



trust youth

A red silhouette of a young person with curly hair, wearing a t-shirt, standing with their arms crossed. The silhouette is positioned in the lower right quadrant of the page.

**What being a trustee means
for children and young people,
and how to recruit them.**

Trust Youth

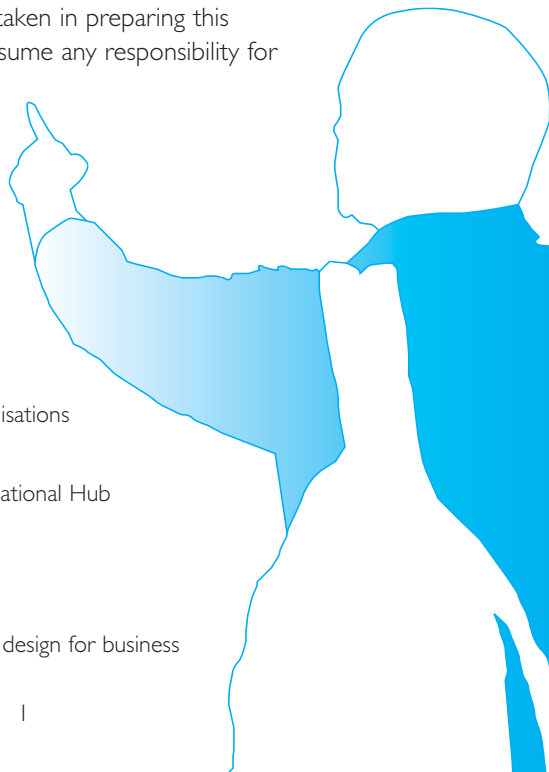
What being a trustee means for children and young people, and how to recruit them.

Trust Youth has been produced in partnership between British Youth Council (BYC), Children's Rights Alliance for England (CRAE) and the Governance Hub. It is one of a series of resources which form BYC's *Youth at the Table* programme that supports children and young people's involvement in governance.

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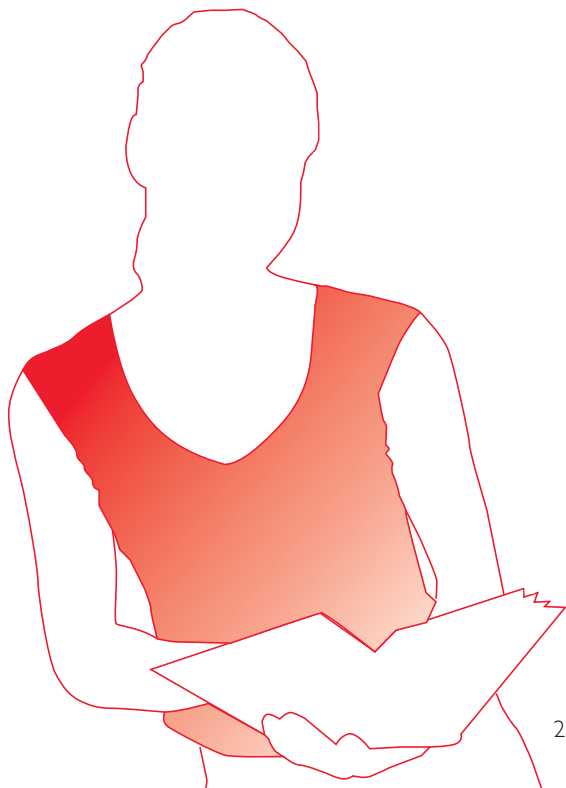
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Introduction

– Trust youth to be Trustees

Children and young people *want* to be **trustees** (people who play a really important role in running organisations), not just for organisations focussed on children and young people but also for other voluntary organisations. Many are already involved through education (e.g. associate school governors), youth organisations (e.g. British Youth Council Board) and interest-specific voluntary organisations (e.g. Girlguiding UK). Despite this, many organisations *don't* trust children and young people to take up such positions.

BYC's *involved or ignored*¹ report found that many organisations felt that children and young people don't know what is involved. Some people also argue that they don't have the skills or experience, as they are 'too young'... However if no-one ever involves young people or explains what a new role involves then we can only expect this to be the case. Taking the time and effort to involve and build up the skills and experience of children and young people can bring massive benefits to an organisation. They will bring invaluable perspectives and viewpoints that can change thinking and plans.

When children and young people become involved in **governance**, especially of organisations that are focused on their issues, those organisations are better equipped to meet their needs. The experience of governance also develops children and young people's sense of their own rights, as well as providing them with an opportunity to benefit wider society.

