



# FROM HERE TO DIVERSITY

A Practical Guide to recruiting  
Black and Asian charity trustees



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Foundation

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# FOREWORD



**The lack of diversity on trustee boards has long been a significant challenge for our sector.**

All too often, charities have relied on trustees that are pulled from a small talent pool of candidates to the detriment of diversity in ethnicity, gender, age and lived experience, including from the LGBTQ+ community.

That's why in 2019, the Co-op Foundation made our first steps into tackling this inequality by awarding funding to the Young Trustees Movement to help double the number of trustees aged under 30 by 2024. It's also why last year we were excited to speak to Getting on Board and Action for Trustee Racial Diversity about the work they were doing to increase the number of Black and Asian trustees.

Discussions between our teams were so aligned and so impactful that just weeks later our trustees agreed a £20,500 grant to help develop this Guide and to support other important activities for the campaign.

But why does it matter?

The Co-op Foundation is Co-op's charity. We help people challenge inequality and co-operate for change so they can share a fairer future.

This fairer future can start in communities, it can start in schools, in partnerships or in work. But it can also start in charities where there is a well-documented inequality in leadership. In fact, research shows that only 8% of trustees in UK charities are from Black and Asian backgrounds and fewer than 3% are "women of colour".

We have to overcome this if we want to build a charity sector that is best equipped to tackle inequalities in their own communities. While I'm confident that all trustees volunteer their time to the best of their abilities, all too frequently a Board's overall life experiences can lack the diversity of the communities they are looking to support.

We believe this is where Black and Asian Trustees of all ages can add substantial experience, knowledge and leadership. This Guide is a real step forward to making this happen. It will help charities build their Board diversity while also supporting potential trustee candidates on their journey to trusteeships. We are absolutely delighted to see it come to life today as part of the Action for Trustee Racial Diversity campaign's aim to facilitate 10,000 more Black and Asian trustees by 2026.

Thank you to Malcolm and the team for bringing this together. It will make a difference by helping to build more effective charities who can in turn support and enable stronger communities.

We look forward to working together so the Co-op Foundation can build our learning and continue to improve the diversity of our own Board. We also have work to do, and we're committed to getting better.

Read more about how we're tackling inequality at the Co-op Foundation at [www.coopfoundation.org.uk](http://www.coopfoundation.org.uk)

**Jamie Ward Smith**  
Chair, Co-op Foundation

# PREFACE

## Malcolm is the Founder of Action for Trustee Racial Diversity

Throughout 2020, the lessons of Covid and the messages and drive instilled by key events including the Black Lives Matter movement and the shocking murder of George Floyd in the USA have served to highlight the significant racial disparities in the UK and bring them to the forefront of the public agenda. Commentators on these globally important events have spoken of them as a moment in time, a catalyst for change.

Whilst we see that an increasing number of charities are taking up the challenge of positive action and anti-racism strategies, for many others awareness and understanding of the gravity of this issue still seems to be sadly lacking. My hope is that these events and the subsequent public reaction have created **momentum** which will cause positive and sustainable change to both the lives of people from Black and Asian backgrounds and to the local and wider communities which charities serve.

The Action for Trustee Racial Diversity (ATRD) campaign launched in 2019, with the central aim of addressing significant under-representation of people from Black and Asian

backgrounds on charity trustee Boards. One of our first activities was to carry out a mapping survey to understand better the barriers and challenges to the lack of racial diversity on charity boards.

Our findings painted a fairly bleak picture. They showed that all too often other organisational priorities take precedence over diversity and that good practice is not being shared widely or known about. It was clear to us that there was an overwhelming need for more access to, and indeed knowledge of, Black and Asian networks. It was also clear from the survey that the barriers to entry were wide and often attributable to lack of knowledge, lack of resources, lack of commitment and resistance to cultural change.

This Guide builds on those findings. It shares the considerable learning gained from this much-needed campaign. It provides practical advice, guidance and support to charities wishing to increase the racial diversity of their trustee Boards. This under-representation has been a long-standing indictment of the state of the sector. This Guide highlights the telling statistics and offers approaches



and solutions for charities genuinely looking to take firm strides towards increasing their diversity. I very much hope that if this Guide is still in wide use in 2026 – five years from the time of writing – ATRD and its supporters will be able to paint a brighter and more optimistic picture of the sector.

Though other guides have addressed charity Board diversity more broadly, this is the first that offers specific practical advice and guidance on increasing the **racial diversity** of charity Boards. We hope that you will find this Guide useful and that its visible impact inspires similar efforts on behalf of other groups which are similarly under-represented on trustee Boards, such as people with disabilities.

I'm delighted - in one way - that the profile of the ATRD campaign has grown considerably since my blogs highlighting the racial under-representation on trustee Boards were shared by key organisations working within the sector. However, it's a harsh comment on the sector that this specific and longstanding issue has not to date been addressed in any significant, focused or co-ordinated way. This campaign only began some two years ago, and I'm frequently being asked to sit on "expert" panels. It's been a steep learning curve!

## About Action for Trustee Racial Diversity (ATRD)

ATRD is a volunteer-led independent campaign working with cross sector partners to address the under-representation of people from Black and Asian backgrounds on charity trustee Boards.

We aim to support charities to bridge the 6% under-representation gap (from 8% to 14%.) by recruiting an additional 10,000 Black and Asian trustees by 2026. We will achieve this by:

- Producing a practical Guide for charities on how to recruit Black and Asian trustees.
- Developing and making available to charities a unique live database of Black and Asian network organisations across sectors and spanning the UK to address the key issue of charities' lack of access to more diverse networks.
- Raising awareness of the benefits of racially diverse trustee boards and the skills, experience, including lived experience, and different perspectives which trustees from Black and Asian backgrounds would bring.
- Helping to remove the barriers which people from Black and Asian backgrounds face in seeking to become charity trustees.

**N.B.** The term "BAME" is used in this Guide by many of the Black and Asian Minority Ethnic organisations listed in the ATRD campaign database of Black and Asian network organisations. It is their description of themselves and not a term which this Guide will use otherwise. We will use "Black and Asian" as, in the opinion of ATRD, those groupings primarily cover the ethnic minority groups which this campaign is specifically championing. We understand fully that others will prefer other terms such as "Black and Brown".

We have also included several case studies throughout the Guide. Occasionally terms such as "BAME" are used in the case studies. However it is not the term which ATRD would use.

In that context, language is also clearly a barrier to increasing Board racial diversity. We suggest that the more open and honest Board discussions are around language, the greater will be the awareness and then, hopefully, better mutual understanding. No-one gets it right all the time. Perhaps half the battle is about openly acknowledging that.

"I just wanted to thank you again for your time and expertise.. You gave us some real insight and I feel we had some very useful discussions, both with you and amongst ourselves."

Debbie Gibbon  
Telford CVS

Hopefully, in the not too distant future, we'll all be "experts" in understanding and knowing how to tackle racial inequalities in the charity sector. Significantly, at the time of writing, the campaign has been approached by over 70 organisations seeking help to increase the racial diversity of their Boards. This figure increases every week.

We hope that you will find this Guide useful, that it helps to shape and inform your approach for your future trustee vacancies, and achieve a visible impact on the face of trustee boards across the UK.

**Malcolm John**

Founder

Action for Trustee Racial Diversity

"ATRD is providing a unique, practical and effective way to make positive change in a key sector in our society."

Rod Roman  
Trustee  
Telford CVS



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# INTRODUCTION

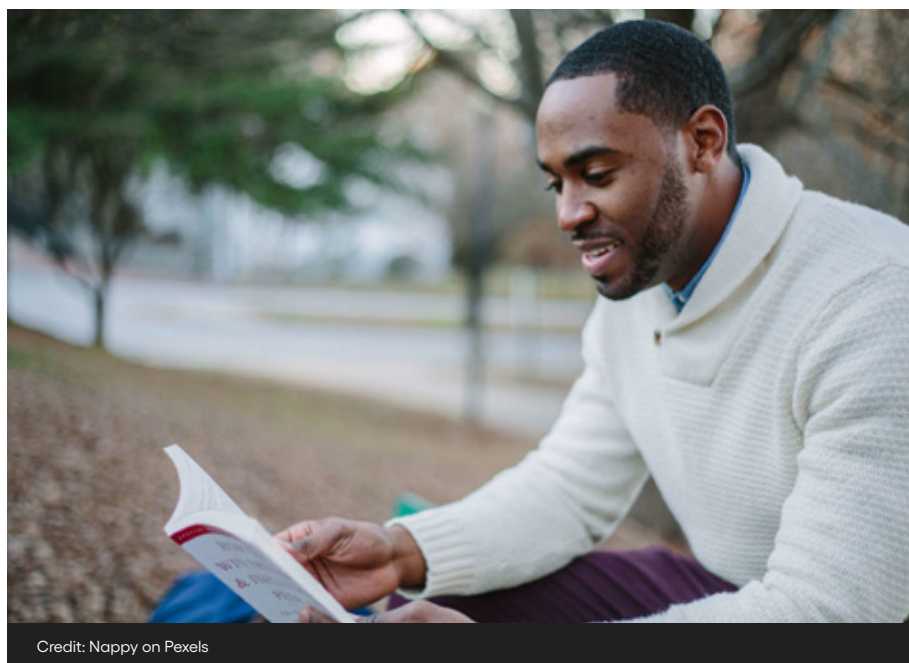


# RACIALLY DIVERSE TRUSTEE RECRUITMENT: THE CURRENT LANDSCAPE

There are astonishingly more than 100,000 trustee vacancies in the UK every year.

Our vision is to bridge the 6% under-representation gap by seeking to facilitate the recruitment of an additional 10,000 Black and Asian trustees by 2026. This would raise the percentage of Black and Asian trustees from 8% to 14% and reach the promised land of proportionate representation. Achieving this goal would significantly change the face of charity Board leadership and make charities a more welcome and attractive place for people from Black and Asian backgrounds.

Too much work to combat inequalities exists in silos. We don't expect this campaign and this Guide to fundamentally change the landscape on its own. We will continue to develop partnerships with key organisations in the charity and other sectors, including trustee recruitment consultancies, to increase our reach, impact and supporter network so that our work might be sustained well beyond the span of the campaign.



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# THE STARK REALITY

Nearly 3/4 of charities have reported difficulties hiring trustees.

Many want to recruit people with professional skills which will be readily transferable to a trustee role. However, the fact that more than 70% of charities recruit informally, and largely through their existing networks, results in a startling lack of diversity among trustees. This Guide and the wider ATRD campaign both readily acknowledge that diversity embraces a broader range of attributes and characteristics than race alone. We are supportive and understanding of the large number of organisations in the sector which champion and support the broader diversity agenda. However, we are bold enough to suggest that the following figures reinforce our assertion that the issue of racial diversity is where there has been least progress.

## 8%

of trustees in England and Wales are from Black and Asian background  
[Taken on Trust, Charity Commission 2017]

## 34%

of UK major charities have all white senior leadership (both voluntary and professional)  
[Green Park 2017]

## 2.9%

of trustees in England and Wales are "women of colour" - fewer than 20,000 out of 700,000 trustees  
[Inclusive Boards 2018]

## only 4

all-BAME boards in England and Wales: 50% fewer than in 2016  
[Inclusive Boards 2018]

## 62%

of the top charities, by income, have all white boards  
[Inclusive Boards 2018]

## 92%

of trustees are white, older, and above average income and education  
[Taken on Trust, Charity Commission 2017]

## 6.6%

the proportion of ethnic minority individuals on large charity boards, representing 418 of a total of 6338 trustees  
[Taken on Trust, Charity Commission, 2017]

To put the figures above in context, 14% of the population in England and Wales is from a non-white background. In many areas, this figure is much higher, rising to 36.8% in London. It is clear then that the figures paint a woeful picture of racial under-representation.



# DRIVING FORWARD CHANGE

The ATRD campaign champions charities focusing on the skills and experience they truly need on their Board.



Credit: Education and Employers

From there, it aims to give practical advice to help charities target trustee recruitment according to their specific needs. This includes approaches to help them reach out in less traditional ways to attract more racially diverse candidates. The focus on skills and experiences avoids accusations of tokenism. We want to reduce the

extensive scale of informal recruitment by providing smaller charities, particularly, with resources to reach and engage Black and Asian networks effectively and affordably.

This Guide, and the ATRD campaign more broadly, aims to achieve a significant increase in the numbers of

Black and Asian trustees on charity Boards. We intend to do this by providing practical solutions, advice and signposting both for charities seeking to increase the racial diversity of their trustees and for recruitment consultancies acting on behalf of charities.

