments.
- Comply with any legal formalities such as notification to the **Charity Commission** and **Companies House**, where relevant.

Stage 5 – the Induction Process

- Arrange a full induction process for the new trustee(s) based on the induction pack, which should be designed to acquaint them with the organisation's purposes, financial position, work programmes, structure, staff and current issues.
- Arrange meetings with the existing trustees and others involved with the charity such as the chief officer, key members of staff, volunteers, beneficiaries and stakeholders.
- Consider appointing an existing experienced trustee to act as a mentor.
- Formally welcome the new trustees when they attend their first board meeting.
- Consider a one-to-one meeting with the chair after the first few trustee meetings, in order to discuss any questions or issues that may have arisen.
- Consider a social event or away day after the next **AGM** to help build team spirit and allow the new trustee(s) to get to know the existing trustees in a less formal setting.

Naturally, it will be necessary to provide initial and ongoing training to ensure that new trustees are able to make an effective contribution to the organisation, this can be evaluated in a number of ways.

Full information on training and development can be found in our information sheet:
5.5 Training and Development for Trustees

Resources

Many organisations offer useful free resources such as model trustee role descriptions, person specifications, induction pack lists, conflict of interest policies, trustee declarations, and so on. Whilst these are very useful it is always important to consider the particular situation and needs of your organisation, and tailor any model documents to fit your own circumstances. A number of the organisations that offer such resources are listed below.

Further Information

Volunteering Wales
Volunteering Wales
www.volunteering-wales.net

Recruit 3
Source
www.recruit3.org.uk

CC30 Finding New trustees – What charities need to know
Charity Commission for England and Wales
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/finding-new-trustees-cc30

RS10 Start as you mean to go on – Trustee recruitment and induction
Charity Commission for England and Wales
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/start-as-you-mean-to-go-on-rs10

Trustee Recruitment
NCVO
https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/tools-resources/board-basics/tools-and-guidance/recruitment

Getting on Board
Getting on Board
https://www.gettingonboard.org/

ICSA: The Chartered Governance Institute
ICSA
https://www.icsa.org.uk/knowledge

Cefnogi Trydydd Sector Cymru Third Sector Support Wales

Further Information

Small Charities Coalition
Small Charities Coalition
https://www.smallcharities.org.uk/

Prospectus
Prospectus
www.prospect-us.co.uk

The Nolan Principles of Public Life
Public Standards
www.public-standards.gov.uk

Cefnogi Trydydd Sector **Cymru**

Third Sector Support **Wales**

Third Sector Support Wales is a network of support organisations for the whole of the third sector in Wales.

It consists of the 19 local and regional support bodies across Wales, the County Voluntary Councils (CVCs) and the national support body, Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA).

For further information contact **https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/contact/**

Disclaimer

The information provided in this sheet is intended for guidance only. It is not a substitute for professional advice and we cannot accept any responsibility for loss occasioned as a result of any person acting or refraining from acting upon it.