Trust Youth is for children and young people – letting them know in their own words what they need to know to be a **trustee**; and for adults and organisations – letting them know children and young people's ideas on the best way to get and support them as **trustees**.

Many organisations want to have younger trustees but are unsure of how to do this. This is where *Trust Youth* can help. The 'recruiting young trustees' section is based on children and young people's suggestions and experiences of what organisations can do to recruit them as trustees. Voluntary organisations *can trust* children and young people to be effective trustees, adding to the skills and experience brought to the table and helping voluntary organisations achieve their goals. *Trust Youth* tells you how.

We have tried to use straightforward terms as far as possible, but sometimes we have had to use 'jargon'. Where we have done this, the words have been highlighted – this means that they have been explained in the key terms section at the front of this guide.

¹ *Involve or ignored?* BYC, December 2005. A survey of 500 organisations that explored children and young people's involvement in their governance.

Key words

Activities: anything done using the **resources** of an organisation and anything under the control of the organisation – this includes all of the organisation’s work and the services that it offers.

Aims: what the organisation wants to achieve – its long term goals.

Assets: the property of an organisation – this might include money, land, vehicles and other equipment.

Beneficiaries: those who get something from the work of the organisation.

Best interests: the duty written into law that says trustees must always do what is best for the organisation and its **beneficiaries**.

Board: the group of people who make sure the organisation is well run. Sometimes the **Board** might be called the management committee or executive committee – this is just a different name, they all do the same job.

The Charities Act 1993 says that the **trustee board** of a charity is ‘responsible... for controlling the management and the administration of the charity...’

Business plan: this is a document put together by the people who run the organisation. It should set out the past, present and future of the organisation, showing what the organisation hopes to achieve in the future. It will also show the plans that are in place to help the organisation achieve its goals.

Conflict of interest: this is where a **trustee’s** personal interests clash with the interests of the organisation. This situation might make it difficult for the **trustee** to think or act independently. If this happens to you, then you should speak to the Chair of the **Board** and explain the problem.

Ethos: this is what makes your organisation different from other organisations. It includes the **values** and beliefs of the organisation. It would also shape the way that the organisation treats its staff, volunteers and **beneficiaries**.

Governance: this covers everything involved in making sure that an organisation is run effectively and achieves its goals.

Governing documents: formal documents that set out the purpose of the organisation and how it should be run.

Induction: help, advice and information that is given to someone starting in a new job or role.

Mission: a specific purpose or aim – this is part of the wider **vision** of the organisation.

National Occupational Standards (NOS) for Trustees and Management Committees: A set of voluntary standards that explains what skills and knowledge you need to be an effective **trustee**. Part of this guide contains a translation of these standards for children and young people. [See the Resources section at the end of this booklet for more explanation.](#)

Objects: these are legal statements that are included in the **governing documents** of the organisation. They set out what the organisation wants to achieve.

Policies: there are different kinds of **policies**. Some deal with the way people act or are treated in the organisation. These **policies** might cover what happens if a person needs to be disciplined. The other kinds of **policies** are more general and give advice about how to do things – they might deal with recruiting staff or finance. Some policies explain who is responsible for what – such as who signs cheques.

Procedures: these are agreed standards of doing things.

Resources: the different things that an organisation can use to achieve its aims. This might include staff and money.

Stakeholders: anyone who has an interest in making sure that the organisation is run effectively – this might include **trustees**, staff, volunteers and **beneficiaries**. The original meaning of the word is people who have put something into an organisation – this could be money or time.

Strategy: a plan of action with an ideal result at the end. A **strategy** will include a number of smaller steps that need to be carried out in order to achieve the aims of the organisation.

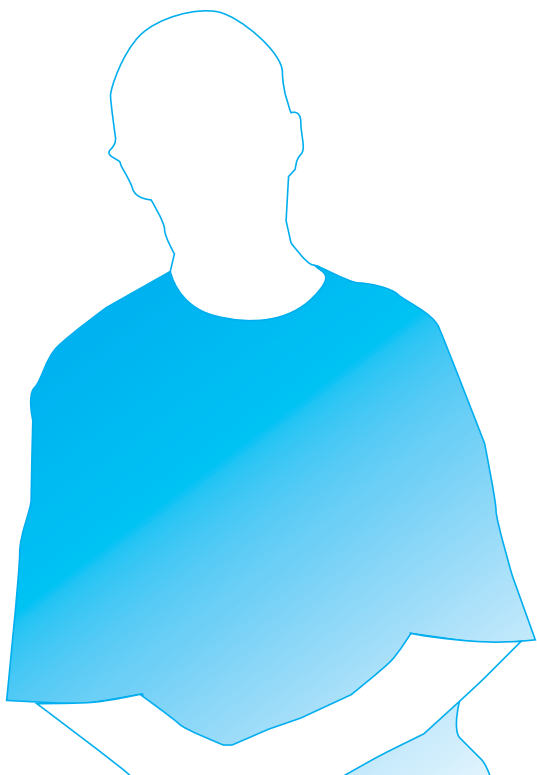
Strategic plan: this is where the **strategy** has been given a timetable.

