



The Awareness and Effectiveness of Charity Trustees in Grant-making in England and Wales

Research and analysis of grant-making foundation trustees' perceptions of their role and responsibilities as trustees.

Prepared for the Association of Charitable Foundations

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21 June 2018







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Introduction

Despite recent attempts to study trusteeship, the actual level of trustees' awareness of their responsibilities and competencies remains a matter of conjecture. This impacts negatively on the ability of policy makers and others to respond effectively with programmes designed to promote greater awareness and understanding of the role and responsibilities of trustees moving forward.

Charity trustees are under scrutiny as never before. Public failings associated with the demise of Kids Company, concerns regarding the governance of fundraising in larger charities, enhanced critical media attention have each contributed to a reported decline in trust and confidence in charities amongst the general public in the past 24 months.

Whilst trustees operating within grant-making foundations have not been the principle source of contemporary concerns regarding charity governance, the assets over which they have control and the growing level of expenditure that they contribute to civil society (estimated at £6.5 billion in 2016) are material in natureⁱⁱⁱ. Together, the combined net assets of the top 300 grant-making foundations are estimated at £60 billion; with private, personal and family philanthropy accounting for 64% of this sum.^{iv}

The role and activities of trustees within grant-making foundations is also coloured by the distinctive contribution that these institutions make within the broader voluntary sector.

The Distinctive Role of Grant-making Foundations

They derive income almost entirely from private, philanthropic sources (including endowments)

They devote 50% or more of their charitable spending to making grants

They are principally grant-making rather than operating or providing direct services

They are not set up to support a single institution/beneficiary or cause

Source: Giving Trends 2017. Association of Charitable Foundations.

In the light of this, this research seeks to establish greater understanding of the characteristics of contemporary trustees operating within grant-making foundations in England and Wales and their awareness (or otherwise) of their responsibilities and duties.

Initial analysis was conducted of the complete data set of the register of trustee roles maintained by the Charity Commission (circa 850,000 individual roles), from which a random stratified sample of trustees (19,064) was extracted to provide more detailed analysis via a national survey of trustees carried out in January 2017.

This initial work was enabled and supported by grant aid received from the Office for Civil Society, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and from the Worshipful Company of Management Consultants. The work was overseen by a consortium with membership

drawn from the organisations listed above and from the Charity Commission, the Cranfield Trust and from Cass Business School's Centre for Charity Effectiveness.

From this initial research base a further extraction from the total data set established a stratified sample of respondents that had self-selected to identify themselves as trustees situated within a grant-making foundation (5% of total sample frame). Analysis of this sub data set indicates that it mirrors both the broader stratification achieved across the full research sample and the relative size of grant making foundations identified by other empirical studies (i.e. 10% above £1m pa.; 20% £100K-£500K pa.; 70% below £100K pa.)^v.

The Characteristics of Trustees in Grant-making Foundations

In 80% of the total number of charities nationally, trustees play both a governance role and an executive role – they have no staff or other volunteers from whom they can seek support. They are very small charities both in size and in the resources they acquire and distribute on an annual basis.

Trustees from grant-making foundations mirror these wider results. Over two thirds (67%) are located in organisations with an annual income of £100K or less. Just three percent responded from organisations with an annual turnover in excess of £5million pa. As in the broader study, the vast majority of trustees reporting operate in organisations that are very small and that are without any form of senior staff function (72%).

Table 1	Organisational Size by Turnover	Response
Less than £	£10,000	29%
£10,001-£10	00,000	38%
£100,001-£	500,000	20%
£500,001-£	5 million	10%
Over £5 mil	llion	3%

Male trustees outnumber women 2 to 1. Foundation trustees are drawn from a narrow cross section of the communities that they serve. The vast majority are white British, older and above average income and education.

Nearly sixty percent (58%) are over 64 years of age. Only 40% of trustees in foundations report that they are appointed for a fixed term and they remain shy in disclosing the length of their current service (61% not responding).

These research findings demonstrate that trustees within grant-making foundations are more narrowly drawn from society than their counterparts in the charitable sector as a whole. There is then, clearly a need to promote greater diversity within charity trustee boards generally and specifically within grant-making foundation trustee boards. The findings contained in table 2 below reinforce this point.

Table 2 The Characteristic Features of Foundation Trustees				
Characteristic	ristic Foundations All Trustees			
Gender	Male 68% Female 32%	Male 64% Female 36%		
Ethnicity	White 99%	White 92%		
75+ 75-64 55-64 45-54 35-44 25-34 19-24	27% 31% 27% 12% 0% 3% 0%	12% 37% 27% 15% 6% 2% 1%		
Employment Retired Full/Part time	60% 37%	51% 44%		
Education Postgraduate Qual. Professional Qual.	21% 63%	30% 60%		
Household Income	74% above median	75% above median		

Trustee Recruitment and Sources of Advice

As the results reported in table 3 indicate, trustees in grant-making foundations are motivated to take up the role for predominately selfless reasons, alongside a clear recognition that their appointment represents a positive skills benefit for the charity of choice.

Table 3	Top Reasons for Becoming a Trustee	
Personal inter	rest in the aims of the charity	50%
Had the skills	the charity required	43%
Wanted to giv	ve something back	42%
The charity cl	early helps people in need	40%
The charity he	elps to protect our heritage	10%
Other		13%

Not surprising, given the size of the organisations from which the majority of grant-making trustees are drawn, nearly three quarters of trustees report the recruitment process they participated in to be informal in nature (73%).

