

GETTING YOUNG PEOPLE ONTO YOUR TRUSTEE BOARD



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INTRODUCTION

Step Up To Serve and the Young Trustees Movement and have worked together to bring you a checklist for getting young people onto your board. It contains a practical process and best practice guidelines to ensure you get the most out of young people and give them the best opportunity to be involved. This is a process that has been used by Step Up To Serve and been successful but may need to be altered depending on the set-up of each organisation and should only be used as a guide.

Research shows that charity boards are around 92% white, with an average age of 60 and 18-24 year-olds only account for less than 0.5% of all charity trustees. Diversity on a board allows for more robust decision making, and a diversity of experience is key to this. Young people are able to bring energy, commitment and fresh perspective to direct a charity. This also gives young people the opportunity to build their skills and experience which in turn will put them in a better place to be the leaders of charities in the future.

The government's civil society strategy argues that the contributions of young people are vital to a thriving society, and have a critical role in helping the country tackle challenges and deliver a better future for all.

"Since being welcomed as a Trustee, I've always felt that I'm meant to be in the room. I can contribute anything that I want and I feel supported to challenge. Being a Trustee at Step up to Serve has helped me become a better Trustee at other organisations and gives me confidence and experience whilst supporting an amazing charity."

- Saeed Atcha MBE DL, young Trustee for Step Up To Serve since 2016



1. RECRUITMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE

- **1a. What to include in the job advert**
 - About the organisation
 - Location details if necessary
 - Summary about what the role is
 - Expectations (time/commitment)
 - Criteria for applying - e.g. aged 18-23
 - You must be at least 18 years old to be a charity trustee (16 if your charity is a company or charitable incorporated organisation (CIO))
 - Explicitly state that young people are welcome to apply and why you need them. If your board is currently not representative you could explain that you particularly welcome people from X, Y, Z backgrounds to apply
 - Roles and responsibilities
 - Avoid the sort of language that excludes people, for example by saying 'expertise' or 'X years of experience in Y'
 - Make it clear that:
 - You are recruiting for potential and learning in the role is expected
 - They are not there to represent the young people (but their experience as a young person bring a much needed diversity of perspective)
 - Training will be provided or that training is an option to fulfill the role
 - Travel expenses will be covered (You're also allowed to [pay trustees](#) to compensate for loss of income if it enables a more diverse board)
 - Share the advert across as many platforms, with the [Young Trustees Movement](#) and partners to reach as many young people as possible
 - How to apply.
- **1b. What to include in the application form**
 - Diversity monitoring form (ensure it is separated from applications when shortlisting). Use this to reflect on your recruitment practices and where/who you need to work on reaching
 - A request for a reference and a note around GDPR and data protection
 - Details of where to send the application, format to send it in and deadline to apply
 - Suggested application questions - see Appendix 1
 - Allow as long as possible for people to apply - e.g 1 month
 - Who to get in contact with if any part of the recruitment process is not accessible to them.

2. INTERVIEW PROCESS

- Ask for any reasonable adjustments to be aware of or that you can make
- Send details as far in advance so they have time to prepare, especially if you ask them to come along to present something on the day
- Try to be flexible with when you can hold the interviews to fit in better with young people's schedules
- Offer online/dial in if candidates are applying from far away. Try to be as accessible as possible for all candidates
- Give people as much details as possible about what to expect during the interview and the format on the day e.g. who will be there, the sorts of questions you'll be asking.
- Allow time at the end of the interview for the candidate to ask any questions.
- At the end of the interview let the candidates know when they should expect and update on whether they have been successful or not
- If they aren't successful in joining the Trustee Board:
 - Offer feedback to all candidates after the interview with some suggestions for the future on how to improve their interview skills
 - See if there are opportunities to get them involved in your decision making E.g. youth boards, steering groups, consultations, consulting on wider strategy/comms meetings for the organisation
 - Re-affirm that the rest of the charity sector still desperately needs them! They can sign up for updates for other opportunities via [this form](#) and develop their trustee skills via the [Young Trustees Movement digital hub](#)

- Always be mindful that this is a trusteeship, not a job interview. When conducting interviews, score applicants on their potential - taking into account the way they approach a problem and their curiosity. For example give a case study of a problem and ask candidates to think about the questions they would have about the problem. This will allow you to score candidates on the way they think about the problem
- Example interview questions - see Appendix 2.

3. APPOINTMENTS

- Let the young person know what their roles and responsibilities are
- Try to appoint at least two young Trustees
- Confirm the dates of upcoming meetings
- Formally appoint them at the next Board meeting
- Ensure they fill in relevant forms that are uploaded to Companies House/Charities Commission
- Let them know that an induction will take place and what will be included.