Structure: how an organisation is set up.

Trustees: a person who has the authority in law to make sure an organisation is run properly. They must always carry out their role in the **best interests** of the **beneficiaries** of the organisation.

Values: these are the main beliefs that shape the way that the organisation works. They form the **aims** and **mission** of the organisation but are also important in the day to day running of the organisation, and how it treats its staff and **beneficiaries**.

Vision: the organisation's ultimate goal.



Some organisations/schemes that you should be familiar with:

Charity Commission: an organisation set up by law to regulate charities in England and Wales. It aims to make sure that charities are effective in their work. The **Charity Commission** provides advice on the laws, rules and guidance that charities need to follow. One of the main things that it does is look at the accounts of all charities every year to make sure that they are spending their money properly.

Governance Hub: a partnership of voluntary and community organisations in England working to improve the decision making of charities. The Hub offers advice, **resources** and ideas on how to improve the way that charities are managed and run.

Inland Revenue (now known as HM Revenue & Customs): this is the government department that is responsible for collecting taxes.

Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator: this organisation does a similar job to the **Charity Commission**. It makes sure that Scottish charities are effective, that they understand and follow the law, and that they spend their money properly.

Self Regulation of Fundraising Scheme: this is a scheme set up by the Fundraising Standards Board (FSB). The FSB is the body for self-regulation of fundraising in the UK. The FSB scheme is open to all fundraising organisations. Members have to agree to stick to the highest standards of good practice with their fundraising. By joining the scheme charities are showing that they are committed to best fundraising practices.

Being a Young Trustee

– What you need to know

This section of *Trust Youth* is a translation of the **National Occupational Standards for Trustees**. Many children and young people already act as **trustees** for organisations, or really want to be **trustees**, but they can be put off by unfriendly language or by feeling they do not have the experience and skills that **trustees** need to have.

Being a **trustee** is a really important job. This section is divided into four areas that look at each of the units from the trustee standards. These standards provide guidance to help you in this work. It tells you everything you need to know, do and understand in order to properly carry out your role as a **trustee**.

Section I: Promoting and protecting the values of the organisation

This section is about the Board of **Trustees** setting out the long term plans for the organisation. It also covers the importance of **trustees** in protecting the **values** of the organisation, and helping it achieve its aims.

When promoting and protecting the **values** of the organisation you are responsible for:

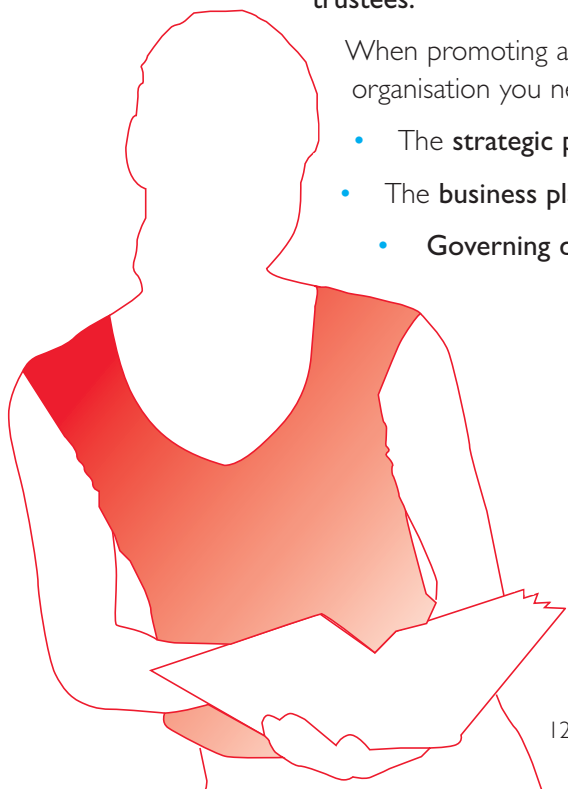
- Making sure that you know why the organisation exists, and what it wants to achieve
- Promoting the **values** and **aims** of the organisation so that it can reach its goals
- Setting the long term plans and direction of the organisation (**the strategic plan**)
- Acting in a way that follows the **values** of the organisation
- Making sure that the **values** and goals are clearly understood by **beneficiaries** and **stakeholders**
- Going back to the aims of the organisation to make sure that they are still relevant, that they take into account any changes that might have happened (for example legal or political changes), and making any changes needed to the **governing documents**
- Making sure that any legal documents relating to the organisation are followed
- Making sure that all decisions are made in the **best interests** of the organisation and the people who benefit from its work
- Making sure that the organisation sticks to its aims and is not influenced too much by outside organisations or people.

