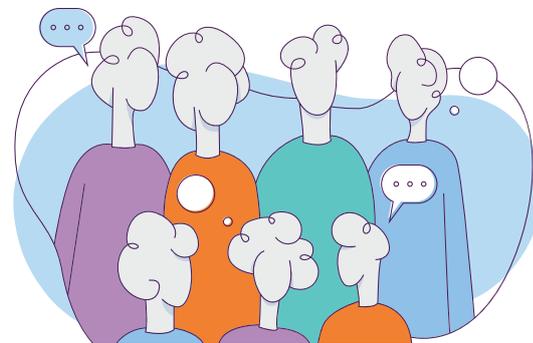


GUIDE TO BECOMING A TRUSTEE



One significant way that you and your colleagues can give back to your local community is by volunteering as a trustee (or a director on a charity's management committee or board). Charities often struggle to find people with private sector experience to join their board, so your knowledge and skills could be very welcome!

Why become a trustee?

Benefits to you:

- Make a major contribution to a great cause. Many charities need trustees: NCVO estimates around 90,000 trustee vacancies in the UK so whatever cause you care about, there'll be options.
- Boost your CV. 65% of trustees think the experience has improved their CV and 22% say they got a promotion because of it!
- Expand your professional network. Becoming a trustee develops your confidence, team working skills and ability to develop relationships.
- If you're interested in becoming a non-executive director in the future, trustee positions provide great experience and prove your strategic capabilities.

Benefits for your employer:

- Training. Being a trustee is an effective and low-cost way of developing employees' skills, especially leadership experience.
- Perspective. Trusteeships give employees experience in broader areas of work relevant to the business.
- Halo-effect. Having its employees acting as charity trustees raises the profile of the company's responsible business work.
- Building professional skills. Being a trustee allows employees to hone critical thinking, problem-solving and analytical skills: 96% of trustees say they've learnt new skills.

What's the role of a trustee?

Every registered charity has a board of trustees (sometimes called the 'management committee' and often with topic specific sub-committees). They make sure the charity has a clear strategy and that its work and goals are in line with its vision. They make sure its assets (from buildings to reputation to people) are used well and that the charity runs sustainably. Trustees don't usually do the day-to-day running of the charity. They delegate this to the employees and act as a 'critical friend' supporting and constructively challenging the team. However, in smaller charities trustees may take hands-on voluntary roles too.

What skills does a trustee need?

This depends on the charity. Adverts for roles will set out any specific skills or experience you need. Charities also often seek out trustees who've benefitted from their services or with lived experience of the problem they're addressing.

How do you find trustee vacancies?

Roles are advertised online in a range of locations. You can join [Reach Volunteering](#) who have hundreds of trustee vacancies across the UK, or try local volunteer centres through [Do-it](#). Charities also advertise on their own websites and some other good starting points are [Guardian Jobs](#) and [Trustees Unlimited](#).



How much time does it take?

Most trustees meet between four and eight times a year, but each organisation will expect you to spend a different amount of time on the role. The only way to find out is to ask the charity. Some useful questions to ask are:

- How many trustee meetings are there each year and how much preparation time is expected for each one?
- How long are the meetings, where are they and at what time of day?
- Are trustees expected to serve on committees?
- Are there opportunities to spend time with the organisation observing its work?
- What contact is there between trustee meetings?
- How long are the terms of office?
- Are there any events that trustees are expected to attend?

How to know whether a trustee position is right for you

- Find out about the mission and values of the organisation. Do these resonate with you?
- Who are the other trustees? It needs to be a team you want to join.
- Ask about the charity's financial position. Every charity files its accounts and annual reports with [the Charity Commission](#) and they provide insight into the organisation.
- Check the legal structure. If the charity is also a company limited by guarantee, then trustees have limited financial liability (you'll want to have this).
- Clarify the time commitment of the role and be realistic about whether you can commit to it.
- Can you commit to the term? Usually a term is a three-year commitment and a trustee can have a maximum of three terms, but this varies between charities.
- Ask about the organisation's strategic plan and priorities. What skills, experience and value can you bring to the board to support the achievement of these goals?
- What induction and training will the charity provide? This will help you become an effective trustee more quickly.

For more information:

The Charity Commission's guide, [the Essential Trustee](#)

[Reach Volunteering](#)

[Getting on Board](#)