**“As a specialist recruitment agency in the charity space, we know that we need to connect at a deeper and more impactful level with Black, Asian and ethnic minority communities and candidates in order to do our part to tackle racism and representation issues at all levels. Whilst we had started some of this work independently, linking up with Malcolm John and the Action for Trustee Racial Diversity campaign has enabled us to take much greater strides forward in identifying and developing the relationships that help us to reach a much more diverse talent pool. Malcolm is incredibly insightful, helpful and understanding, and our relationship with him and the campaign continues to be central to our growth and our ability to better support the charities we work with.**

Amelia Lee, Regional Director, Charity People

## CHAPTER 1: OVERCOMING THE BARRIERS TO A MORE RACIALLY DIVERSE BOARD



# BENEFITS OF DIVERSITY

## There is significant research into and evidence of the benefits that diversity brings to organisations, reaching far beyond the charity sector.

Research by McKinsey, for example, found that companies that were more gender diverse were 15% more likely to outperform their peers. That same study also looked at ethnicity and found that companies that were more ethnically diverse were 35% more likely to have greater success than their competition.

Diversity brings a broader range of perspectives to organisations. It avoids the risk of “groupthink” or “collective blindness” which might occur when all trustees and senior staff come from the same social, educational and racial background. It also enables organisations to draw on a wider pool of available talent. Significantly, this is a talent pool that also often naturally includes those individuals who better represent the people those charities support and the communities in which they work. They can bring “lived experience” of the issues which the charity addresses and positively affect the quality, impact and creativity of organisational decision making. The topic of “lived experience” is explored in more detail later in this Guide.

While conversations around the significant racial disparities in the UK are increasingly taking place more publicly, there is clearly still much work to be done. An increasing number of charities are taking up the challenge of positive action and anti-racism strategies, however, for far too many others, there still seems to be very limited awareness and understanding of the seriousness of this issue.



Credit: Education and Employers

This begs the question of how those charities might be encouraged and supported to increase their awareness and understanding and commit time, effort and resources to prioritise the necessary actions.

The buck must start at the top. The Chair and the CEO have key roles in leading internal discussions and championing more racially diverse Boards. They need to recognise that increased racial diversity enhances their organisational skills and experience and, in very many instances, enables their charities to be more relevant and accountable to the people they support.

The Association of Chairs - the membership infrastructure organisation for Chairs and Vice-Chairs in England and Wales - plans to be a key player in developing programmes and initiatives which promote “inclusive leadership” among charity Chairs. This is good news. A poll at an Association of Chairs peer event in 2020 of more than fifty charity Chairs and Vice-chairs revealed that none of them encountered any resistance from their Boards to encouraging Board diversity. Arguably they might not have been attending if they had!

# 20%

had been successful in attracting or retaining trustees from non-white backgrounds

# 20%

said that, whilst their Board talks about racial diversity, it's not being acted on as a priority

# 70%

stated that there was commitment to building a more racially diverse Board

# 45%

were looking for practical ideas on how to increase racial diversity on their Boards.

# 43%

said that their Board lacked access to BAME networks

Currently, there are no figures available for the number of Black and Asian Chairs in the UK's charity sector. However it can be fairly safely assumed that the number is lower than the 8% of Black and Asian trustees. We hope that by increasing the number and visibility of Black and Asian Chairs, more Black and Asian individuals will be encouraged to take up Trustee roles and go on to become Chairs.

**“If you have Chairs that are all the same, Chairs can be around on a Board for over 20 years, and they are unlikely to have a big impact on changing the diversity of Boards. I would want Chairs to acknowledge that diversity and inclusion are a priority and should be at the heart of what they do.”**

Missed Expertise 2021

It is vital that Chairs and CEOs seize the momentum currently behind driving forward racial diversity and lead by example. The Chair in particular must champion greater racial diversity, support the development of more inclusive policies and practices within the organisation and, with the trustee Board and the CEO, plan strategies to achieve this. The Association of Chairs is a useful source of advice and support to Chairs on this.

Action for Trustee Racial Diversity is working closely with the Association of Chairs and the Young Trustees Movement to develop a network of Black and Asian chairs. We aim to seek their views and contributions alongside their white peers in how Chairs might be supported to advance Board racial diversity. Through this initiative, we will also encourage and support current Black and Asian chairs to be peer mentors and role models to others coming up what can often look like a very long ladder.

**“There was another woman of colour who was the Chair - she was amazing. I saw in her possibility”**

ATRD questionnaire survey 2021



# BARRIERS TO A MORE RACIALLY DIVERSE BOARD

This Guide explores the barriers to achieving racially diverse trustee Boards from two perspectives.

Firstly, from the point of view of the potential or current Black or Asian trustee, and secondly from that of the trustee recruiter: that might mean an individual charity or a trustee recruitment consultancy. It includes a broad selection of quotes drawn from the questionnaire survey which ATRD sent in 2021 to potential and first time and current trustees from Black and Asian backgrounds. The survey sought to evidence first hand the experiences of individuals from Black and Asian backgrounds who are either in their first trustee role, or have applied successfully or unsuccessfully to become a trustee, or are interested in becoming a trustee. We received over 100 responses which gave us a huge amount of insights, challenges and practical solutions. The report of the findings and next steps will be circulated widely in 2021.

“I’ve now stopped applying for Trusteeships after failing to secure the last three that I applied for.”

ATRD questionnaire survey 2021

“I’ll never forget that first meeting and my levels of discomfort throughout; the dawning realisation that the Chair would allow me floorspace when we were discussing ethnic minority communities or young people but my contributions elsewhere in the agenda were politely disregarded. The whole experience was wholly disempowering and dispiriting. I now realise that this has been the experience of many first-time Trustees, especially those from minority backgrounds in the grant-giving sector.”

Missed Expertise 2021

For Black and Asian trustees, whether current or prospective, a key barrier is their perception of trusteeships as not being for “people like them”. The stereotypical image of the Board trustee as “the great and the good” is very much a reality, and supported by statistics. All too often, Black and Asian people don’t see themselves reflected in that image. From ATRD’s experience, there are also a number of other contributing factors deterring Black and Asian people from taking on trusteeships, they include:

- their lack of awareness or knowledge of charities and trusteeship and the benefits that trusteeship brings for both them and the organisation
- a lack of belief that they have the skills or experiences that Boards are looking for
- previous poor experience of them or their peers applying for a trusteeship or of working in a charity
- prohibitive and exclusive trustee recruitment criteria
- their lack of access to trustee networks and influential contacts

## Nurole’s top 7 obstacles to greater ethnic diversity on charity boards

Nurole is a global Board recruitment consultancy working closely with ATRD



**1. UK Demographics:** Younger groups in the UK are more ethnically diverse. In the 2011 census, ethnic minorities made up 5% of those aged 60-64 but 25% of those aged 0-4.

**Forward-thinking charities should:** Find ways to cast the net wider and consider appointing younger trustees.

**2. Glass ceilings:** High-quality candidates not yet on boards aren’t even considered because they fly under the radar of charities and recruiters alike.

**Forward-thinking charities should:** Use search methods that can ‘think’ outside the box and unearth candidates who are unconventional but no less qualified or capable.

**3. Behaviour:** Research suggests underrepresented groups are less likely to apply for board roles, particularly after facing rejection, because they perceive that such roles are “not for them”.

**Forward-thinking charities should:** Actively encourage applications from under-represented groups and ensure rejections are handled sensitively.

**4. Unconscious bias:** Boards struggle to fairly assess candidates that are not “like them”.

**Forward-thinking charities should:** Use a structured application and interview process to ensure candidates are evaluated fairly; this is nearly twice as good at predicting

how well a candidate will perform compared to unstructured processes.

**5. Prior experience:** Organisations can be nervous about appointing people without direct experience at board level, which perpetuates the historical lack of ethnic representation on boards.

**Forward-thinking charities should:** Be open to appointing first-time board members so long as candidates have passion for the cause and determination to rapidly develop their board acumen.

**6. Critical mass:** Being the “first and only” board member from an underrepresented group can be more exhausting and stressful for candidates, which hinders recruitment and retention.

**Forward-thinking charities should:** Ensure there is a critical mass of ethnic minority representation on the board by prioritising open and inclusive recruitment.

**7. Law:** Under the Equality Act, there is a fine line between legal positive action and illegal positive discrimination; charities cannot consider only Black and Asian candidates, but equally they might not go far enough in tackling the problem.

**Forward-thinking charities should:** Better understand the implications of the Equality Act in order to run recruitment campaigns that are effective, inclusive, and legal.

There are also significant barriers facing charities looking to recruit Black and Asian trustees. They include:

- most crucially, a lack of awareness and understanding of the importance and benefits of racial diversity to organisations
- too much reliance on existing familiar networks combined with a lack of knowledge of or access to Black and Asian networks
- their lack of knowledge, capacity and commitment to build and develop relationships with national, regional or local Black and Asian network organisations
- not enough Black and Asian applicants coming forward, sustaining the often heard “they don’t apply” mantra
- not focussing enough on targeting people because of their skills rather than simply for their diversity
- Lack of priority for or genuine commitment to searching effectively for Black and Asian trustees

Specifically for trustee recruitment consultancies, the barriers most often come about when they accede too quickly or do not challenge strongly enough clients’ lack of understanding of or genuine commitment to recruiting Black and Asian trustees. They must be prepared to make a stand and push clients to move beyond their comfort zones.

“Some boards create a false binary between diversity and skills, presenting a situation where either diversity is trumped over the skills needed or vice versa. This is not how we would urge a Chair to approach recruiting for diversity.”

Missed Expertise 2021



# FINDING A WAY FORWARD: ADDRESSING THE BARRIERS

## “Our remedies oft in ourselves do lie...”

All's Well That Ends Well, Shakespeare

Charities genuinely wanting to increase their Board's racial diversity must put themselves out there. And to do so, there are a number of actions they must put in place:

- acknowledge where they are now, why they're where they are, where they want to be and how they're going to get there
- decide on the skills, expertise and diversity they need to be a more effective and inclusive organisation; carry out a diversity, skills and experience audit
- recognise and acknowledge that the skills their Board needs exist throughout Black and Asian networks and communities that they have not been able to reach, engage and attract
- convince potential applicants that they are serious about wanting to change the face of their Boards and that they value the skills and experience which diverse trustees bring
- be explicit in their recruitment adverts that they're proactively seeking people from Black and Asian backgrounds; use case studies profiling or demonstrating the type of trustee, diversity and skills they are seeking

- review the profiles of their current trustees on their website and think about changing or removing them so as not to put off less “glittering” applicants
- ensure that recruitment panels are racially diverse and consider the option of using independent external Black and Asian recruitment panel advisers if they can't find suitable people from their own organisation

Charities must work harder. For greater racial parity to be achieved, there is much more they can do to sell themselves. They must highlight the valuable work their charity does for individuals and communities. They must promote the key leadership role of trustees and how people from Black and Asian backgrounds, particularly

young people, might benefit from trusteeships. Charities should consider a number of approaches to increase their reach to more diverse audiences, for example:

- using social media, YouTube and Vimeo videos, webinars, podcasts and other less traditional methods so that they reach different and younger audiences
- working with young dynamic organisations such as Young Trustees Movement, Beyond Suffrage, Girl Dreamers and Black Young Professionals to get new and appealing messages across
- using Black and Asian social media networks as allies and communicators in their marketing campaigns



Credit: Unknown on Unsplash

It is also vital that charities challenge, address and break down previous negative experiences of Black and Asian individuals applying for a trusteeship or of working in a charity. These experiences are in no way the exception and indeed, for many of the individuals with whom ATRD has engaged, they are often the norm.

Charities need to act now to restore their reputation and win back the confidence of talented individuals from Black and Asian backgrounds who have had negative and frustrating experiences. They need to:

- acknowledge that they made mistakes in their previous recruitment processes
- show where they've changed their policies and practices to deliver better outcomes for people from Black and Asian backgrounds
- highlight instances of good positive experiences of Black or Asian candidates
- make every effort to give constructive feedback to unsuccessful applicants

**“I have been applying for Trustee/Non-Executive roles for about three years without success. I have been offered trustee roles in very small community groups, but I wanted larger voluntary organisations to benefit from my experience”**

ATRD questionnaire survey 2021

**“It was always a NO answer, or they are looking for someone with more experience”**

ATRD questionnaire survey 2021

**“A great many applications were made. In most cases there was no response. In some cases offers for further discussions were withdrawn without any explanation”**

ATRD questionnaire survey 2021

**I've applied for several roles over the years where I've not had a response - or worse - had no contact AFTER being offered the role. This has happened at least twice. It just happens that the last two I applied for, at the same time, both offered so I decided to take both. I've also been interviewed for a third one - awaiting news on that one.”**

ATRD questionnaire survey 2021

**“Tick box engagement with Black Lives Matter has left a bad taste. Board agreed to write/publish a statement in support, but that never happened and requests for accountability/deadlines were met with hostility by the white chair.”**

ATRD questionnaire survey 2021

**“Provide open and honest feedback when rejecting us. We're all of us sensitive to the experience of being rejected, but also grown up enough to know that there are often perfectly good reasons why we weren't selected. Once we know what these reasons are, we can learn from such experiences”**

ATRD questionnaire survey 2021

It would be fair to say that many charities still have a great deal to learn about the need for and benefits of racially diverse trustee Boards. There is a widespread lack of understanding of the importance of racial diversity and the enormous benefits it can bring. Predominantly white Boards and mainly white senior management teams have typically not seen the need for prioritising diversity in their volunteer and staff strategies or for backing this up with specific actions.