When promoting and protecting the **values** of the organisation you need to know and understand:

- What the organisation stands for, the history of the organisation and how it runs on a day-to-day basis
- Who the **beneficiaries** and **stakeholders** are, and what their needs are. You also need to think about any times when these people's needs might clash (**conflict of interests**)
- What a **conflict of interest** means. As a **trustee** you must say if you have done or might do something that could work against the organisation or if any decision being made might bring you any benefit.
- The wider environment that the organisation works in, and how other similar organisations work
 - Any laws and rules relevant to the organisation and the **trustees**.

When promoting and protecting the **values** of the organisation you need to read:

- The **strategic plan**
- The **business plan**
- **Governing documents**.



Section 2: Setting the strategy and structure of the organisation

This section is about planning for the present and future of the organisation. It talks about how decisions are made and the need to make sure that the **values** and goals of the organisation are represented in everything that the organisation does (this includes any projects, services and the day-to-day running of the organisation).

When setting the **strategy** and **structure** of the organisation you are responsible for:

- Making sure that the organisation sets **aims** that reflect its **values** and mission.
- Working with staff to produce a **strategic plan** that shows how the **aims** of the organisation are going to be achieved
- Making sure that the organisation has a good **structure** – this needs to follow any laws about how charities are run and have good **procedures** in place for making decisions about the organisation
- Making sure that the organisation has a good range of **activities** and uses its **resources** properly
- Making sure that you look at the **strategic plan** regularly, keep it up to date and check that it fits with the **activities** of the organisation.

When setting the **strategy** and **structure** of the organisation you need to know and understand:

- The advantages and disadvantages of the different ways an organisation can work
- What is in the **governing documents**
- The work that the organisation does on a daily basis
- The **structures** that cover decision making, management and the daily running of the organisation and why the organisation uses these particular **structures**
- The importance of planning how money is going to be spent, both now and in the future. You need to make sure that the organisation makes a budget and reviews it regularly
- How to look at what has gone well in the organisation and what has not worked

When setting the **strategy** and **structure** of the organisation you need to read:

- The annual budget
- The **strategic plan**
- The **business plan**
- The annual report (a summary of all of the **activities** and finances of the organisation. The **Charity Commission** also looks at these reports to make sure that the organisation is spending its money properly).

Section 3: Making sure that the organisation is effective, responsible and accountable

This section is about **trustees** working together to make sure that the organisation is well run, that it is meeting its aims, working in the best way possible and following any relevant laws. It also talks about how **trustees** are responsible for leading the organisation, making sure that it is managed properly and that it is run by the best people.

When making sure that the organisation is effective and responsible your duty is to:

- Develop, set up and review any **policies** and **procedures**
- Make sure that **policies** are in place to deal with all of the important parts of the organisation (such as finance, employment and health and safety). You also need to make sure that there are **policies** that cover misconduct – this is where someone has behaved badly, or broken some of the rules of the organisation
- Make sure that all of the **policies** and work of the organisation recognise that people have different backgrounds, beliefs and needs and treat people equally
- Make sure that senior members of staff are responsible for key **activities** within the organisation, such as appointing new staff. As **trustees** you need to support these people and review their work
- Make sure that you follow all laws covering employment. You must also make sure that the staff get the chance to learn new skills and develop in their jobs
- Make sure that if any **activities** are passed to another person or organisation that you know what you have asked this other person to do, and when they should report back to you

- Make sure that all money is spent sensibly, in line with the **aims** of the organisation. You must also make sure you understand any laws covering how charities spend their money
- Make sure that you prevent the organisation from getting into trouble and think about ways to stop this from happening
- Take advice from other professionals about the running of the organisation if you need to. You should make sure that you keep any written advice so that you can use it again in the future if you need to
- Look closely at how well the organisation is doing and where it could do better.