4. INDUCTIONS

- Ask the young person what might be helpful to know about them when planning an induction e.g if they work fixed hours and if it is hard to take time off work
- Try to arrange time for the young person to meet with members of the organisation to understand the details of the work better
- Arrange meetings with some existing Trustees to get familiar with the team
- Signpost the [Young Trustees Movement digital hub](#) so they can access peer support
- Share some background reading and documents to help get them up to speed
- Share previous meeting minutes
- Make sure Trustees are aware of any existing policies, especially your expenses policy
- Consider if the young person could be matched with another more experienced Trustee who could act as a mentor or buddy. This is useful for all trustees joining the board.

5. TRAINING

- Consider any specific training opportunities that Trustees are required to take in order to fulfil their role effectively
- Offer formal training opportunities or spending time with specific team members
- Consider how to train more experienced Trustees in how they liaise and work with the younger Trustees and ensure they understand their importance and value in the board. The [Young Trustees Movement](#) can support this.

6. PRE-BOARD PREP/BRIEFINGS

- Make sure a phone call or meeting is put in ahead of the Board meetings to ensure young Trustees (and ideally all Trustees) have the opportunity to ask questions or to summarise papers and what is coming up in the meeting so they are clear on how they can input.

7. BOARD MEETINGS

- Try to make time at the beginning of the meeting for young people to speak/share their reflections so that they are more likely to contribute throughout the meeting
- Set out a seating plan so the young Trustees can be seen by the Chair and are mixed between the older Trustees
- Try to plan meetings so that young trustees are able to attend and it can fit in with their schedules. Ask them beforehand what restrictions they have.

8. POST BOARD MEETINGS

- Try to get some time in after Board meetings to check in how it was for the young person and again give them the opportunity to ask questions/clarify points

9. END OF TERM PROCESS

- Ensure they are thanked at their last meeting
- Offer an exit interview
- See if you can find ways to keep them updated and involved with the organisation



APPENDIX 1 - Links to useful resources and organisations doing this well

- Many charities recruit young Trustees and make this a priority in their organisations such as [UK Youth](#), [Northern Stage](#), [Blagrove](#) and [BYC](#).
- [CAF Young Trustees guide](#)
- [Getting On Board](#) - a more detailed good practice guide for recruiting trustees.
- [Roundhouse guide](#), focused on including youth voice on boards in the Arts
- [Beyond Suffrage](#) who run a training and placement programme for Black, Asian and Minority ethnic women on boards
- Sign up to the [Young Trustees Movement](#) for additional support and updates.

APPENDIX 2 - Example application questions

- Consider allowing young people to apply using more creative means such as a video, vlog etc. This is particularly helpful for young people with disabilities who often find getting their words down on paper difficult.
- Why do you care about our mission? (200 words)
- What would you like to gain from this experience? (50-100) words
- What programmes or youth related activities have you previously been involved in?
- Depending on the org a question around their experience related to the org. E.g. for Step Up To Serve we asked - What social action have you done yourself? Examples might include volunteering, fundraising, community organising, campaigning, mentoring, befriending or caring. These might be opportunities you have taken up through an organisation or your school/ college/university or that you have arranged yourself.
- Are you able to travel independently to attend meetings? Put in details for online meeting options as well to make it as accessible as possible.

APPENDIX 3 - Example interview questions

- In preparation for this, we asked you to prepare a few minutes at the beginning outlining why you think you would be the best person for the role (no PowerPoint presentation for this). Can you share your thoughts for a maximum of 5 minutes?
- What do you see as the key challenges and opportunities facing the organisation?
- Additional questions Step Up To Serve have asked:
 - Why do you think that youth social action is important within society?
 - How has your involvement in social action had an impact on you and how would you use this in your role as a Trustee?
 - Part of the role will be to provide leadership and also to act as ambassador by representing the charity at external functions. Can you give an example of when you've been in a leadership position in the past and why you were successful?
 - What role do you feel you take in a group setting? Please give an example of you taking on this role and how it contributed to the success of the group.
 - This role is a significant time commitment. You have to attend meetings and wider XXXX engagements. Can you give this commitment to the campaign? How will you manage your time to ensure you can attend?
 - In this role you will be dealing with a lot of information that is confidential. Do you feel comfortable not sharing information with others? What experience have you had with handling sensitive information?
 - Can you tell us about a time when you made a difficult decision? What contributed to you making that decision and what did you learn from it?
 - Whilst in the role what skills would you particularly like to develop and why?
 - A key part of the role is communicating about the value of social action and the campaign, can you tell us a bit about your experience of sharing your stories on social media or other comms channels?
- Do you have any questions you want to ask us?





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