We strongly advise all charities to schedule time for their Board to undertake a detailed discussion about where they are and where they want to be. Then, in light of those discussions, setting out a specific timetabled plan for how they want to get there. Many charities will need support to help them do this. Rising from this need, there are an increasing number of Black and Asian-led diversity consultancies able to give valuable advice to organisations seeking to develop and implement diversity and inclusion strategies: seek them out and use them.

Similarly to charities, many trustee recruitment consultancies have a lot to learn about the need for and benefits of racially diverse trustee Boards. The overwhelming majority of commercial trustee recruiters are themselves made up of largely white Boards and white staff teams. This must change both to show their own commitment to diversity and to give a degree of trust and confidence in their credentials to charities and individuals seeking to use their services.

Some have recognised this and are now working hard to develop their knowledge and expertise by working with organisations like ATRD, Beyond Suffrage, Getting On Board, Girl Dreamers and She Leads on Legacy. Many still work with clients - generally larger charities - which have not recognised the value of, or show the commitment to, racial diversity, often favouring “big names” as new trustees. It’s time for many more of them to turn talk on diversity and inclusion and good intentions into specific and sustainable actions.



Credit: Unknown on Unsplash

## Charity People’s Diversity & Inclusion Charter

Charity People works with a variety of non-profit organisations to help them recruit more effectively, more efficiently and more inclusively. The company adopted its Diversity and Inclusion Charter in 2019 to support clients in creating truly inclusive recruitment campaigns. They achieve this by providing tools to combat unconscious bias and extending the candidate search beyond the usual suspects to increase diversity in talent pools.

Charity People first engaged with Action for Trustee Racial Diversity as part of this commitment to improve relationships and support of underrepresented candidates at Board and senior leadership level. The organisation also has an on-going partnership with mother and daughter co-founders of She Leads For Legacy, Sharon and Afiya Amesu.

The main challenge Charity People encountered was identifying and connecting with networks of Black, Asian and ethnic minority individuals. Like all charity recruitment agencies (and the wider recruitment sector), solving the practical issues of inclusive practices is only one half of the problem – alone, that won’t necessarily connect you with new talent pools. Honest, open and authentic conversations and dialogue was the starting point.

Their on-going work has focused on actively growing new relationships, connecting with new networks and partnering with organisations to hold targeted events and promote racial diversity on boards, always incorporating intersectionality (“the interconnectedness of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group.”) into their thinking.

# CHAPTER 2: REACHING AND ENGAGING DIVERSE NETWORKS





# THE ATRD DATABASE OF BLACK AND ASIAN NETWORK ORGANISATIONS (BANOs)

The prevalence of largely white trustee boards governing charities of all sizes serves to emphasise the lack of broader awareness of the hundreds, if not thousands, of Black and Asian network organisations across the UK. Any charity looking to increase its Board's racial diversity **must** look beyond its usual networks and informal contacts. However, as the vast majority of charities have predominantly white trustees and senior managers, their access to and knowledge of Black and Asian networks organisations with the capacity and the potential to provide trustees with the required skills and experience is extremely limited.

This was a key finding in the mapping report which the ATRD campaign produced in 2019. Even those charities that are sensitive to the need for broadening the candidate pools from which they are recruiting, generally don't have the time, resources and capacity to research, identify, engage and attract such organisations.

That is why ATRD has focussed its work on developing and maintaining its unique database of Black and Asian network organisations. At the time of writing, this database comprises over 500 Black and Asian

network organisations across public, corporate, voluntary, charity and education/academic sectors. Some are well-established professional organisations, some membership groups, others exist primarily as simply a social media presence - Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram. We continue to grow and expand this database every week.

It will seek to tap into the rich vein of skills within corporate and other Black and Asian networks with professional skills and with the very many local network organisations in the major cities and towns in the UK where tens of thousands of local charities operate. Most universities, for example, will have Black and Asian student and staff networks.

However, it is worth noting that, despite our regular reminders to the organisations on the database, the large majority of them have not subscribed formally to the database – likely because of time and capacity constraints. **On the other hand, not a single one has actively told us that they don't want to be on the database.**

So, it will be for charities and trustee recruitment consultancies wishing

to recruit more diversely to review the information about the network organisations on the database, identify those likely to meet their needs and engage directly with them in an open, welcoming, inclusive and focussed way.

In compiling this unique database, we have been ceaselessly struck by the extraordinary diversity and creativity of these networks and – just as significantly – the passion and entrepreneurial spirit of the individuals who founded them. To give just a flavour of the range, they include: The Association for BAME Engineers; 100 Black Men of London; Black British in STEM; Black on Board; Black South West Network; Black Fundraisers UK; Black Women in Finance; Black Girls Hike; Black Young Professional Network; BAME network for the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals; British Sikh Nurses; Creative Diversity Network; East Asian Lawyers; Institute of Cancer Research BAME Network; Melanin Medics; Muslim Women Cycling Network; People of Colour in Tech; Race on the Agenda; Women in the City Afro-Caribbean Network; not to mention a host of university Black and Asian networks.



Credit: Unknown on Unsplash

They represent a wide and diverse range of skills and expertise. Many of their members and followers are very likely to be much younger than the average age of current trustees. In that context, the skills and expertise they would bring might well include experience in fields that tend to attract younger demographics such as digital technology. This is an area increasingly being prioritised by charities of all sizes in light of the increase in online service delivery necessitated by the Covid pandemic and a broader trend towards digitisation.

The Inspire List - <https://trustees-unlimited.co.uk/the-inspire-list/>, initiated in 2021 by Wakkas Khan, an Oxfam trustee, working with Trustees Unlimited and a small group of Black and Asian champions in this field, including founder of ATRD Malcolm John, is also a brilliant showcase of the skills, experience and diversity of current Black and Asian trustees.

## Nurole in partnership with ATRD

"At Nurole, we're constantly building partnerships with organisations and communities - doing the hard work to help our clients reach underrepresented candidates so they don't have to. Over the past months, we've had many productive conversations with network organisations on how we can work to increase ethnic representation on charity boards. We're excited to see the benefits this will have for our charity clients going forward in terms of stronger and more diverse shortlists."

"If you're a charity looking to go through this process for yourself, you should be prepared to invest the time and resources needed to significantly broaden the pool of candidates you're reaching. Only by doing so can the problem of underrepresentation be meaningfully tackled. If you're a charity looking to widen your pool of trustee candidates, the ATRD database will prove tremendously helpful."

**NR**  
NUROLE

# REACHING BLACK AND ASIAN NETWORK ORGANISATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS

We accept that the database cannot hope to meet the diverse and varying needs of every type of charity seeking to recruit Black and Asian trustees. This Guide therefore also offers broader advice on how charities can research and identify other Black and Asian network organisations either locally or more widely which they might then engage more purposefully.

Our belief is that if the campaign has been able to achieve so much largely through volunteers alone, then it's not beyond the resources of any charity to do likewise! However, it will require organisations prioritising this work and putting in the time, commitment, focus and resource to achieve the desired results. We recommend that charities, as we did, seek to recruit volunteers able to undertake this work, particularly where they themselves are short of people resources.

Charities must not expect Black and Asian network organisations and their members to knock boldly on their door or online portal and ask to be trustees. Why should or would they if they felt they wouldn't be let in or fit in? Charities must be proactive and commit to doing this well in advance - say three to six months ahead - of any recruitment deadline. It must not be a last-minute afterthought!



Credit: Lou Jasmine/The Unmistakables



Credit: Christina @ wocintechchat.com on Unsplash

## Case study - Voluntary Arts

For a long time, we were concerned about the lack of ethnic diversity within our board and our staff without managing to do anything about it. There are three main steps that finally helped us leap over that hurdle, as follows.

- Our new Chair insisted that we find a way to increase ethnic diversity on our board. He didn't have all the answers for how we should do this, but he had a real determination which pushed us to take action.
- We hired a BAME adviser to help us, on a short freelance contract. They recommended we set up a BAME advisory panel that would last for one year.
- We recruited a panel of nine volunteers from different BAME communities across the UK, including the Pakistani community in Glasgow, the Caribbean community in Cardiff and the Indian community in Belfast. So, the panel was diverse in terms of ethnicity and where they lived. The members of the panel worked directly with some of our staff teams around

the country. This allowed them to better understand the work of our charity. The panel met each other several times for dinner followed by meetings the next day where we discussed the issues faced by their artistic communities across the UK.

When the panel was disbanded after one year, most of the panel members wanted to stay involved in the organisation. Five of the panel members joined the board – one was already a trustee. Our board suddenly became very ethnically diverse. What has been very important to our trustee board is: we don't have just one BAME representative on our board. Our new trustees brought particular skills and expertise and happened to be from different ethnic backgrounds. Our panelists' experience on the BAME panel gave them a chance to get to know the charity before committing to becoming a trustee.

**Case study drawn from and with permission from Reach Volunteering's Trustee Recruitment Cycle.**

There are three main steps that finally helped us leap over that hurdle



# THE DIY APPROACH TO BUILDING YOUR OWN BANOs RELATIONSHIPS

For many charities, the ATRD database, however extensive, will not contain a “silver bullet” solution to trustee racial diversity challenges. This was never its intention: rather, we aimed to show what can be achieved with resources and commitment. Once you’ve accessed the database, don’t think it’s enough for you just to circulate your recruitment advert indiscriminately to the BANOs on it or other networks which you’ve researched yourself. Identifying diverse networks is just the first step: the next and key step is to put time and effort into building meaningful and positive relationships with them. The database has been developed as a tool to help charities more easily research and identify BANOs with the specific skills or experience which they might need. For instance, an alternative technology charity which approached ATRD was able to research and identify specific

Black and Asian networks focused on ecology, the environment and climate change. You may well be surprised at what Black and Asian networks exist!

It is therefore by no means exhaustive. There is a wealth of networks, organisations and groups out there and accessible with just an internet search. Use key search words such as African, African Caribbean, Afro-Caribbean, Asian, BAME, Bangladeshi, Black, Caribbean, Chinese, Ethnic Minority, Faith, Islamic, Indian, Pakistani, Muslim, race. Combine these terms with the skills, experience or expertise you’re seeking, for example engineering, environment, legal, fundraising, digital technology, media, business, sport, finance, music. For instance, you could try searching “Asian” with “Tech”, “Black” with “Pharmacists” or countless other creative combinations.

## Actively engaging local Black & Asian network organisations

Despite the almost universal use of online technology and virtual meetings by trustee Boards in 2020 as a result of the Covid pandemic, many – in particular smaller – charities are still reliant on recruiting new trustees from the locality where they operate. Often, this is crucial in facilitating links with their local communities and those they support. Significantly however, many of these charities struggle to engage people from Black and Asian communities as trustees even in areas with high percentages of people from Black and Asian backgrounds.

For this reason, a lot of ATRD’s energies have been focused on researching and adding locally-based Black and Asian organisations to the database. We have begun by focusing on a small number of main cities and towns, namely Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Newcastle, and Sheffield. At the time of writing, the database includes more than a hundred of these locally-focussed networks. We plan to increase the cities and towns covered by the database and identify more networks in them as the campaign continues.

**“I was delighted to find out about ATRD, as we are keen to do all we can to promote diversity and inclusion at the Centre for Alternative Technology. The advice and resources that ATRD has provided have been incredibly helpful, and I’m sure will continue to be so”**

Sally Carr, Centre for Alternative Technologies

## Researching your local networks

For charities keen to adopt a locally-focussed DIY approach to developing their own relationships with BANOs, we recommend following three simple steps:

1. Research your local networks
2. Resource your commitment
3. Take your time over the process

Only you will really know the demographics of your local population, your communities and their needs and the diverse range of charities operating in your area. If you don’t, then you really ought to!