When making sure that the organisation is accountable you are responsible for:

- Making sure that the organisation follows any relevant laws
- Making sure that there is a clear way for communicating with **stakeholders** about decision making and the good things that the organisation has achieved
- Making sure that all of the systems, **policies** and **procedures** are regularly reviewed and kept up to date
- Making decisions that will protect and benefit the staff, volunteers, property and **assets** of the organisation – so that the organisation can achieve its goals
- Making sure that the organisation can justify all of the work it has done, and present this information in a way that follows any relevant rules.

When making sure that the organisation is effective, responsible and accountable you need to know and understand:

- Why it is important to follow the **governing documents**
- Any **policies** and **procedures** relevant to the **objects** (legal statements covering the purpose of the organisation)
- Why it is important that **policies** and **procedures** follow any relevant laws and guidance
- What responsibilities the organisation has to its staff or volunteers
- Why it is important to make sure that the organisation doesn't get itself into any trouble
- Why the **Board** needs to have clear guidelines on how to deal properly with **conflicts of interest**
- Why you need to be careful when you discuss the organisation – and why you need to think about what you say, and who you speak to
- Why fundraising is so important to the organisation
- The requirements of the **Self Regulation of Fundraising Scheme**.

When making sure that the organisation is responsible and accountable you need to read:

- Any documents relating to the finance of the organisation – such as accounts and budgets.

Section 4: Making sure that the Board of Trustees is effective

When making sure that the **Board** is effective you are responsible for:

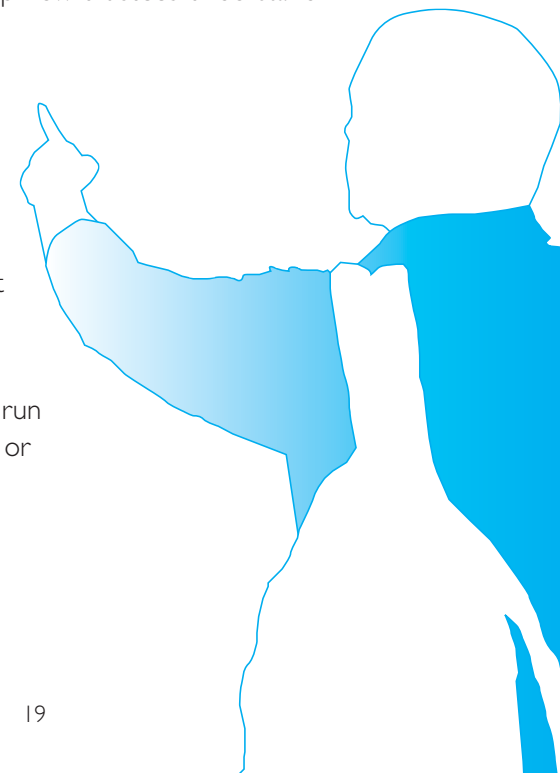
- Making sure that the **Board** knows what each **trustee** is responsible for. There should be a role description for **Board** members and for particular jobs that need to be done. You particularly need to think about the roles and responsibilities of specific **Board** members, such as Chair and Treasurer, as well as sub-committees (groups of **Trustees** with responsibility for specific areas such as finance or employment)
- Making sure that the people on the **Board** are relevant to the work of the organisation. You also need to make sure that the **structure** of the **Board** follows the organisation's **governing documents**
- Making sure that the **trustees** have a broad range of skills and experiences
- Having clear **policies** and **procedures** for recruiting and replacing **Board** members
- Making sure that all **trustees** understand their roles, responsibilities and what is expected of them
- Making sure that all new **Trustees** have a good **induction** and receive regular support, training and the chance to learn new skills
- Making sure that there are good lines of communication
- Making sure that everyone in the organisation and the **stakeholders** understand the role of the **Board**
- Having clear rules and **procedures** that cover how the **Board** runs
- Making sure that any **conflicts of interest** are dealt with using relevant **policies** and **procedures**
- Acting in an appropriate manner when representing the **Board**
- Making sure that there are systems in place for reviewing how well the **Board** does its job and for individual **trustees** thinking about how well they are carrying out their roles.

