



vast 
Volunteering

What is a Trustee and How do I Become One?

Introduction

Trustees ensure their charity has a clear strategy, and that its work and goals are in line with its vision. A trustee's role in a charity is to be the 'guardians of purpose', making sure that all decisions put the needs of the beneficiaries first.

They safeguard the charity's assets – both physical assets, including property, and intangible ones, such as its reputation. They make sure these are used well and that the charity is run sustainably.

Trustees don't usually do the day-to-day running of the charity. They delegate this to the staff, led by the Chief Executive. Instead, they play the role of a 'critical friend' to the Chief Executive by giving support and by challenging – in a supportive way – to help them manage effectively. However, in smaller charities with few or no staff, trustees may take hands-on roles too.

Most trustee boards meet four to eight times a year. Many boards have sub-committees that focus on particular areas of work or projects. Where they do, trustees are often expected to get involved with one or more sub-committees, as well as having a good understanding of their charity's work overall.

Further information can be found [here](#).

“Having worked in the voluntary sector for over 10 years and living with a profoundly deaf family member I have seen first-hand the inequalities and daily struggles that deaf people face in our communities. I became a trustee of dDeaflinks to support a charity that has a passion for breaking down barriers and inequalities for dDeaf people”

Kelly Smith, dDeaflinks Trustee



"Being a Trustee involves challenge and support, usually at the same time, but there is the opportunity to learn good governance, a considerable number of new skills and make a crucial difference to the organisation."

Neil Dawson, Ford Green Hall Museum and VAST Trustee



INVESTING IN
COMMUNITIES

Case Study - Headway North Staffs

Established in 1985, Headway North Staffordshire is a leading centre for the rehabilitation and support of people who have survived a brain injury.

It aims to promote a wider understanding of all aspects of brain injury and to provide information, support and services to people with a brain injury and their relatives and carers. They achieve this by providing access to physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, life skills and counselling.



My name is Michelle Gunnery, I'm a trustee and treasurer of Headway North Staffs. In my professional work, I am a Case Manager, working full time, and have been a trustee for eight years.

I originally visited as I was supporting a client that needed ongoing support. That was many years ago, and after a while I really understood how much the service could help an individual after a life changing illness or trauma. Once I understood the charity, I knew I wanted to get involved further. To become a trustee, I was interviewed, shown around and discussed at length what I was hoping to bring to the role and what they were looking for in a trustee.

I am a very hands on person, believing we need to offer our service users the most rehabilitation options that we can as a charity. So to me every bit of therapy and positive options we can bring to the service user is important. It's amazing to be part of Headway North Staffs as the service changes and improves year on year.

The rewards are very simple, seeing service users going from needing hoists and multiple carers to walking with a crutch and requiring no carers. Independence is so important, we take it for granted, yet in a moment it can be taken away and the smile on the persons face is one hundred percent worth what we do.

It can be challenging, you have to work as a team, you have to be able to look past the 'now' and look into the 'future' and the charity sector is having a very tough period so financial decisions are not always popular. Most trustees put in about five hours a month, but more is always welcome! Business knowledge is a plus, being able to speak to people from all walks of life and have patience. Be ready with a smile and words of support.

Why should you think of becoming a trustee:

- Giving something back. Becoming a trustee is a fantastic way to give something back to a cause you care about or feel that it is important to the community you live or work in.
- Professional skills, bring your skills but enhance them outside your normal business remit.
- Improve your CV and enhance your professional development
- Meeting new people.

For more information on Headway North Staffordshire see their website [here](#).

Benefits Of Being a Trustee

Learning new skills such as decision making, negotiation and influencing, thinking strategically, managing relationships and partnerships



Opportunities to go beyond what you do in your day job and home life

Building your understanding of the challenges and experiences that others face



It is good for your wellbeing – volunteering can boost your health, help you manage stress, combat depression and grow your confidence

Benefits Of Being a Trustee

It can be a great springboard to a non-executive directorship (other kinds of board positions) if that's something you want to explore further down the line.



You can make a significant difference to a cause that matters to you, as you may want to get involved with a cause or issue that you're passionate about.