ATRD’s database of local organisations has been developed largely through internet searches. Once you’ve researched a local network in your city or town of operation, check whether they are active by running their network name through a search engine and checking their website and social

media account for activity. If you see no activity in the last 12 months or so or no obvious contact details, you might assume that it is not an active network. Check to see if they are cross-referenced on local council or Council for Voluntary Services’ (CVS) websites. Local services including Community Foundations, Race Equality Councils (REC), Interfaith Councils, Young People Foundations (in London), mosques, churches or faith groups are likely to be useful routes into local Black and Asian network organisations and their potential pool of trustees.

Use key search words as highlighted earlier in the Guide, coupled with the name of your town or city. For instance, we have found the search terms “Asian-led organisations” or “Black-led organisations” followed by the specific town, city or region you’re interested in very helpful.

## Resourcing your commitment

Any charity seeking to diversify its Board must decide to commit specific budget and people resources. It’s a great idea to use Black and Asian community representatives from local organisations to support your outreach to local Black and Asian organisations. However, please remember that there is a cost attached to their time also.

You might also use your own volunteers, if this is an option, to engage and attract Black and Asian organisations and individuals. Or you might advertise for volunteers, as ATRD did, for instance through Reach Volunteering.

## Taking your time

All this takes time, commitment and energy, so start the process early. We recommend beginning your outreach three to six months ahead of your recruitment deadline to allow for meaningful engagement and ensure that you are finding the right candidates who would bring the skills and experience required for your Board.



Credit: Lou Jasmine/The Unmistakables

# TWELVE STEPS FOR RECRUITING BLACK AND ASIAN TRUSTEES

Outlined below is an indicative timetable showcasing a 12-step programme for more diverse trustee recruitment. The exact timeline and the necessary steps will of course vary from charity to charity. However, it gives a good idea of how long a truly diverse and inclusive trustee recruitment process should take.

## WEEK 1

Discuss at Board level your diversity needs and the journey you wish to take.

## WEEK 3

Set up a diverse recruitment panel, using independent advisers where necessary and practicable.

## WEEK 5

Carry out a diversity skills and experience audit, considering Board and organisational needs.

## WEEK 8

Write your inclusive trustee recruitment advert: hire a diversity consultant or consult with existing Black or Asian trustee(s) to equality proofread it for tone, language and inclusivity.

## WEEK 9

Agree and implement your marketing and promotion plan; engage with diverse sources and networks rather than relying on those that might be familiar; carefully consider where you advertise and promote your trustee vacancies. This could include: the ATRD database of Black and Asian network organisations; local Black and Asian organisations; ATRD social media network; LinkedIn; Twitter; Reach Volunteering; Young Trustees Movement, etc.

## WEEK 17

Organise an online awareness raising and information event for potential applicants.

## WEEK 20

Assess applications.

## WEEK 22

Interview shortlisted applicants.

## WEEK 24

Appoint successful candidates.

## WEEK 25

Where practicable, let all applicants know why they were unsuccessful. Lack of useful feedback will deter many good candidates from applying again for a trusteeship.

## WEEK 26

Confirm and begin implementing induction and inclusion processes, including ongoing support such as mentoring and buddying.

## WEEK 28

Evaluate your process and the outcomes.

## Case study - Communities 1st

Communities 1st is a voluntary sector umbrella organisation in Hertfordshire. It set up online “speed dating” sessions aimed at bringing together local charities seeking new trustees with local people interested in trusteeship.

“I think it’s safe to say that our Trustee Speed Matching sessions are now part of the fabric of what we do at Communities 1st. We have now held five events. The last one was so successful that every role and every volunteer applicant was successfully matched. There was an excellent spread of diversity too, young, old, men, women, trans, people with disabilities, Black, Asian and other minority ethnic communities all represented. The important thing about sessions like these is that it takes the formality out of the equation, making it fun and accessible, and triggering very interesting

conversations. We intend to run these sessions a few times a year from now on as they have proved to be an excellent way to do board recruitment.

It’s also worth saying that we hold regular information sessions on trusteeship to back up the recruitment events. These informal and informative sessions dispel the myths and create confidence around trusteeship for anyone who may be new to the concept or has reservations about whether it’s right for them. We have an NCVO governance consultant who runs these for us and is brilliant at making the wonderful world of trusteeship inviting and accessible for all.

We are planning to host similar recruitment events for other volunteering roles too in the hope that this approach can bring volunteering to the people and the people to volunteering more than ever.”

**Tom Watkins, Communities 1st**

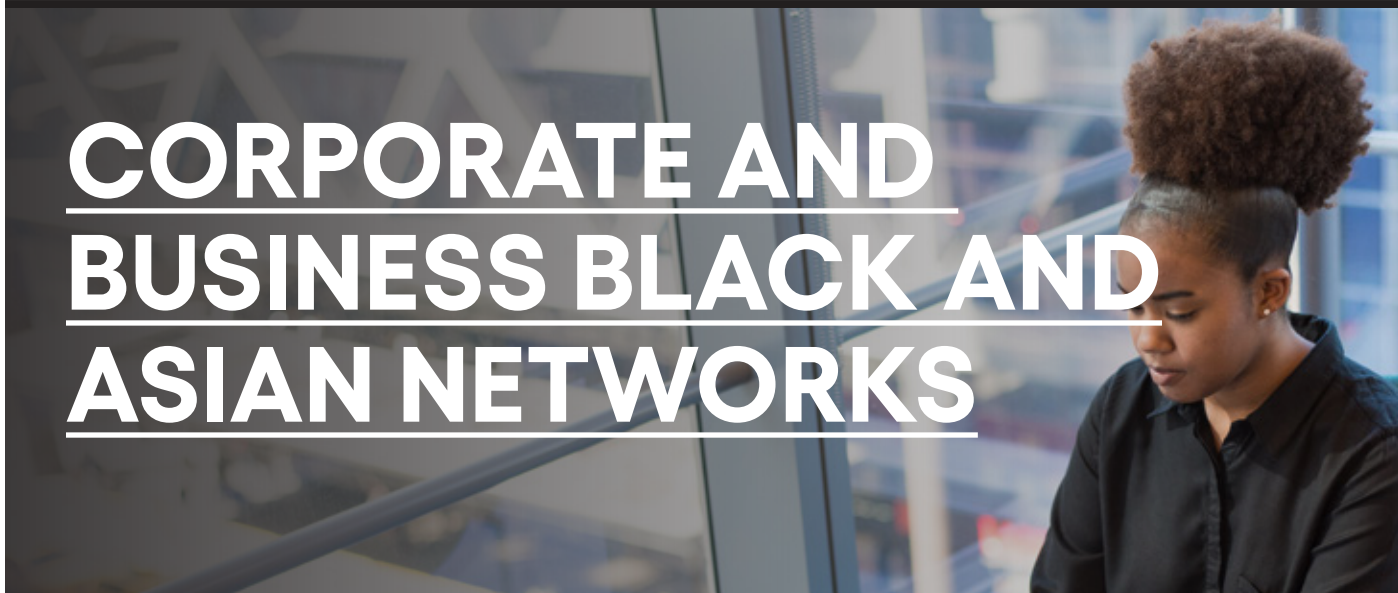


Credit: Lou Jasmine/The Unmistakables

## Case study - Telford CVS

Midlands-based Telford & Wrekin Council for Voluntary Service successfully brought together a wide range of local diverse organisations as a first step to a local diversity strategy, using an online webinar. By running the session digitally, organisations were able to make connections with others based locally, including Black and Asian organisations, with whom they hadn’t been able to make connections before.





# CORPORATE AND BUSINESS BLACK AND ASIAN NETWORKS

Significantly, many of the trustee skills most commonly sought by charities are transferable skills which might equally come from Black and Asian individuals working within corporate and business sectors.

Our research into trustee recruitment sites, and particularly Reach Volunteering, identified many of the key trustee skills charities are looking for. They included:

- business development;
- campaigning;
- corporate social responsibility (CSR);
- creative industries;
- digital communications;
- finance;
- human resources (HR);
- legal;
- media;
- property management
- social enterprise.

Whilst most of these skills can be sourced from individuals with direct experience in the charity sectors, there's no doubt that Black and Asian networks within the business and corporate sectors would also be a key source of these skills. For that reason, the ATRD database lists an

ever-growing number of Black and Asian networks within the corporate and business sectors. They include several well-established in-house Black and Asian staff networks within FTSE companies and large multinationals. For example, the ATRD database currently includes BDO BAME network, Deloitte's Multicultural Network, EY's Black Network, Lloyds Bank Foundation's BOLD network, National Grid's ONE BAME network, and PwC's Multicultural Business Network to name but a few. Small business networks such as the Federation of Small Businesses, which also has regional arms, are also now developing their own "BAME" networks.



### Case study: Dorothy Henderson, Trustee at Almeida Theatre

Dorothy was a partner in city law firm Travers Smith, where she was Head of Employment Law. She became a Trustee at the Almeida Theatre through Nurole. She was recommended by someone in her network because they knew about her genuine passion for theatre and the arts.

"Boards need to ensure that their organisations welcome (and seek out) candidates who do not necessarily look or sound the same as them and to recognise that such candidates, provided they have the required qualification standards and motivation, can add huge value through a fresh perspective and different approach."

**Dorothy Henderson**

Credit: Christina @ wocintechchat.com on Unsplash

# UNIVERSITY STUDENT NETWORKS

The hundreds of colleges and universities across the UK are a significant and, as yet, largely untapped source of younger potential trustees with professional skills and lived experiences. Our research shows that the majority of universities have well-established Black and Asian student networks, often covering a specific ethnicity such as Afro-Caribbean, Asian, Ghanaian, Indian or Pakistani. At the time of writing this Guide, we have identified some 60 Black and Asian university networks, which are listed in the ATRD database. A large majority of the members of these networks will also undoubtedly go on to professional careers, enabling them to develop a wide range of highly sought-after trustee skills and experiences.

It is vital therefore that charities and trustee recruitment consultancies are proactive in reaching out to these networks to help increase the pipeline of potential Black and Asian trustees. ATRD aims to be equally proactive in working closely with our partner organisations such as Charity People, Getting on Board and the Young Trustees Movement to raise students' awareness of the work of charities and the role of trustees as charity leaders.

### Case study: Anbreen Bi

"There weren't many people of my background – working class, BAME, having grown up relying on benefits - at Cambridge University," says Anbreen Bi. "But I had family and friends just a call away. They spurred me on, kept me going."

It was this understanding of the importance of strong family ties that attracted Anbreen to Fastn, a charity that works with families to strengthen relationships. After graduating in medicine from Cambridge University, Anbreen went on to study a Masters in psychiatry at King's College London. It was here that she was introduced to Fastn.

"I just stumbled across a workshop that Getting on Board put on in alliance with KCL and the KCL student union. I realised that being a trustee was the perfect way to use my skills and passions to help a charity and it was just what I was looking for."

"I've volunteered for a number of charities since I was 16 and I was keen to apply my professional skills in a trustee position."

The workshop was part of the Student Board Bank, a first of its kind

programme that also included a Charity Trustee Fair where charities looking for young trustees were able to recruit students directly.

"I met the CEO of Fastn and it started from there," says Anbreen. "Fastn believes that investing in dependable relationships from an early age can help people thrive throughout life. It is an approach that resonated with me. I benefited enormously from charities growing up and recognise the important role they play in society."

"I want voices like mine to be heard and to encourage others to make their voices heard too. More than anything, I want to open the door for other minorities and young people to make a real difference to people's lives."



Credit: Lou Jasmine/The Unmistakables

# ACCESSING ATRD’S BANOs DATABASE

ATRD’s database of BANOs is a key element of the campaign. It has been developed as a low-cost, affordable tool for charities of all sizes to use, adapt and learn from so that they can achieve their aim of increasing the racial diversity of their trustee Boards. It has been designed to make it easy and accessible for trustee recruiters to use and is intended as a working document. We will continue to develop, expand and grow its content.

Charities can download the link to the BANOs database from the ATRD website <https://atrd.group>. We ask organisations wishing to access the database for a one-off donation. Asking for financial contributions not only allows us to further the work of the ATRD campaign,

but also ensures the database and its contents are more valued by those wishing to use it. We ask small organisations to contribute £50 and larger organisations to donate £100 or more as they see fit. Similarly, we ask trustee recruitment consultancies to make a minimum donation of £200 to access the database.

## Using the database effectively

Clearly then it is not just enough to research and identify local Black and Asian organisations and individuals. Crucially, you must also be able to communicate openly and effectively why you’re seeking to diversify your

trustee board, where you are now in terms of diversity, where you’re aiming to go and how you plan to get there and stay there. That means ensuring you have a welcoming and inclusive internal environment in which all views are heard, respected and listened to equally.