When making sure that the **Board** is effective you need to know and understand:

- That all **trustees** are responsible, according to the law, for any decisions that are made by the **Board**
- The role of the **Trustees** in relation to the running of the organisation
- How to deal with any problems between different members of the **Board** or between the **Board** and staff
- How to deal with **conflicts of interest**
- When to ask for professional advice, and who to get advice from
- How to get training and support for **trustees**
- How to plan for the future of the **Board** to make sure that it will carry on working effectively
- Any documents that will help new **trustees** understand their role.

When making sure that the **Board** is effective you need to read:

- **Policies** that cover the way that the **Board** is supposed to work and what it is supposed to do
- Other **policies** linked to the way that the organisation is run – such as Health and Safety or Equal Opportunities.
- The Governing Documents
- The role descriptions.



Things all Trustees need to know

When you carry out your role as a **trustee** you will need to:

- Show commitment to, and support the **purpose**, beliefs and **aims** of the organisation
- Listen to the opinions of other **trustees** – even if you don't agree with them. You also need to be positive about the things that staff members have to say when they come to meetings. You can challenge what people say, but make sure you are constructive and not negative
- When you are acting as a **trustee** you need to behave responsibly
- There might be times when you are dealing with information that is sensitive or private. You need to make sure that you keep this information confidential – don't share or discuss this information with anyone else unless you check that it is alright to do so.
- Understand that meetings are important and be willing to attend as many meetings as you can. You also need to make sure that you are prepared for the meetings – so you need to have read any documents or carried out any tasks that you were given at the last meeting
- Support the decisions made at meetings and stand by them
- Respect the different responsibilities and roles of those that run the organisation day-to-day and those that govern it overall.

There are also a number of important documents that you need to read and understand as a **trustee**:

- The organisation's **governing documents**
- Any **policies** linked to the way that the **Board** is run
- Any **policies** about making sure that the organisation works well for everybody
- Written **policies** that cover the day to day running of the organisation and **procedures**
- Role descriptions and outline of personal qualities needed in order to be a **trustee** or carry out a specific role on the **Board** (such as Secretary or Chair)
- Any documents that are linked to the **Charity Commission**, **Inland Revenue** or the **Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator**.

This might sound really complicated but there should be people on the **Board** who will support you as a **trustee**. They should provide copies of all these documents for you. If you have not seen these documents don't be afraid to ask for them – you need them to do a good job.

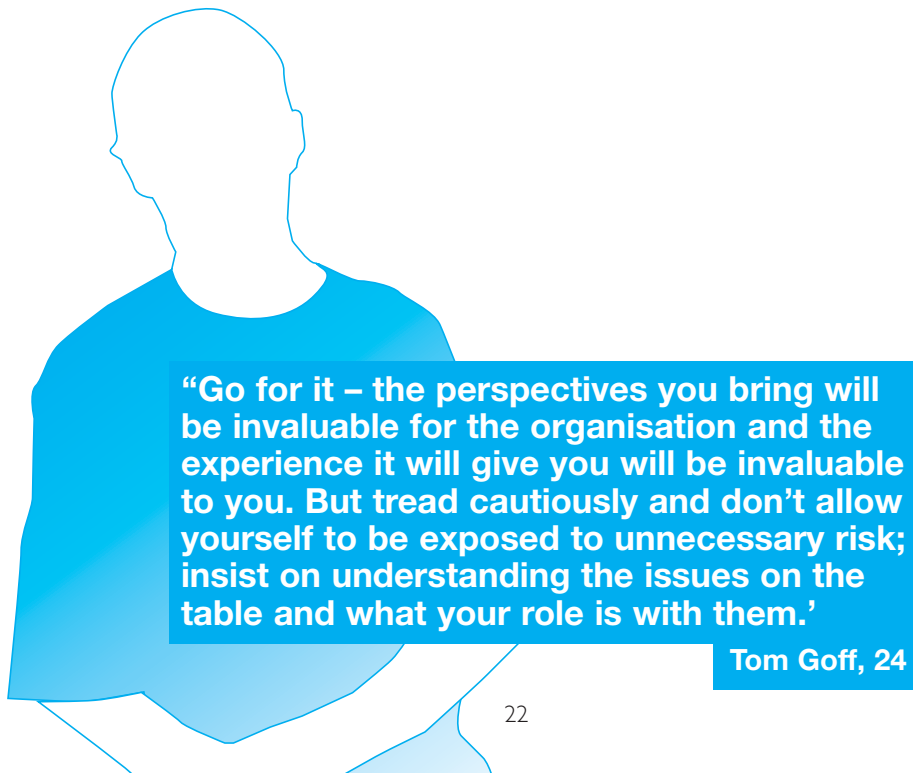
Recruiting Young Trustees

The quality of trustee you end up with will depend on your recruitment process, regardless of whether you are looking for younger or older **trustees**. Having a clear recruitment process that explains all the stages involved, including who will make the decisions, is as important as letting potential **trustees** know exactly what you are looking for.