The benefits of an experiential learning environment – by learning on the job, you get access to a unique training experience while giving something back



You'll be addressing a real need in the community as finding trustees can often be a tough challenge.



Benefits Of Being a Trustee

96%

of trustees say they learned new skills

86%

say it's a good compliment to professional and family life

22%

got a promotion as a direct result

73%

say being a trustee boosted their confidence

38%

had new leadership aspirations as a result

84%

say being a trustee made them happier

“Being a trustee of a charity is a privilege and an honour. I love having a seat at the table discussing and agreeing how to take Girlguiding Staffordshire forward. Focusing on the staying true to the charity purpose and intent, ensuring the funds are available to make take the plans forward, discussing conflicts of interest and ensuring we safeguard the charity both now and for the future. This role has given me exposure into senior strategic conversations which have been pivotal in my growth within my career. I would say to anyone thinking of it - do it! it's so rewarding to give back to a charity whilst gaining valuable skills that can enable your personal growth too.”



Dyanne Sargeant,
Girlguiding
Staffordshire Trustee.
Programme Director
within HMRC.

Six Essential Duties Of a Trustee

Charity law gives trustees a legal responsibility for a given charity. To support this trustees also have specific duties. These are set out by the Charity Commission and show how trustees should govern their charity and conduct themselves. The following six legal duties are taken from the Charity Commission's core guidance: [The Essential Trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do.](#)



How To Become a Trustee

If you'd like to kick start your journey to becoming a Trustee, or have any questions at all, we'd recommend getting in touch with our fantastic volunteering team at VAST. You can contact them over email volunteering@vast.org.uk or telephone 01782 683030

Our dedicated volunteering team will support you through the whole journey of becoming a Trustee through a simple eight stage process, shown on the next page.

We can also help you find useful resources and reading to support you in your role as a new Trustee.