Once charities decide they want to use the database, ATRD is happy to schedule a consultation to explore how best they might use it. Depending on the requirements of the individual organisation, this might include suggested wording to help charities in their approaches to the listed BANOs, support with shortlisting the most relevant organisations or advice on local outreach.



Credit: Allgo-an-app-for-plus-size-people unsplash.jpg

The database alphabetically lists hundreds of Black and Asian network organisations across all sectors- charity, business, corporate, public - and a hugely diverse range of professional, membership, staff, student, social etc. networks.

As the campaign continues to develop, ATRD is committed to ensuring that the database is accessible and easy to use for charities. Each organisation has therefore been assigned a list of keywords drawn from its website or social media handle to highlight the

type of skills and experience which its members, followers, supporters or those it supports might be able to bring as charity trustees. An extract from the database giving examples of this is below.

BANO	Keywords
AFBE - UK (Association for black and minority ethnic engineers )	Equality and diversity, young people, education, charity, profession, engineering
Afford	Heritage, culture, profession, finance, social enterprise, development
Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Education Trust - North West / Race Archive in Manchester	Equality and diversity, community, local; Manchester
Akwaaba	Migrants, lived experience, local, Hackney
Aleto Foundation	Young people, mentoring, lived experience
African Women’s Development Fund	Equality and diversity, campaigning, charity, heritage, culture
All African Women’s Group	Migrants, asylum seekers, refugees, lived experience



Credit: Christina @ wocintechchat.com on Unsplash



Typically, ATRD would advise that charities use the database to shortlist a targeted selection of organisations – no more than say twenty or thirty – that best meet the needs of their organisation and the skills or experience gaps they are aiming to fill by recruiting new trustees. Indiscriminately contacting every organisation on the database would be neither the most efficient use of a charity's time and resources, nor the most effective way to develop meaningful relationships resulting in successful trusteeships.

The key to successful engagement is not just to email and hope organisations respond. Rather, it is to communicate in a way that is personalised, appeals best to the targeted organisation, gives a good idea of the culture of the charity seeking new trustees and why it's seeking to recruit racially diverse trustees.

It is important that throughout this process, charities are mindful of the fact that the grouping "Black and Asian" covers a wide range of ethnicities. So, you must carefully consider whether you need for organisational reasons to attract individuals from specific ethnic backgrounds to your Board. Then be specific about that in your recruitment activity and identify and engage those network organisations which specifically support or are followed by that community.

Finding a local volunteer and/or a volunteer with knowledge of the recruiting charity to engage BANOs would be a useful resource for organisations with limited capacity. As has previously been mentioned, Reach Volunteering is an excellent source of diverse volunteers.

**"Thinking about my own recruitment, it is perhaps significant that I was initially approached by a BAME member of the organisation (not a trustee)"**

ATRD questionnaire survey 2021

**"Often when people advance diversity and inclusion, they restrict themselves to Black diversity. Asian diversity and inclusion is different in character but still an issue, and I appreciate that you include both in your definitions in this survey."**

ATRD questionnaire survey 2021



Credit: Education and Employers



Credit: Education and Employers

## Be creative and resourceful in making approaches to the BANOs

### Case study – Nurole, using the ATRD database

Our advice to users of the database would be to:

- Focus on the organisations whose members seem most likely to meet your skills and experience needs
- Be creative and resourceful in making approaches to the BANOs
- Tap into the knowledge and experience of BANO leaders to find the best candidates

#### Focus on the organisations that are right

Given the size of the database, it can be helpful to narrow the list down to begin with, and filtering based on the candidates you're trying to reach. For our purposes, we identified 18 organisations to target our initial efforts. Largely guided by the market, these were the groups with skill sets and profiles that closely matched what our most recent charity clients were seeking.

#### Be creative in your approach

Within those organisations, we then identified the 'decision makers' to reach out to - these were typically either CEOs, Founders, or Chairs. There is no hard and fast rule for where to find this information - it could be on their website, social media, LinkedIn, press releases - but some research and creative thinking goes a long way! Even if someone isn't the best person to speak to, they're usually very happy to point you in the right direction.

#### Tap into the leadership

Because different organisations are structured differently, their internal leadership often has great ideas on how to share your opportunity with the right audience in the network. For instance, it could be a newsletter, or a working group, or even just a direct recommendation of someone with the right background.



# CHAPTER 3: BEST PRACTICE TRUSTEE RECRUITMENT



## SETTING THE TONE: PITCHING YOUR RECRUITMENT ADVERTS

Recruiting for charity trustees without a strong focus on the diversity of the full Board is only a mistake. ATRD's expertise, reach and approach is so helpful. When Turn2us recently recruited three trustees, ATRD's help was central to the successful diversification of the Board. Also, Malcolm is just the loveliest man to work with.

Thomas Lawson, Chief Executive, Turn2us

Time and time again, we see evidence of potential trustee applicants who have been deterred by the tone, language and content of recruitment adverts. Adverts should use plain English, avoid jargon and spell out abbreviations not previously spelled out. They should make it absolutely clear that you want Black and Asian candidates to apply as a result of the skills and experience gap which your diversity skills and experience audit has highlighted or because of other organisational needs you've identified. Charities should not ask for previous

trustee or senior management experience. This is often a barrier for prospective Black and Asian candidates who would very often not have that experience but would have many other relevant and transferable skills and experience. This requirement is likely to be particularly restrictive for charities keen to attract younger Black and Asian trustee applicants.

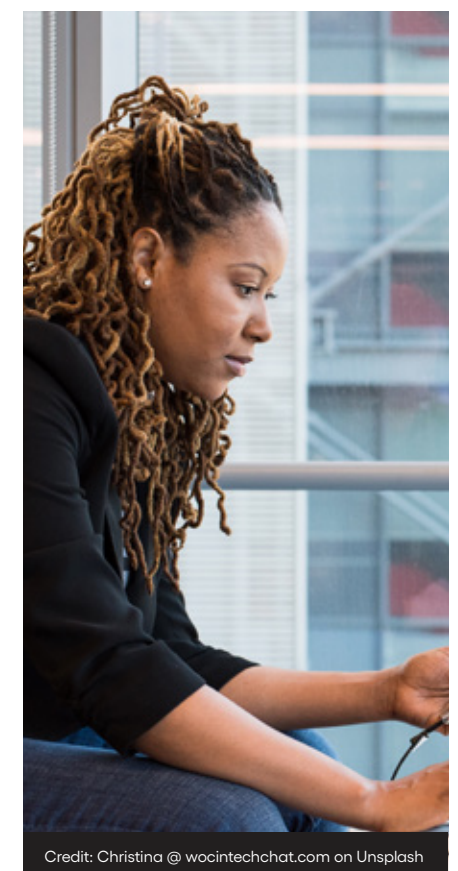
**Trustees do not need academic qualifications.** A committed first-time trustee should be able to get fully up to speed with the requirements of trusteeship reasonably quickly with the right support from the Chair, other trustees and the CEO. Mentoring, buddying or going through a trustee training development course such as Getting on Board's programme are good support options. The Cranfield Trust, for instance, runs an excellent, well-established mentoring programme.

**"There is a lack of 'taster' experiences which means that people often don't know what being a trustee entails or how it might differ across charities/roles."**

ATRD questionnaire survey 2021



**Getting on Board's** How to Recruit a Charity Trustee gives excellent advice on trustee recruitment adverts. It can be downloaded via the organisation's website [<https://www.gettingonboard.org/post/how-to-recruit-trustees-for-your-charity-a-practical-guide-launches-today>]



Credit: Christina @ wocintechchat.com on Unsplash



Research shows that people from Black and Asian backgrounds are deterred from applying to become trustees because of the traditional “pale, stale, male” perception of trustee boards. Often, this is coupled with the belief that it’s not for “people like us”. Many may have had previous poor experiences of applying to become a trustee or have heard of negative experiences from friends, family, peers and colleagues and more widely on social media. There is much more that charities can and indeed should do to try to overcome negative and stereotyped perceptions of charity trustees. Here are some helpful tips for how this can be achieved.

- Commit to openly advertising vacancies; move away from tapping your own informal networks and contacts. Use social media - LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram - more effectively to attract younger and more diverse candidates. Equally, The Young Trustees Movement is an invaluable source for reaching potential younger trustees.
- Seek advice on how to ensure your recruitment advert is inclusive not exclusive.
- Don’t wait until you’re ready to publicise your recruitment advert before you start thinking about how you’re going to identify, reach, engage and attract people from Black and Asian backgrounds. It takes time, effort and commitment. Start 3- 6 months ahead of your formal recruitment process. Don’t give up if you’re not successful first-time round. Keep trying.
- Carry out a diversity skills and experience audit so that you’re clear about the skills and experience you want and you’re not just recruiting people because of their colour. Be aware of adopting an approach which might seem to be “tokenism”.
- Don’t be afraid to be explicit in

your recruitment advert that you’re specifically seeking Black and Asian trustees; explain why, for instance, that you need your Board to be more representative of the people you support; or to increase organisational creativity and problem solving through the different perspectives and life experiences which diversity brings; or to reach a wider talent pool for the skills and experience your charity requires.

**“It’s always white men so I never see myself in this description. Reading through the description of who you were looking for in this chat made me think it could be me.”**

Getting on Board, 2020

- Consider ring fencing, i.e. don’t fill vacancies with the same type of trustee, until you’ve found the right Black and Asian trustees with the skills and experience you require; this approach avoids any talk of quotas.
- Don’t just recruit a single individual as the sole Black or Asian trustee. That is unlikely to change the dynamic and thinking on the board.

**“Great to see someone from a diverse background, and the recruitment drive was open about wanting to increase diversity at Trustee Level. Very transparent, open and honest, about their ambitions for the organisation. That’s what drew me to apply.”**

ATRD questionnaire survey 2021



Credit: Lou Jasmine/The Unmistakables

- Review your website to ensure that it’s not off putting to Black and Asian candidates; post on it your intentions to recruit more diverse trustees and why you’re doing so.
- Profile or case study the type of more diverse candidate you’re looking for so that prospective applicants recognise themselves in the profile.
- Avoid “glittering” profiles of current trustees which might put off candidates lacking that background and experience.
- Don’t ask for senior leadership/ senior management experience: most people don’t have that type of career path.
- Don’t ask for previous trustee experience; the basic skills which trustees are required to have can be acquired through on and off the job training such as mentoring and coaching.
- Don’t use loaded wording, such as “governance and Board experience required” which might give the impression that you’re looking for a certain type of “traditional” trustee with traditional skills and experience”.
- Use Plain English in your advert - so many adverts seem to require a degree in linguistics or some knowledge of Ancient Greek or Latin to understand them; ask an independent person to proofread your use of language.

There is no blueprint for the perfect recruitment advert guaranteed to attract Black and Asian trustees with exactly the skills and experience you are seeking. However, by following as closely as you can the tips above, you will maximise your chances of achieving a successful and inclusive recruitment process.



Credit: Christina @ wocintechchat.com on Unsplash

**There is a burden of representation I feel at the moment. Another member will be joining soon and I had wanted to leave the board, but I don’t want to leave them being the only person of colour on the board. I feel every time conversations around diversity come up, I am called to answer. I have also been a part of every board/chair recruitment panel we’ve had since we joined as they want to make sure the panel is diverse and I am the only person of colour.**

ATRD questionnaire survey 2021

**I’m delighted I’m not the only one - there are three of us.**

ATRD questionnaire survey 2021

**“I was looking to get trusteeship when I left university and they told me I was too inexperienced to be put into their network of board volunteers despite 10+ years of campaigning experience.”**

ATRD questionnaire survey 2021



### Case study - Water Mill Primary School

Contributed by Ninna Makrinov, Chair of Governors

We embarked on a skills development journey using the DfE's competency framework. And we made a conscious commitment to recruiting diverse members. We also decided not to appoint unless we agreed on the value to the board.

As vacancies arose, we openly indicated that we were looking for diverse members. That was, I am sorry to say, not enough. The reason for this was obvious to me when I was delivering a confidence training session to university students and one of them openly discussed what she called the elephant in the room: all were women from ethnic minority backgrounds. She shared her experiences of discrimination and how she would not apply for a job in a place that was not already diverse, to avoid this. In her eyes, a recruitment pack that mentioned diversity was just saying 'not for me'.

How could we make our obviously white Board the place for those who were not like us?

I hope some of the ideas I tried might help others:

- Commit to diversity: Discuss diversity openly in your board. Create a list of the characteristics you ideally would want to have. Not all diversity is visible, but visible diversity can help demonstrate your commitment openly.
- Celebrate the diversity you already have: Think about how your board and/or school is already diverse. Share this and make it visible. Add diversity stories on webpages, for example.
- Ask for what you are looking for: Although I mentioned above that just adding a diversity statement was not enough, I still think this is needed. Make sure it includes your reasoning; I changed ours from 'we welcome applications

from BME backgrounds" to "We would particularly welcome nominations from parents from diverse ethnic backgrounds. We are committed to the diversity of our school; we would like our governing board membership to demonstrate this."