There are a range of things that your organisation can do when looking to recruit younger **trustees** to your **Board**. Some top tips are given below along with where to promote opportunities and other practical suggestions of things that you can do.

In the boxes are some of the things young trustees say about their experience.

This section of the guide is for organisations wishing to successfully recruit young **trustees**. It is based on suggestions and ideas from children and young people.



“Go for it – the perspectives you bring will be invaluable for the organisation and the experience it will give you will be invaluable to you. But tread cautiously and don’t allow yourself to be exposed to unnecessary risk; insist on understanding the issues on the table and what your role is with them.”

Tom Goff, 24

Top tips

Every organisation will have a process for recruiting their **trustees**, from appointment to election. The principles below probably apply to all recruitment processes, but they are especially important when you are working to include children and young people.

Be Accessible:

- Think about the language that you use: terms like **governance** are not part of every child and young person’s day-to-day conversation.
- Consider when and where meetings take place – you may need to change them to ensure that children and young people can participate.
- Ensure that, unless it is due to legal requirements, your recruitment process doesn’t prevent a young person (especially those aged 18 and over) from applying.

Explain what is involved:


- Make sure the information you provide answers the five Ws.
- **What** will they be required to do as a trustee?
- **When** will the applications need to be returned and when will a final decision be made?
- **Where** will meetings take place and where can they obtain further details?
- **Who** are you looking for – do they need any specific experience or skills?
- **Why** are you looking for **trustees** – is it to fill a vacancy or are these new positions?

Go to them – don't expect them to come to you:

- *Attend* places that children and young people go to, talk to them about what is involved and provide information about how they can be involved.
- *Provide* taster opportunities for them, where they can meet other **trustees** and observe the **Board** in action.

Support their involvement:

- Provide *training* for them, not just when they start but throughout their time as a **trustee**. Looking at their individual and collective needs will help identify areas of training that are required.
- *Cover expenses* for travel. Let them know how much it is and how they can receive them. Also provide refreshments for them at meetings.
 - Consider running a *mentor system*. This doesn't have to be with another **trustee** but could be with a staff member (in larger organisations) who works with the **trustees**.



'Be persistent. Chat to people you know are already involved and if you don't know, find out who would be useful to talk to.'

Gemma Loyden, 22

Promoting opportunities

There is no single way to ensure that children and young people will know about how they can become a **trustee** and the various types of opportunities that exist. A common message from young people is to use a range of approaches (formal e.g. advertisement in the paper and informal, e.g. word of mouth).

'A sense of achievement, the feeling that you are actually making a difference to help people and taking others' thoughts into consideration.'

Sarah Collins, 18

There are three main ways by which **trustee** opportunities should be promoted to children and young people:

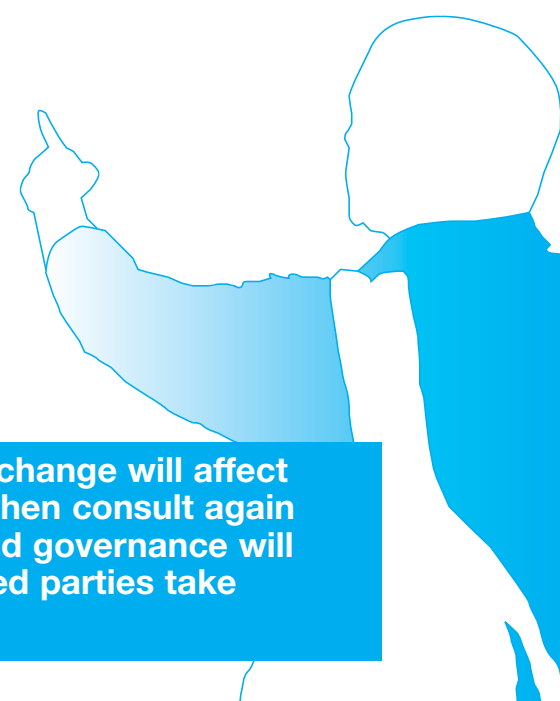
- **Education:** young people believe that **trustee** opportunities should be promoted through education institutions, such as schools, colleges and universities.
- **Media:** not just the mass media – newspapers, radio, television, the internet, but specifically in media outlets that are for children and young people such as magazines etc. Other publicity such as leaflets, flyers and posters should also be used, ensuring with all that the language and style used is appropriate.
- **Voluntary organisations:** many children and young people already volunteer and being a **trustee** is one type of voluntary activity. Providing voluntary organisations with information on local and national **trustee** positions will ensure that a wider range of children and young people are made aware of this opportunity.

