

Whatever the size of your organisation, having the right trustees is critical. Because they perform such an important role, it can be challenging to recruit them – but it can also be an exciting opportunity to bring in new experience, skills and ideas to your organisation.

Tips on getting the right trustees

1. Plan ahead

- **Team work:** are the current trustees ready and willing to work on this together? Are there any problems or issues that need to be resolved before taking on new board members?
- **Time:** allow plenty of time! Recruiting the right trustees can take several weeks and sometimes months and is not something you want to rush. So if new trustees need to be elected at the next AGM, make sure that you start the process well in advance.
- **Research:** check what procedures and materials your organisation already has in place for recruiting trustees. Take a look at some of the resources available to groups on trustee recruitment (see the 'Resources' section at the end of this information sheet).
- **Planning:** decide between you who will be responsible for doing which tasks. Agree a simple plan and timeframe.

2 Check your governing document

- This is the rulebook for how your organisation is governed and is sometimes also referred to as a constitution, trust deed or memorandum and articles of association.
- It may set out requirements such as the maximum or minimum number of trustees you can have on your board, how and when they can be appointed – ie by election or nomination – and the procedures for doing this.

3 Be aware of who can and can't be a trustee

- If you are a registered charity, there are certain people who can't act as trustees for example, someone who is an undischarged bankrupt or anyone who is under 18 yrs old.
- For more information on who is eligible see The Charity Commissions guide ['Finding new trustees – what charities need to know'](#) p12

4. Carry out a mini skills audit

- Recruiting new trustees can be a great opportunity to introduce fresh skills, experience and perspectives to your organisation. Work out what skills, knowledge and experience you already have between you, where there might be gaps and what you would like to bring into your organisation to make it more effective. For example, do you need campaigning skills to help you make your voice as an organisation better heard?
- If your organisation is beginning to grow, would someone with management experience be useful? To help you assess which skills and qualities you already have as a board and what you might want to bring in, take a look at NCVO's '[Trustee Recruitment Tool Kit](#)' and draw up your own simple 'Skills + Experience Table' p14

5. Write a role description – it's worth taking the time to do this!

When recruiting for any new role, it's very helpful to take the time to think about and clearly define what it will involve so that any potential applicant is clear right from the start what will be expected of them, and they can be sure that they have the relevant skills and experience. It will also make it much easier for you to spot the right person when they apply!

Role Description: work together to decide on the key things – the tasks and responsibilities - your trustee will need to do in their role. NOTE: there are certain legal responsibilities that need to be included – for an example trustee role description see: NCVO's '[Trustee Recruitment Tool Kit](#)' (p24). Think about any skills or experience gaps you identified in your skills audit and draw up a list of the skills, knowledge, experience and other qualities you are looking for in a trustee. See also our Nuts and Bolts guide (p6 & 16 on how to develop role descriptions)

Be realistic: whilst it's important to identify the key skills and experience that your organisation needs, it's also important that the person you describe might actually exist! Unless there are very specific skills you need, try to avoid creating an enormous list of formal qualifications. Try to identify other experience and qualities – ie personal experience, commitment and willingness to learn new skills.

6. Publicise the opportunity

Word of mouth is a simple and often effective way of finding new trustees for your organisation. But it can also be quite restrictive – potentially preventing you from accessing a much wider pool of talent and not necessarily enabling your board to reflect the diversity of the community you are working in. See our Recruiting Trustees page for other ways to advertise your role. Here are a few ideas for advertising your vacancy:

- [Volunteer Centre Sheffield](#) – Register here to advertise your roles online for free.
- [Charity Job](#): free to advertise for volunteers, including trustees
- [NCVO Trustee Bank](#) – for NCVO members only

7. Further resources

[Trustees Week](#) is a dedicated trustee website has more information and resources.
Charity Commission: [The Essential Trustee](#). This sets out the role and duties of trustees.