- Target specifically for the diversity you need: I used Inspiring Governance and Governors for Schools to support my search. Inspiring Governance has a shortlisting system. On this occasion we wanted men and minority members; I did not contact any white women in my search. The vacancies were open to all, but I did not reach out to them.

If you'd find it helpful to see a detailed example of a best practice trustee recruitment process, take a look at the case study in **Appendix 1**.



Credit: Education and Employers

# RECRUITING TRUSTEES UNDER SPECIFICALLY CHALLENGING CIRCUMSTANCES

**"There is a world elsewhere"**

Coriolanus, William Shakespeare

For many charities, recruiting Black and Asian trustees is challenging enough in normal circumstances for the variety of cultural, organisational, people and knowledge reasons discussed in Chapter 1. However, in circumstances as described below where the barriers are that much more challenging, charities need to apply even more energy, commitment, resources and creativity.

### Recruiting for specialist skills and expertise elsewhere

Professional skills are much valued on trustee Boards. Finance, HR, legal and digital technology amongst the most sought after. Some charities – because of the nature of their operations – might require more specific skills such as planning, architecture, property management, energy conservation to name a few. Business and corporate Black and Asian networks are often the ideal places to begin searching for prospective trustees with these types of professional skills..

We suggest, for instance, that if you're looking for energy expertise, you should search for Black and Asian networks within energy companies, or for finance skills, you might



Credit: Lou Jasmine/The Unmistakables

research any Black or Asian members or networks within the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW), or Black and Asian networks within accountancy companies or small business networks such as the Federation of Small Business Black and Asian networks.

### Recruiting in areas with fewer concentrations of Black and Asian communities

It would not be reasonable to expect charities based in areas with low percentages of Black and Asian populations to be able to reach out to and recruit Black and Asian trustees as easily as charities in, for instance, urban or inner-city areas.

However, very few areas in the UK have no Black or Asian communities and arguably most charities would have people they support from Black

and Asian backgrounds. If we take the mostly rural county of Norfolk as an example, the census identifies 3% of its population is from Black and Asian backgrounds, while in Norwich this figure rises to 9%. So, charities should not avoid the challenge, but we understand the need to be proportionate and reflective of the communities you are serving.

We recommend the same principles of outreach, engagement and inclusion as for areas with higher Black and Asian populations but with a sharper focus on local communities as well as local organisations. As has previously been mentioned , the ATRD database is a live tool. We will continue to update it accordingly with local BANOs in largely rural areas like Norfolk to try to ease the search challenge for charities in such areas.



### Recruiting for traditionally white, middle-class, elitist charities

Similarly, some charity areas seem to be much less accessible to people from Black and Asian backgrounds than others. This often seems to apply to charities working in areas such as heritage, environment, animals, classical music, arts, theatre, and other similar areas traditionally seen as white middle-class or elitist preoccupations.

Whether it's going to Sadlers Wells, the English National Opera, a National Trust or English Heritage property, the Royal Festival Hall, Wimbledon or even the National Theatre – never mind going for a walk in the country - it's as rare to see another Black or Asian person as a visitor in these places

as it is on the Boards of such “hard to reach” charities. Two inspiring examples of Black and Asian network organisations engaged in these “traditional” areas are Black Girls Hike and Muslim Women Cycling Network.

Fortunately, many charities operating in these sectors are becoming increasingly aware of the need to increase their racial diversity for a mixture of reasons. That might be for attracting funding, championing greater equity, reflecting their local or national communities more closely or increasing their customer base. As the ATRD campaign has developed, it has become abundantly clear that Black and Asian networks exist in many of these areas but often on a parallel plane. Many Black and Asian people view these areas as almost akin to

“another country” for which they don't have the right passport.

The challenge for these charities is to convince prospective Black and Asian trustees of their genuine desire to champion, embrace and embed racial diversity on their Boards and throughout their organisations. They must then take this momentum forward to engage and forge long lasting links and partnerships with the Black and Asian network organisations operating in their areas of work, and work harder to prove the door is wide open for Black and Asian individuals with skills and experience.

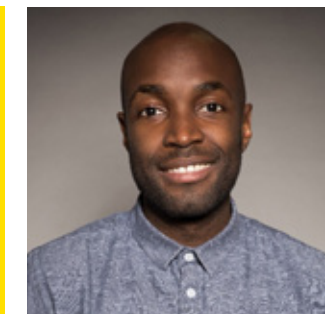


Credit: Starling Bank & Lensi Photography

## Case study- Richard Etienne, Trustee at Hackney Empire

Richard is Deputy Head of Internal Communications at the Department for International Trade (DIT) and became a Trustee at Hackney Empire through Nurole. He's a self-proclaimed 'Hackney boy'. The Empire was the first theatre he ever went to. He has the communications and marketing knowledge to drive transformation in the charity, just like he has done at every stage of his career thus far. In other words,

he's the perfect candidate: what's the secret? It's safe to say even a researcher or recruiter would have struggled to find him: lived experiences don't usually show up on LinkedIn profiles. This role went out to someone who knew Richard personally - including his skillset and background - and they recommended him for the role. Richard commented, “If you're only advertising roles to the same



people, then the ones you want to attract outside of that circle will never hear about it. I found out about this particular position because a white ally let me know about it, and said, ‘You'd be great for this.’”

### Recruiting for lived experience

We define “lived experience” broadly as “personal knowledge about an issue gained through direct, first-hand involvement.”

**“I'm not really that sure that anyone from the board is not from a professional background. There isn't really anyone. But it is interesting as most of the recipients of our grants do not come from a professional background”**

Missed Expertise, 2021

It's worth reflecting that many charities seeking to address issues within their communities have been founded by people who have lived experience. Lived experience helps give credibility, legitimacy and accountability to charities' work and allows them to be more responsive to the needs of those they support.

Crucially, having trustees with lived experience begins to change the power dynamic. It gives lived experience a leadership and decision-making role at the centre of the organisation. This might also lead charities to reflect and consider new forms of governance to reinforce this change. They might include simplified ways of presenting management accounts, avoiding jargon and using Plain English in Board papers and other communications.

However, we cannot underplay the challenges facing charities that wish to reach and engage people with lived experience, recruit them as trustees and ensure that their voices are heard on a Board where the majority of trustees are not like them. Charities need to increase their awareness and understanding of the value and distinctiveness which Black and Asian people with lived experience bring. They must continually strive to reach a place where they do not see a difference between lived experience and the professional skills or experience other trustees may bring. Charities should **always** be looking to recruit individuals with personal

experience of the social issues they address, and not only when seeking to recruit trustees. For instance, a charity working with young people might engage actively with universities and local charities working with young people to attract young people - perhaps initially as volunteers - with lived experience of the issues they are dealing with. This would be a useful way for that charity to begin to develop a pipeline of potential young trustees with lived experience.

**“Bursaries for us to go on the recommended IoD or FT courses which are significantly outside many of our budgets.”**

ATRD questionnaire survey, 2021

Charities need to recognise that ongoing support – perhaps through training and development, mentoring, or buddying – is essential to ensure that lived experience trustees feel comfortable about their role on the Board. “Shadowing” existing trustees and getting to know them outside the Board meetings is a helpful way to reduce the “intimidation” factor for lived experience applicants.

Another route to trusteeship for lived experience individuals might also be to start them in board advisory groups so that they learn to understand the role of the board and the responsibilities of trustees better. The growth of service user committees and youth advisory boards reinforces the increasing use of such approaches. We support a range of ways for boards to hear from people with lived experience, so that people with lived experience of the cause can inform governance through different methods that best suit them and their personal circumstances.

**“Trustees are voluntary positions, which may exclude those without the financial resources/ stability to be able to commit time in a voluntary capacity. Additionally, I have observed that many trustee positions are advertised requiring extensive experience, which again depending upon the opportunities that have presented themselves during your career, you may not have.”**

ATRD questionnaire survey, 2021

Lived experience trustees might also - but by no means always - need financial support to be able to fulfil roles as trustees because of their personal and economic circumstances. Charities must ensure they consult their lived experience trustees about the best way of providing support and take into account potential consequences such as the impact on any benefits of financial support from the charity. There are undoubtedly strong arguments for allowing charities more widely to pay lived experience trustees.

**“There is often a disconnect in the way that boards view diversity. It is worth referring to the fact that boards often view legal experts as ‘integral’ to the ability of a board to do its job successfully but do not view community experts similarly as integral to a board’s function. In reality, a board uses little legal advice and could easily pay for it without taking a board seat, however, this is not the norm. As such, those with expertise in communities are often not seen as individuals that bring immense skill to the work of a board and this needs to change.”**

Missed Expertise, 2021

**“People with lived experience may not get the opportunity to enter the board of an organisation without prior experience of governance, and may be seen as less ‘desirable’. Joining a board that is interested in and values their lived experience provides amazing opportunities for people to develop their knowledge and experience of governance that can be applied elsewhere in future.”**

CCE2021

**“It requires systemic change in paid work as trustee work cannot be seen as worth the effort if Black and Asian people face disparity in work.”**

ATRD questionnaire survey, 2021

**“One size should not fit all!”**

CCE2021

## Case study – ‘Lived experience on non-profit boards’, Centre for Charity Effectiveness (CCE)

In its recently published online resource ‘Lived experience on non-profit boards’, the Centre for Charity Effectiveness (CCE) at the Business School of City, University of London, offers some useful tips focused on recruiting for lived experience, including:

- Agree that the Board will have x% of trustees with experience of our core work. As the Board deliberates on the core skills and competencies it needs to be the ‘best Board’ for this charity at this particular point in its development, with clarity about the part that lived experience of the cause plays in this. Ownership of this ideal by all Board members helps to strengthen the recruitment process.
- In the organisation’s governing document, include a requirement for there to be trustees with

lived experience, reinforcing the importance of this requirement in all relevant documentation and in trustee induction.

- Make it part of the DNA – include it in the organisation’s values, and relate it back to your purpose and vision. Shout about the value lived experience brings – e.g. at the AGM, in the Annual Report, in blogs and news items.
- Define and review the value the new and different perspectives bring (evaluate and measure it; say what is different/better), as part of a whole board review, not just those with lived experience, otherwise it ‘silos’ it even more.

The full resource can be accessed here: <https://www.cass.city.ac.uk/faculties-and-research/centres/cce/reports-and-research/lived-experience-on-nonprofit-boards>

## Case study – The Smallwood Trust

“The Smallwood Trust awards grants to support women who are living in poverty, suffer mental ill health, are in abusive relationships, are digitally excluded or all of the above (and this list is far from exhaustive). “I think if you have personally been affected by these issues, you will bring a perspective to decision making that others who have not just cannot; but I am also aware that the opportunity, confidence and headspace to be a trustee can be really limited.

This is why I wanted to provide an opportunity for someone to shadow me as I embark on my first Trustee position; to provide an opportunity to gain confidence, and for us to learn the ropes together. Experience that I hope we will both benefit from.”

**Dr Ambreen Shah**



**I think a lot of these institutions don’t actually want diversity because they don’t really question themselves as to why they don’t have it. They do not think about what they have to sacrifice to engage authentically. I feel like they talk about diversity just to be nice.**

Missed Expertise 2021

**“As recent reports show, most trusts and foundations have a diversity deficit - which is an individual and collective failure. If you have any doubt about this, the next time you go to a meeting or conference for trusts and foundations look around. I do, and almost always I find myself asking ‘Is this what the acceptable face of white privilege looks like?’**

Anonymous



### Recruiting for member-led organisations

Many large member-led organisations are only allowed by their constitutions to recruit trustees from their member organisations and their individual members. Where the charity's membership lacks diversity, so would the composition of the trustee board be self-perpetuating. It is in the power of such organisations to change the terms of their constitution. Trustees should therefore commit to review their membership provisions regularly to ensure that they are still the most effective for the charity as it develops and grows and that its membership and trustee board are both representative and diverse.

Charity Commission research has indicated that a diverse membership is a critical success factor in realising the benefits of membership and that membership can only be a means by which individuals can be engaged in civil society if the membership is representative and inclusive. [Charity Commission]

Membership charities might become more racially diverse by allowing their members to nominate non-members from Black and Asian backgrounds as trustees or allowing individuals to apply to become trustees if they also agree to sign up as members. This assumes of course that the organisation has actively committed to achieve a more racially diverse trustee board and to engage and attract Black and Asian network organisations and individuals to an already inclusive environment. It would also demand of the charities that their leadership makes and champions the case strongly to their members for the necessary changes to be accepted and followed through.

