



ACTION
FOR
TRUSTEE
RACIAL
DIVERSITY
UK



FROM HERE TO DIVERSITY
A Summary Guide to
recruiting Black and
Asian charity trustees

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Foundation

OUR BIG GOAL

The Action for Trustee Racial Diversity (ATRD) campaign launched in 2019 with the aim of addressing the significant underrepresentation of people from Black and Asian backgrounds on charity trustee boards.

Research suggests that Black and Asian trustees comprise 8% of all trustees, yet make up 14% of the UK population. This underrepresentation has long been an indictment on the sector. 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.



Our campaign aims to support charities to recruit an additional 10,000 Black and Asian trustees by 2026.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Our full guide, *From Here to Diversity: How to Recruit Black and Asian Charity Trustees*, provides practical advice, guidance and support to charities wishing to increase the racial diversity of their trustee boards. 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 Boards.

This guide covers four key elements:

1. The barriers and challenges for charities in achieving a more racially diverse board.
2. How charities might reach and engage with Black and Asian networks and individuals.
3. Best practice in Black and Asian trustee recruitment.
4. Inclusion and succession planning.

This is a summary guide, not to be replaced by the full version but aims to give an insight into some of very practical steps you can take to achieve greater racial diversity in your Boards.

BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES

Charities genuinely wanting to increase their board's racial diversity must take a number of steps. Here are just a few:

- Acknowledge where they are now, how they got there, where they want to be and how they're going to get there.
- Decide on the skills, expertise and diversity they need for a more effective and inclusive organisation, and carry out a diversity, skills and experience audit.
- Convince potential applicants that they are serious about wanting to change the face of their boards and that they value the skills and experience that diverse trustees bring.
- Be explicit in their recruitment adverts that they are proactively seeking people from Black and Asian backgrounds; use case studies profiling or demonstrating the type of trustee, and the diversity and skills they are seeking.
- Ensure that recruitment panels are racially diverse. Consider asking independent external Black and Asian recruitment panel advisers if they can't find suitable people in their own organisation.

If charities are to engage and attract more diverse trustee applicants, they must promote the key leadership role of trustees and how people from Black and Asian backgrounds, particularly young people, might benefit.

IMPACTFUL APPROACHES

- **USE SOCIAL MEDIA:** YouTube and Vimeo videos, webinars, podcasts and other less traditional methods so that they reach different and younger audiences.
- **COLLABORATE** and work with dynamic youth organisations such as Young Trustees Movement, Beyond Suffrage, Girl Dreamers and Black Young Professionals to get new and appealing messages across.
- **ENGAGE** Black and Asian social platforms as allies and communicators in marketing campaigns.
- **ADVERTISE** through Reach Volunteering and Getting on Board who are known particularly for attracting more diverse candidates.



REACHING BLACK AND ASIAN NETWORKS

The vast majority of charities have predominantly white trustees and senior managers. This usually means that their access to and knowledge of Black and Asian networks and organisations with the capacity and the potential to provide trustees with the required skills and experience, is often extremely limited.

BANOs DATABASE

That is why ATRD focuses its work on developing and maintaining its unique database of Black and Asian network organisations (BANOs). This database currently includes over 550 Black and Asian network organisations across public, corporate, voluntary, charity and education/academic sectors.

The database 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.

The database highlights the rich variety of professional skills and experience, including lived experience, within corporate and other Black and Asian networks, such as those among thousands of local charities operating in cities and towns across the UK.



It takes time, resources and commitment to find and engage with organisations with the potential to provide charities with quality candidates, both to fill current trustee vacancies and to develop a pipeline of volunteers and future trustees. Don't be tempted to go for tokenism and the quick fix.



Malcom John, Founder.
Action for Trustee Racial Diversity.



Research shows that people from Black and Asian backgrounds are deterred from applying to become trustees because of 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 across their networks. There is much more that charities can and should do to try to overcome negative and stereotyped perceptions of charity trustees.

SEVEN TIPS AND TAKEAWAYS for your recruitment strategies

- 1 Don't wait until you're ready to publicise your recruitment advert before you start thinking about how you're going to identify, engage with and attract people from Black and Asian backgrounds. Start three to six months ahead of your formal recruitment process. Don't give up if you're not successful first-time round.
- 2 Carry out a diversity, skills and experience audit so that you're clear about your needs and the diversity gap on your board. Be aware of adopting an approach that might seem to be tokenism. [Read the full guide for more on this.](#)
- 3 Commit to openly advertising vacancies; move away from tapping your own informal networks and contacts.
- 4 Don't be shy about saying explicitly in your recruitment advert why you are specifically seeking Black and Asian trustees. e.g. You need your board to be more representative of the people you support.
- 5 Don't just recruit a single Black or Asian trustee. This is unlikely to change the dynamic and thinking on the board. [Read more in the full guide about why this is so important.](#)
- 6 Review your platforms including your website and adverts. Check for language, visuals and the experience you are asking for e.g. degree level, prior trustee / senior management experience.
- 7 Use plain English in your advert – too many adverts are packed with unnecessary jargon.



SEVEN KEY ACTIONS

You can take to diversify your board

- 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 charity's way of working.
- 3 Appoint a trustee as 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 Many Black and Asian trustees might feel the weight of imposter syndrome, if they're entering a world that feels a bit alien to them. Chairs and other trustees must ensure that they behave and provide support to new Black and Asian trustees in a way that helps to lessen any such feeling.
- 6 Continue the discussion with and get regular feedback from the new trustees on the inclusiveness of the charity, and respond accordingly.
- 7 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.

[See more insights and best practice examples in the full guide here.](#)



FIVE STEPS

for your Board Succession Planning

Charities must maintain momentum and continue to champion racial diversity across the organisation. We suggest the following steps:

- 1 Build racial diversity recruitment into your future trustee recruitment plans.
- 2 Continue to develop and maintain your links with local, regional and national Black and Asian network organisations and potential Black and Asian trustees.
- 3 Think about setting up board advisory groups which would include potential Black and Asian trustees, particularly people with lived experience.
- 4 Consider developing trustee apprenticeships or shadowing programmes for potential Black and Asian trustees.
- 5 Connect to the social media networks of potential and existing Black and Asian trustees.

12 STEPS TIMELINE

for recruiting Black and Asian Trustees