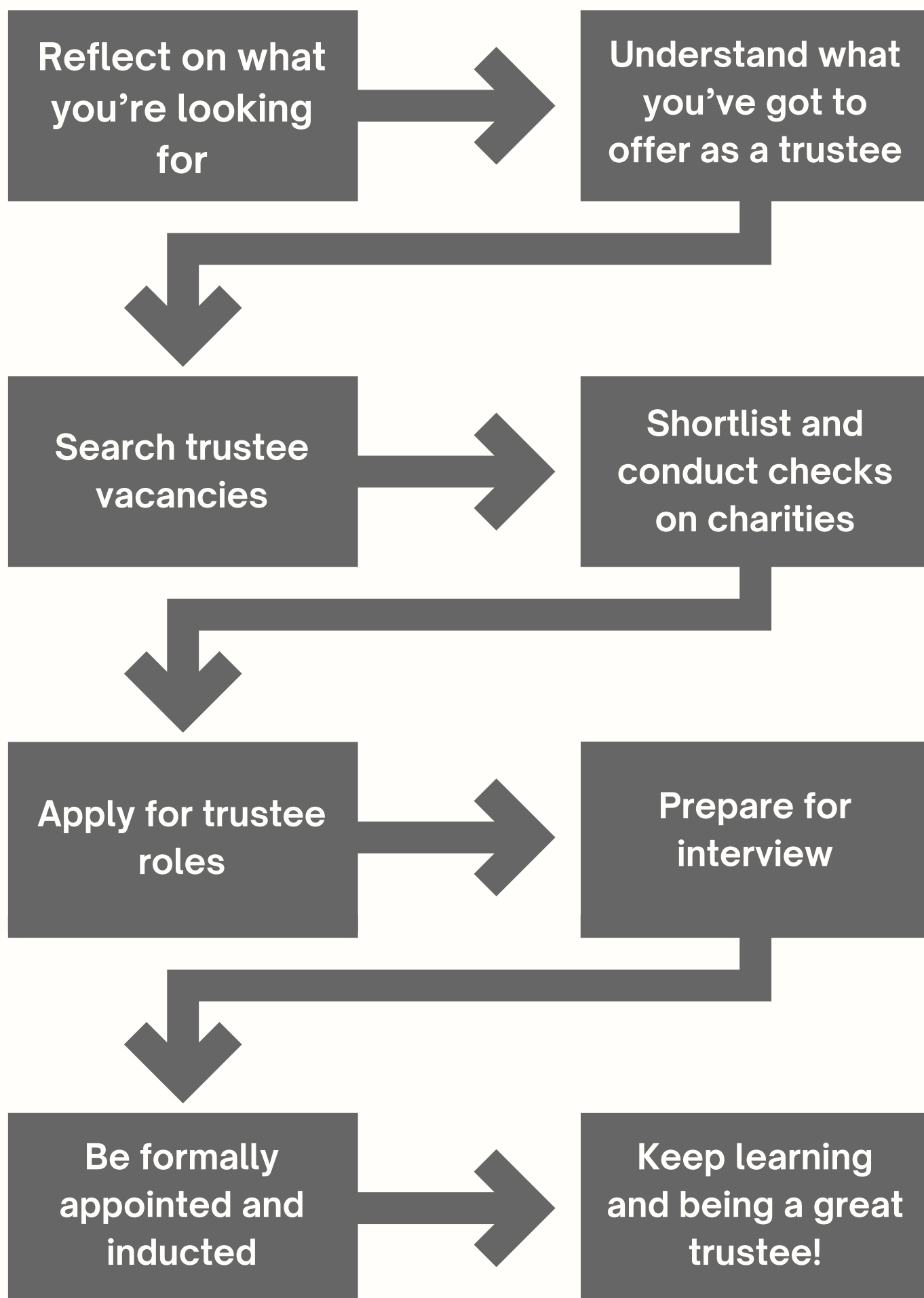


On the final two pages of this document, you can see just a few of the many organisations currently looking for Trustees.

If none of the below interest you, don't discount becoming a Trustee. Our staff will work with you to identify an organisation looking for Trustees that fits your interests, skills and any other requirements that you may have.

We are firm believers that there is a role out there for everyone!

How To Become a Trustee



What Trustee Vacancies Are There?



Our mission is to protect and conserve the collection in perpetuity and to educate and inspire visitors. We welcome the range of visitors – international and domestic – as well as forging links with the local community and with artists, designers and makers.

Since 2005, Asha has helped men, women and children seek refuge from persecution. We actively promote social inclusion for asylum seekers and refugees. Each year, we help more than 900 people from almost 50 different countries.



Asha
North Staffordshire
Social inclusion for Asylum Seekers & Refugees



Staffordshire
Sexual
Health
Charity

Our mission is to provide support, advice and education to everyone around sexuality, gender, HIV and sexual wellbeing within Staffordshire, to enable a greater understanding and acceptance of everyone's differences.

Your Emotional Support Service (YESS) is a mental health and well-being charity. Our fabulous group of counsellors and well-being practitioners provide emotional support and opportunities for people of all ages; children, young people and adults.



Your Emotional
Support Service

dDeaflinks are committed to actively supporting the equal opportunities of all dDeaf people in employment, training, services, information, and education. Providing vital services for the dDeaf community, giving them a voice, empowering independent living, breaking down barriers and improving access to services.



dDeaflinks Staffordshire
Supporting local Deaf people since 1868

What Trustee Vacancies Are There?



Savana provides free counselling and support services within Stoke on Trent for anyone who has been affected by sexual violence and abuse from the age of 4 upwards. Our vision is a world free from Sexual Violence and abuse.

Established in 1985, Headway North Staffordshire is a leading centre for the rehabilitation and support of people who have survived a brain injury.

We achieve this by providing access to physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, life skills and counselling.



Whispers of Hope are a small charity based in Stoke on Trent who support women who are victims of domestic abuse or sexual trafficking who have no recourse to public funds. We provide a safe house, subsistence for the women in the house, a weekly health and wellbeing session in the community, befriending, advocacy and crisis support as needed.



Our mission is to build inclusive communities where everyone has a sense of belonging and a place in society. Our focus is to provide people-led safe places and spaces in Staffordshire, where vulnerable adults and children can connect, inspire, and thrive.



The Barracks Trust is a charity providing local businesses & charities with affordable rental units at The Barracks Workshops building. We ensure the conservation of the Barracks for present and future generations; and support local communities through grant-aiding local voluntary and community groups.