### Case study – Proactively promoting membership diversity and inclusion

Charity Commission staff visited a very large national membership charity and found it to be well run. The charity reported that it had never experienced any problems with its membership. However, it had recently surveyed its members and discovered that they, like the charity's trustee board, were predominantly white.

The charity provides information and support services for a particular group of people and is also active in raising awareness of their needs and campaigning on their behalf. It is therefore important to the charity that the needs of all people within that group are understood by the charity and that a more diverse range of people are encouraged to join.

As a result, the charity has launched an on-going 'outreach' campaign designed to communicate with people who might benefit from being a member of the charity but are currently not engaged by it. This includes measures to modernise the charity's image and reflect the needs of different sections of the community. The charity recognises that this is important for its own strength as an organisation as well as the community it serves. [Charity Commission]

### Recruiting for grant-giving and family-run trusts and foundations

99% of boards in the grant-giving sector are white in stark contrast to the communities which they serve. This compares with 92% of the wider charity sector and is a long way from the grant-giving sector being representative of the people and communities which they support. Many of these grant-giving trusts and foundations are family owned, led and run.

The challenge for them is to begin to reflect internally on whether a white-led Board can truly claim to understand the needs of the diverse range of organisations and communities they provide grants to. For family-run organisations, it would be particularly important to bring in external independent consultancy support to facilitate honest and open internal discussions. This might also help them to consider more creative and diversity friendly approaches to the composition of their Board and as a result help introduce new perspectives and ideas.

Parts of the grant giving sector are now engaged in actions to increase their Board racial diversity under the umbrella of the Association of Charitable Foundations. This includes programmes such as 2027, which prepares professionals from working class backgrounds for decision-making roles in the grant sector, initiatives like Stronger Foundations, and alliances like the Just Foundations UK which seeks to accelerate the pace of meaningful action towards racial justice within UK grant making foundations and its own member organisations. Many are specifically seeking to recruit more Black and Asian trustees. However, 1% is a shockingly low baseline and clearly much work is still to be done to turn words into sustainable actions. <https://www.acf.org.uk/news/acf-publishes-10-pillars-of-stronger-practice-for-chairs-of-foundations>

## CHAPTER 4: INCLUSION AND SUCCESSION



# INCLUSION: RETAINING BLACK AND ASIAN TRUSTEES

Credit: Lou Jasmine/The Unmistakables

## Principle 6 of Charity Governance Code

“Addressing equality, diversity and inclusion helps a board to make better decisions. This requires commitment, but it means that a charity is more likely to stay relevant to those it serves and to deliver its public benefit. Recognising and countering any imbalances in power, perspectives and opportunities in the charity, and in the attitudes and behaviour of trustees, staff and volunteers, helps to make sure that a charity achieves its aims.

All trustees have the same responsibility for the charity, so they must have equal opportunity to contribute to decision making. Board diversity, in the widest sense,

is important because it creates more balanced decision making. Where appropriate, this includes and centres the communities and people the charity serves. This increases the charity’s legitimacy and impact. Equality and diversity are only effective and sustainable if the board works to be inclusive, ensuring that all trustees are welcomed, valued and able to contribute.

Boards that commit to equality, diversity and inclusion are more likely to set a positive example and tone for the charity by following an appropriate strategy for delivering its purpose and setting inclusive values and culture”

The challenge of achieving more racially diverse trustee Boards does not end with recruitment. It extends to charities making sure that once Black and Asian trustees are recruited, they remain with the charity for their full term of appointment. This means that charities must develop, maintain and monitor inclusive policies and practices at all levels to ensure equal access to opportunities and resources for new and existing Black and Asian

trustees who might otherwise feel excluded or marginalised.

The responsibility for making this happen must lie not just with the Chair and the CEO but with all trustees. They must also ensure that all staff and volunteers recognise and are supported to play important roles in sustaining an organisational culture of equity, diversity and inclusion.

“For true inclusiveness of diversity it’s not just about the recruitment of Black and Asian trustees but also the complete acceptance and respect of their views and input once they’re in the role. Imagery and messages about intentions to reduce inequalities really matter. Organisations must be authentic and increasing diversity of trustees cannot be a standalone act. We have to believe the organisation is also looking at diversity throughout their organisation, otherwise, it would just be lip service.”

ATRD questionnaire survey 2021

“I think that there’s great work around improving Board representation in the sector at the moment, but there’s a gap around ensuring that once those trustees join, the Boards and organisations are spaces where (in my case) WoC trustees can thrive.”

Social Practice Academy participant

“I am chair of a small mental health charity for young people. The profile of the board is not diverse, and is out of kilter with the profile of our user base. We don’t want to just tick boxes about being more inclusive. We actively want to have bigger debates and make better decisions based on the involvement of a more representative board. We are happy to change the way we organise ourselves and run meetings. We are keen to listen. And we’d like to find ways to make being a trustee here more interesting, relevant and rewarding.”

Anonymous

This Guide offers nine key actions for charities who are genuinely committed to having a sustainable inclusive environment:

1. Bring in external expertise, where feasible, or use expertise within the Board to promote discussion and ensure real understanding and awareness on the Board of what diversity and inclusion really means for the organisation.
2. Draw up a diversity and inclusion statement, including how to ensure diversity and inclusion are embedded within the organisation’s way of working.
3. Appoint a Board diversity and inclusion champion with a clearly defined role and publicly supported by the Chair and CEO. This individual need not necessarily be a Black or Asian trustee.
4. Ensure that the views and reflections of new Black and Asian trustees are proactively sought both at and outside of Board meetings, and not just on diversity and inclusion issues.
5. The Chair’s approach in chairing Board meetings should be sensitive to the fact that some Black and Asian trustees might engage and contribute in different ways to the traditional white, older, middle class trustee. The style and approach of Board meetings might need to be discussed and the views of the new Black and Asian trustees taken into account in deciding on any changes.
6. Many Black and Asian trustees might feel the weight of “imposter syndrome”, if they’re entering a world hitherto alien to them for the first time. This calls for Chairs and other trustees to ensure they behave and provide support to new Black and Asian trustees in a way which helps to lessen any such feeling. They might need support and guidance on how best to do this.
7. Discuss, agree and monitor your diversity targets based on current data and to a timescale which is realistic and targets which are measurable and can be monitored by the Board.
8. Continue the discussion with and get regular feedback from the new trustees on the inclusiveness of the charity, and respond accordingly.
9. Plan continuous development, training and mentoring or “buddying” with another trustee to support and enable new Black and Asian trustees to carry out their roles effectively.



Credit: Christina @ wocintechchat.com on Unsplash



# SUCCESSION PLANNING: DEVELOPING A TRUSTEE PIPELINE

Crucially, charities must not be complacent and sit back and consider the job done once they've successfully recruited their first Black and Asian trustee. Just one Black and Asian trustee on any Board is not enough and often looks like "tokenism".

Charities must maintain this momentum and continue to champion racial diversity across the organisation.

We suggest the following steps:

- Build in racial diversity recruitment into your future trustee recruitment plans.
- Continue to develop and maintain your links with local, regional and national Black and Asian network

organisations and potential Black and Asian trustees.

- Think about setting up board advisory groups which would include potential Black and Asian trustees particularly people with "lived experience".
- Consider developing trustee apprenticeships or "shadowing" programmes for potential Black and Asian trustees.
- Engage and attract Black and Asian individuals as volunteers as a first step to raise their awareness of and develop them into trustees.
- Connect to the social media network of potential and existing

Black and Asian trustees which ATRD has set up in 2021 [here](https://www.mightynetwork.com). ([www.mightynetwork.com](https://www.mightynetwork.com))

These steps will ensure that next time you're recruiting Black and Asian trustees - openly and inclusively - you already have a strong pipeline of talented and skilled Black and Asian individuals passionate about becoming trustees.

## Celebrate!

.....and finally, highlight and celebrate your successes until they become the norm and not the exception!

"It was hard at first. I didn't have any clear skills to offer, didn't know what a trustee was and was concerned and then confirmed to be a diversity hire – a condition of funding at the charity. I came really close to quitting but decided f\*\*k it, if I'm going to be in this position, I'll be vocal and use this seat to champion change."

Getting on Board 2020

"I left a trustee style role because I felt intimidated around lots of white people. Your voice is undermined, and you feel like a minority. If you ask too many questions you feel like you are being demanding. It also just felt like a tick box exercise. I was like a silent member of the board. There were a lot of power dynamics due to race issues."

Getting on Board 2020

"I've been supported really well; an open and welcome attitude to responding to questions; an induction that included reading material to dip into, an opportunity to meet beneficiaries, an openness to my knocking on the door of other trustees for 1-1s; joining at the same time as another woman of colour so we can check in with each other if needed. So far so good!"

Ambreen Shah

## CONCLUSION





Credit: Education and Employers

As we look to the future for ATRD, we plan to focus on three key areas: growing a social media network for potential and current Black and Asian trustees; developing local capacity-building partnerships; and raising awareness of trusteeship and trustee opportunities.

#### Social media network for potential and current Black and Asian trustees

ATRD has set up a social media network which aims to bring together potential and current Black and Asian trustees and provide a space for them to:

- learn about the role of charities and the responsibilities of trustees
- share experiences as trustees or aspiring trustees
- provide peer and role model support
- be more aware of the barriers and challenges in applying to trusteeships and staying as trustees
- hear directly from charities and trustee recruitment consultancies

We would be delighted for any Black and Asian individual interested in becoming a trustee and for current Black and Asian trustees to sign up to our network here. ([www.mightynetwork.com](http://www.mightynetwork.com)). We see this network going forward as a valuable resource for charities and

trustee recruiters genuine about achieving racial diversity to engage with and “sell” themselves to a potential pool of trustees from Black and Asian backgrounds.

**“Create a portal where a skills pool can be stored and organisations can recruit directly from the portal”**

ATRD questionnaire survey 2021

#### Developing local capacity building partnerships

A longer-term aim of ATRD is to develop local capacity and local partnerships which might focus on building links between charities and local Black and Asian network organisations and communities in the way in which this Guide advocates.

This would help ease the resource intensive work for all charities of identifying, engaging and recruiting trustees from Black and Asian backgrounds, locally. We hope that key local infrastructure organisations such as Councils for Voluntary Services, Racial Equality Councils, Community Foundations or other similar infrastructure or umbrella organisations would be keen to work with us on this.

#### Raising awareness of trusteeships

We recognise that there is much work still to be done to raise awareness of charities and the leadership role of trustees, particularly among younger people from Black and Asian backgrounds. We plan to work more closely on this particularly with trustee recruitment consultancies and corporate organisations and also our other partners.

**“I read about ATRD’s fantastic work on LinkedIn. Malcolm generously gave his time to advise me, in my capacity as a School Governor, about the things we should think about as we seek to increase the diversity of perspectives and lived experience in our governing body. In my professional life I run a small charity: I believe fervently that ATRD will bring much-needed challenge to the way our sector has approached Board recruitment in the past and will support us to improve in the future.”**

Emma Bell,  
Torriano Primary School

## IN CONCLUSION



Credit: Education and Employers

**“Screw your courage to the sticking place, and we’ll not fail”**

Macbeth, William Shakespeare

I hope that this Guide provides insights and that it stimulates discussion - and more crucially - action, as we move forward towards a significantly more diverse and inclusive charity sector.

**There are some 168,000 charities in the UK. It would only take 5,000 of them – just 3% of UK charities – recruiting two Black or Asian trustees each to reach by 2026 the magical 14% representation of Black and Asian people in the UK! That’s a total of 2,000 new Black and Asian trustees each year - 1,000 charities recruiting two trustees a year.**

Meeting this target requires charities to show strong commitment at Board and senior management level backed up by specific actions, including developing an inclusive organisational culture and processes.

Don’t let this moment pass you by. We urge you to work with us and commit publicly to make your organisation one of those 1000 charities! Diversity benefits us all.



# APPENDIX 1: BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLE OF INCLUSIVE RECRUITMENT



## Appendix 1: Best practice example of inclusive recruitment

### Case Study - Hospital Charity (provided by Eastside Primetimers (EP))

Extract from the Chair's introduction: At this important point in our journey, we are seeking two new Trustees who can bring different perspectives to our Board to help the Hospital Charity achieve its plans for growth and build on the huge affection in the community for it. We seek to become more diverse as a Board and this is reflected in the person specification you will find in this pack. We want to be more representative of the communities the Trust serves both in terms of ethnicity and age.

#### Person specification

We want the Charity Board to be representative of our local community and so would welcome approaches from people who live locally or have a connection with the Trust. We encourage applications from under-represented groups, particularly people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, but also a broad age-range and people living with disabilities. We also welcome applications from people who have not been senior volunteers or non-executives before.