Practical things

It may seem simple, and something that doesn't need saying but it is important when looking to recruit young **trustees** that you do not patronise them or, as the saying goes, try to 'be down with the kids'. In addition to the top tips listed above, there are other things that are easily forgotten but are simple to include,

- **Assume nothing:** Do not automatically assume that anybody will or will not want to become a **trustee**, or that they will know everything they need to know about either your organisation or being a **trustee**. Remember the top tips mentioned earlier
- **Treat everyone equally:** Avoid seeing the process of recruiting younger **trustees** as the only way by which they can be involved in your organisation. This can come across as being very tokenistic, and be seen as just 'ticking a box'. Treat younger **trustees** as equals, not as being only the 'young **Board** members'. Remember they have an equal status with the other **trustees** and have skills and experiences that add to the **Board**.

- **Identify hurdles and barriers:** Ask children and young people what would prevent them from becoming a **trustee** in your organisation, and use what they say to come up with ways to make changes that will help overcome those barriers.
- **Have a named support contact:** This is someone on the Board who is available to meet with the children and young people before meetings to ensure they are comfortable with papers and know what the meeting aims to achieve. They will ensure the children and young people receive papers in advance of meetings, as well as their expenses and are a point of contact for any questions they may have.



**'To all those who the change will affect
consult, consult and then consult again
– as the only way good governance will
work is if all concerned parties take
ownership of it.'**

Matt Pusey, 22

Background and further resources

The National Occupational Standards for Trustees and Management Committee Members (usually known as the 'Trustee Standards') were published in May 2006. They were developed by the Workforce Hub and approved by the body that organises new exams and qualifications, the Qualifications and Assessment Authority (the QCA) as a base for developing courses and qualifications about being a trustee. There will soon be courses based on them which trustees or anyone else interested can take.

The Trustee Standards are also useful in several other ways. They can help people to get an idea of what being a trustee involves. They can also help you plan what you need to learn about. The Governance Hub is helping people to use the Trustee Standards. You can go to their website www.governancehub.org.uk to find more information and a toolkit with lots of exercises for groups and individuals and boards to do.

You can download the trustee standards from www.workforcehub.org.uk

You can also find information and other resources on the Governance Hub website. It contains a **Resourcefinder** that will help you find material to read on a wide range of themes that trustees might need to know about.

There are two other websites that have lots of resources you might find useful:

- The Charity Commission website contains all their publications www.charity-commission.gov.uk
- Askncvo on the NCVO website contains lots of shorter documents you can use and adapt www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/askncvo/

British Youth Council



The British Youth Council (BYC) is the national youth council for young people aged under 26 in the UK. BYC represents and involves a unique coalition of young people through their involvement as individuals or through their youth organisations. BYC brings young people together to agree on issues of common concern and encourage them to bring about change through taking collective action.

The British Youth Council
Mezzanine 2, Downstream Building,
1 London Bridge, London SE1 9BG

Tel: 0845 458 1489 Email: mail@byc.org.uk Web: www.byc.org.uk
Registered charity number: 305973

Children's Rights Alliance for England



The Children's Rights Alliance for England (CRAE) is a coalition of over 370 voluntary and statutory organisations committed to the full implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). CRAE monitors Government action on the CRC, undertakes public policy advocacy, including young people's self advocacy, and disseminates information on children's rights developments. CRAE wants all children to be respected as individual people and to be treated as full and equal members of society. To find out more about CRAE's work please go to www.crae.org.uk.

CRAE
94 White Lion Street, London N1 9PF

Tel: 020 7278 822 Email: info@crae.org.uk
Registered charity number: 1005135

The Governance Hub

The Governance Hub is part of the Government's ChangeUp programme which was set up to help the voluntary and community sector to work more effectively. It started work in summer 2005 and is working with a wide range of partners. Its aims include

- getting more people and different kinds of people involved in trusteeship;
- providing more resources and services to help trustees, chairs and boards to grow and develop;
- building a higher profile for governance as an important activity.

To find out more about the Hub, or register to get the Hub newsletter, go to www.governancehub.org.uk.

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The Governance Hub
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