Recruiting trustees is an ongoing challenge for charities. The latest statistics suggest there are more than [**100,000**](https://fundraising.co.uk/2018/05/08/many-charities-can-not-recruit-trustees/#.XGWFJ1z7SUk)**unfilled charity trustee vacancies in the UK**, with **74% of charities reporting difficulties hiring the trustees they need in 2018.**

It’s not only recruiting trustees that is challenging, it’s recruiting trustees with the right skills. Many charities face serious skills gaps, for instance many lack relevant legal, digital and marketing skills at board level.

Increasingly, trustee boards are recognising the need to recruit trustees with more diverse skills, from a variety of different professional backgrounds to improve their effectiveness.

The Charity Commission’s [Taken on Trust report](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/658766/20171113_Taken_on_Trust_awareness_and_effectiveness_of_charity_trustees.pdf) found that **out of 700,000 trustees, two-thirds were male, the average age is 55-64 and 92% are white.** The report highlighted there is a “danger that charity boards might become myopic in their views and in their decision-making”.

So how can charities ensure they have a diverse board with a broad range of skills and experience and that this is maintained?

**Here are some tips for recruiting Trustees in 2019:**

**Conduct a skills audit**

Carry out a skills audit to check what skills the board already has and where the gaps may lie. Also check when the term of office is over for current trustees, so you can plan accordingly and ensure good succession planning.

**Think about your charitable objectives**

What is your mission? Does the board reflect the community you are serving? For instance, if you are a youth charity, can you appoint some younger trustees on the board that understand the issues younger people face today. If this is the case, you may need to change things to accommodate them. Younger trustees might not be able to take time out of their working day to attend meetings, so you may need to hold evening meetings instead.

**Clear role description**

Conduct an audit of the competencies, knowledge and experience needed for the role and recruit in line with that brief. Make sure you have a clear vision of what your ideal new trustee will be like. Think about why someone would be interested in coming to volunteer for you.

**Robust recruitment process**

Plan the recruitment process properly scheduling in all activities and making sure those involved in the process are fully briefed. Recruiting a new trustee can take several weeks, so make sure you allow the time to do it well.

**Communication channels**

To attract the best talent, charities need to look outside their immediate networks. This may mean using communication channels such as social media. Think about where the people you would like to attract would be likely to see your advert – whether it's a local venue, specialist press, a volunteering website or elsewhere.

**Advertise the role**

Write a punchy advertising post it on your website and link to this via your social media networks. If you produce a newsletter, make sure you include the advert. Also use your current networks and engage the whole board in the process. Make sure everyone knows there is a trustee vacancy available.

**Use a specialist recruitment firm**

Consider using a professional recruitment firm with a track record of recruiting trustees. A recruitment firm will have a huge database of professionals seeking trustee roles and will able to match candidates to your exact requirements. Many companies offer a cost-effective service based on the size of the organisation.

**Be clear about the decision making process**

This needs to be clear upfront to avoid surprises later. Have a clear process for informal meetings, tours of services and interviews and who will conduct these. Interviews should be evidence based to test motivation as well as skills and experience. Make sure you always take verbal references at interview stage.

**Engaging new trustees**

A great induction can make all the difference to engage new trustees. It can also be useful for charities to assign a buddy to mentor and support new trustees. We find this can help new recruits get up to speed quickly and learn some historical details about the work of the trustees, which will help them feel more able to participate from the start at board meetings.

Remember, trustees are custodians of the whole organisation, so recruiting the right people who will fit culturally with the organisation is crucial.

Recruitment is an opportunity to talk about what the charity does and spread the word about the great work you are doing. The process itself can help to induct new trustees making them feel part of the organisation by the time they’re formally appointed.