We are looking for trustees with skills and experience in the following:

- fundraising and income generation
- communications and PR, particularly digital and social media
- business and commercial expertise especially entrepreneurial businesses within the St George's catchment area

As well as people from the BAME community, we are also looking for younger people who may not have had previous Board experience but have undertaken voluntary work and been involved in team decision making e.g. through membership of committees or voluntary groups.

#### The search

We followed an open recruitment process, advertising the roles widely and reached out to numerous networks. We contacted the following organisations/people and asked them to help spread the word about the role, providing them with wording for the ad and with the pack:

- The voluntary sector coordination bodies
- The Wandsworth Community Empowerment Network
- The West Indian Friends and Families Association
- Hope Atrium, a BAME led health and social care group
- Muslim Women of Merton
- Wandsworth Chamber of Commerce
- Wandsworth CVS
- The three Wandsworth councillors
- Eastside Primetimers talent pool networks

On LinkedIn, we connected with several BAME platforms and asked them to spread the word about the role.

The role was advertised on the following online platforms:

- Third Sector Volunteering
- Charity Jobs
- ACEVO
- Women on Boards
- LinkedIn
- Twitter
- EP and client websites

Our individual search was largely focussed on connecting to people from the BAME community (about 80% of individual contacts).

#### Recommendations to the charity:

We interviewed all potential candidates and subsequently recommended six suitable candidates to the charity, all from the BAME community. We also provided 14 further CVs of people who also met the criteria but who weren't all from a BAME background.

The charity decided to interview five of the people recommended plus three candidates of the further list of 14 (two white and one BAME).

The charity appointed one BAME candidate as a trustee and one non-BAME. They also offered one BAME candidate a position on the Business Development Committee.

# APPENDIX 2: RESOURCES AND SIGNPOSTS



## Appendix 2: resources and signposts

### Support organisations

This list is not exhaustive. It largely relates to organisations which ATRD has actively worked with. Many other support organisations are also doing great work on racial diversity.

**Association of Chairs** - We are a membership organisation supporting Chairs and Vice Chairs of charities and social enterprises in England and Wales. We help people to lead good governance and run an effective trustee board. Our resources and events are designed specifically for those in a chairing role. <https://www.associationofchairs.org.uk>

**Be On Board (South West)** - Led by People of Colour, BeOnBoard is a leadership incubator and accelerator that empowers, encourages, and elevates PoC talent into the boardroom and C Suite teams. Leading on diversity to deliver positive change, we disrupt through radical recruitment solutions, training, capacity building and consultancy. At BeOnBoard, we navigate individuals and organisations through their journey towards representation, inclusion, and inclusive governance. To find out more about our adventures in diversity contact julz.davis@beonboard.co.uk or visit [www.beonboard.co.uk](http://www.beonboard.co.uk) or find us @beonboard.

**Beyond Suffrage** - The aim of Beyond Suffrage, is to accelerate progress towards achieving gender equality for Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic women at board level, by adopting a measurable long-term strategy that

focuses on breaking down barriers and creating an organic pipeline of talented young future leaders. <https://www.socialpractice.co.uk/beyondsuffrage>

**Black on Board** - Black on Board (BoB) is a training programme and a community aiming to improve the racial diversity on Governing Boards of organisations in all sectors across the UK. Our focus within the BME community is people of colour including Black, Asian, Latin American, Arabic and migrant and refugee communities to address under representation of our communities at board level. Our training programme prepares people to become effective Board members. <https://olmec-ec.org.uk>

**Centre for Charity Effectiveness (CCE)** - The Centre for Charity Effectiveness (CCE) has enhanced the performance of hundreds of organisations and thousands of individuals across the nonprofit sector. Drawing on sound research and the shared experiences of our academics, consultants and clients, CCE provides nonprofit leaders with support and guidance across governance, strategy and leadership, to help drive significant change. CCE's online resource 'Lived experience on nonprofit boards' is designed to assist nonprofit organisations to reap the benefits of including trustees with lived experience of the charity's cause on their boards. <https://www.cass.city.ac.uk/faculties-and-research/centres/cce>

**City Year** - At City Year UK, we focus on enabling inspirational young people to volunteer in schools in some of our most disadvantaged communities, full-time, for a year. They are trained and supported to give much needed extra help to children who need it most. We see that by helping pupils grow, our volunteer mentors grow too.

They leave as leaders, committed to social change and ready to pursue their career. <https://www.cityyear.org.uk>

**Cranfield Trust** - At Cranfield Trust, we're passionate about building successful charities. Through transformative management consultancy, mentoring, and training services we help charities improve their effectiveness, so they can reach more beneficiaries and make a bigger impact in the communities they serve. We connect charity leaders with highly skilled volunteers to help them gain the business skills, confidence and knowledge they need to thrive. <https://www.cranfieldtrust.org>

**Full Colour** - Full Colour was set up in 2019 with the aim of enabling organisations and sectors to become more diverse and properly inclusive. Full Colour works at a strategic level to drive systemic change within organisations, developing practical solutions that are specific to each client's circumstances [www.fullclr.com](http://www.fullclr.com).

**Getting On Board** - Getting on Board supports people to volunteer as charity trustees, particularly those who are currently under-represented on trustee boards. That means supporting more women, people of colour, young people, people with disabilities, LGBTQI people, people with a diversity of lived experience, and so many others to become trustees. We also support charities to recruit and retain diverse trustees, and help employers connect their employees with amazing trustee opportunities. <https://www.gettongonboard.org>



**Reach Volunteering; TrusteeWorks -**

Reach Volunteering runs a UK wide service, which helps charities recruit over 1,000 trustees a year. It is completely free for charities with a turnover of under £1 million turnover. Reach is proud of the racial diversity of the applicants it attracts: over 23% of applicants are from Black, Asian or other minoritised ethnic groups. Reach has also produced an online guide to board recruitment, the Trustee Recruitment Cycle, promoting an inclusive approach at every stage in the process. You can search for trustees and promote your trustee role here: <https://www.reachvolunteering.org.uk>

**2027 -** 2027 is the result of a collaboration between five of the UK’s leading social change organisations: Centre for Knowledge Equity, Charityworks, Koreo, Northern Soul Consultancy and Ten Years’ Time. The 2027 Associates Programme is a 12-month salaried programme which works with frontline professionals from working-class communities, and prepares them for decision-making roles in grant-making and impact investing organisations. The 2027 Trustee Coaching Programme provides individual and group support for trustees in trusts and foundations who are from diverse backgrounds. <https://2027.org.uk>

**Young Trustees Movement -** The Young Trustees Movement is made up of current and aspiring young trustees, employers and allies. We exist to double the number of trustees aged 30 and under on charity boards by 2024. <https://youngtrusteesmovement.org>



Credit: Lou Jasmine/The Unmistakables

**Executive search/ trustee recruitment consultancies**

**This list is not exhaustive. It largely relates to organisations which ATRD has actively worked with. Many other trustee recruitment consultancies are doing great work in this area**

**Charity People -** Charity People works with a variety of non-profit organisations to help them recruit more effectively, more efficiently and more inclusively. They created their Diversity and Inclusion Charter in 2019 to support their clients in creating truly inclusive recruitment campaigns providing tools to combat unconscious bias and extending their reach beyond the usual suspects to increase diversity in their talent pools. <https://charitypeople.co.uk>

**Eastside Primetimers (EP) –** EP provides charity consulting and recruitment services to make charities and social enterprises more effective and sustainable. Our aim is to be a critical friend and partner for those that work with people most in need. <https://ep-uk.org>

**Green Park -** Green Park is an award-winning consultancy that offers Executive Search, Interim Management, Board Advisory, Diversity & Inclusion and Managed Service People Solutions across the private, public and third sectors. Championing diversity and inclusion, Green Park is changing the face of leadership by helping organisations think differently about talent in the UK’s top boardrooms. Our aim is to help organisations to attract, identify, develop and retain trusted, inclusive, authentic and highly effective leaders from different backgrounds to leverage the power of collective difference. <https://www.green-park.co.uk>

**NFP Consulting -** NFP Consulting offers search and selection to board and executive level for the charity sector and mission driven organisations since 2001. How we work is central to our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. We do not work on a commission and bonus basis, which enables us to invest the time and resources needed to go beyond the obvious and traditional prospects to achieve long-lasting and successful appointments based on merit. <https://nfpconsulting.co.uk>

**Nurole -** Nurole is the global platform changing the way organisations hire board-level talent. We are breaking open the old headhunting processes – secretive searches that throw up safe and predictable names. By combining smart technology and industry expertise, we transform the boards of multinationals, start-ups, charities, government bodies, and everything in between. It’s the most efficient way to find high quality, diverse candidates and empowers brilliant people to apply for roles that match their skills, passions and availability. <http://www.nurole.com>

**Saxton Bampfylde -** Saxton Bampfylde is a leading leadership advisory and search firm operating across the commercial, public and not for profit sectors. We are passionate and determined advocates for improving the diversity of boards and senior teams and work hard to weave inclusion into every aspect of our assignments. We have developed programmes outside of our search work which proactively support and develop diverse talent for board positions, including STEP (<https://www.saxbam.com/step-programme/>), which is our holistic coaching, development and career development programme offering for individuals from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds. <https://www.saxbam.com/>

**TPP -** TPP Recruitment is a specialist and well-established UK-wide consultancy. Our areas of expertise enable us to provide dedicated support to organisations across the following non-profit and public sector organisations. We have created an inclusive recruitment guide in partnership with Inclusive Employers. We hope this guide will provide you with useful tools, tips, advice, and resources to help empower your organisation to take your recruitment outcomes to the next level. To access the guide, please submit your details here. <https://www.tpp.co.uk>

**Trustees Unlimited -** As one of the UK’s leading trustee and board recruitment agencies, we work with a broad portfolio of organisations. We have made it our mission to find the right trustees for boards of all shapes and sizes. We develop, place and support people on charity boards to help maximise their impact as a trustee. <https://trustees-unlimited.co.uk>



Credit: Education and Employers

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# GETTING ON BOARD - CHANGING THE FACE OF TRUSTEESHIP

Getting on Board is a trustee recruitment and diversity charity. Its guiding belief is that board diversity is key to effective decision making, better delivery of a charity’s services and the broader goal of creating a more equitable society.

Getting on Board supports people to become charity trustees, particularly those who are from one or more groups currently under-represented on trustee boards. That means supporting more women, people of colour, young people, people with disabilities, LGBTQI people, people with a diversity of lived experience, and so many others to become trustees.

### Partnership working

Since its inception in 2004 Getting on Board has supported thousands of people to become trustees and worked with numerous organisations to raise awareness of the role of trustees and to train them to become trustees.

Working in partnership with other charities, businesses and a host of other organisations is still at the heart of what Getting on Board does. The organisation is proud to be working with Action for Trustee Racial Diversity, Young Trustee Movement and Reach Volunteering, amongst others, to achieve the common goal of changing the face of trusteeship.

### Changing trusteeship today

Today, Getting on Board’s mission continues to change the face of trusteeship by bringing diversity to charity boards.

The charity supports individuals through our flagship Charity Board Leadership Programme and webinar series which equips aspiring trustees with the information, insight and agency to navigate the challenges involved in applying for trusteeships, and helps them secure roles in which they can make a significant difference.

This runs in tandem with Getting on Board’s work helping charities themselves diversify their boards through meaningful systemic change and open recruitment which is delivered through monthly webinars and through a six-week [Transform programme](#).

To find out more about how Getting on Board can help your charity, or you as an individual, come and visit our website [www.gettingonboard.org](http://www.gettingonboard.org).







We hope that you will find this Guide useful, that it helps to shape and inform your approach for your future trustee vacancies, and achieve a visible impact on the face of trustee boards across the UK.

“At the Association of Chairs, many Chairs ask us ‘how can we recruit more Black and Asian trustees?’. It’s great to have this new guide. It explores the barriers to recruitment and highlights the many different networks that are a potential source of Black and Asian trustees from many walks of life who can be a good match for your charity. A very useful resource.”

Ros Oakley  
Association of Chairs

“Reach Volunteering is proud to collaborate with ATRD who have provided amazing leadership to charities on increasing the racial diversity of Trustee Boards. This in-depth specialist guide on recruiting Black and Asian trustees is a key tool for helping charities achieve this.”

Janet Thorne  
Reach Volunteering

“We look forward to learning from, supporting and working in partnership with ATRD. Because now more than ever, we need boards with a diversity of perspectives that enables them to better navigate uncertainty and reflect their communities. This Guide will be an invaluable resource to help achieve this”

Mita Desai  
Young Trustees Movement

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