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Recruitment	Foundations	All Trustees
Formal	19%	23%
Informal	73%	71%
Not sure	8%	6%

Job Description	Job Description Foundations All Trustees	
Yes	23%	35%
No	66%	59%
Not sure	9%	6%

Allied to this, two thirds report the lack of any job description outlining their role as a trustee and the vast majority of the sources of recruitment for new recruits to the board appear to be highly informal and lacking rigorous recruitment procedures and practices.

Table 4	Source of Recruitment	
Asked info	mally by the Chair	37%
Nominated	elected by organisation members	28%
Asked info	Asked informally by another board member 26	
Formal induction process		10%
Responded	to an advert	4%
Asked by s	taff member	3%
Other		18%

Whilst the procedures and practices surrounding trustee recruitment are largely informal, this does not mean that trustees do not feel supported in their introduction to their role as a trustee in grant-making foundations. Two thirds report receiving guidance and support about their role as a trustee at point of recruitment.

Non-the-less the demographic characteristics of trustees in grant-making foundations reported above, coupled with the informal nature of the recruitment process followed, establishes a danger that trustee boards to which they belong (foundation boards and otherwise) might become myopic in their views and in their decision-making. Trustees might be regarded as overly reliant upon fellow trustees for both the recruitment of new trustees and for their principal sources of advice and support.

The Operation of the Board

There is a significant variation in the manner in which grant-making foundation boards as opposed to other types of charity board organise themselves. In the former, board size appears smaller, not least the percentage reporting board size of just three or fewer members; whilst the majority (52%) of respondents report their board to comprise between 4 – 7 members.

Table 5 Board Size	Foundations	All Trustees
3 or less people	20%	10%
4 – 7 people	52%	48%
8 – 10 people	13%	25%
11 – 15 people	12%	13%
16 or more people	2%	4%

As the results displayed below demonstrate, more widely, charity boards have a clear tendency to meet more regularly than those focused on the grant-making specialism. This is not surprising given the more ordered environment operating within a grant making institution where application, review and evaluation of programmes operates to an institutionalised process of operational programming.

Table 6 Meetings Per Year	Foundations	All Trustees
1	10%	5%
2	36%	7%
3	10%	10%
4	39%	31%
More 4	13%	47%

Given the lack of response to questions pertaining to length of service on the board and the fact that 40% of respondents have no established time limit to their period of office as a trustee, it is not surprising that the results reported for length of service reflect particularly long time periods for trustees operating in grant-making foundations.

Table 7 Length of Board Membership					
How long have you been a member of the board?	Foundation Trustees	All Trustees			
1 year	10%	17%			
2 years	10%	11%			
3 years	5%	10%			
4 years	5%	9%			
5 or more years	70%	53%			

Whilst these results suggest that both type of trustee board would benefit from time limited, fixed term periods of office for trustees, over 70% of trustees operating in foundation boards have held office for longer than 5 years.

Potential Barriers to Trustee Recruitment

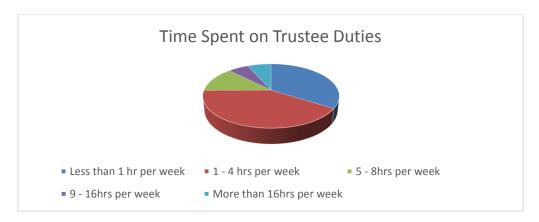
Legal Obligations

The perceived risk of personal liability is often cited as a barrier to trusteeship. This is linked to the perception of increasing regulation and legal complexity in the role. The findings in this research indicate that this is not a barrier in recruiting trustees within the grant-making environment.

In these research findings 90% of trustees operating in grant-making foundations reported that they were very or fairly confident that they understand their legal responsibilities (37% were very confident). This represents greater confidence in their legal understanding of their role than found more broadly amongst all charity trustees.

Lack of Time

Lack of time has also been cited as a key barrier to people becoming trustee^{vii} but this does not appear to be an issue in the responses achieved in the research. Some 77% of grant-making foundation trustees said they spend up to 4 hours a week on trusteeship; nearly 35% said they spend less than 1 hour a week on their duties. By contrast, research into formal volunteering delivers a mean time spent by volunteers as 11.6 hours per week^{viii}. Analysis correlating time spent on trustee duties with the personal value trustees achieve from their role as trustees, shows that most trustees find their personal experience as a trustee rewarding (overall 91% indicate very rewarding or rewarding).



Promoting Greater Diversity amongst Trustee Boards

Academics, practitioners within the voluntary sector itself and more recently politicians, have all promoted the benefits of maximising diversity on trustee boards. Harris (2014) finds that both board diversity and board expertise are positively correlated with better performing non-profit organisations^{ix}. Base & Bernstein (2016) find that greater board diversity impacts positively on the effectiveness of board behaviour^x.

The recently published (July 2017) voluntary sector 'Good Governance' code of practice provides a complete section of the code to the promotion of greater diversity within charity boards, contending that "the board is more effective if it includes a variety of perspectives, experiences and skills."

The House of Lords Select Committee Report on charities published in March 2017 found that, "trustee diversity is important, as boards with a range of skills, experiences, ages and backgrounds are likely to lead to better governance.xii

The research findings presented here therefore raise significant concern about the breadth and the range of diversity currently present within grant-making foundation boards. The ethnic composition of boards, as reported by trustees in this research, is completely dominated by white representatives (99%). Men outnumber women by two to one. Sources utilised to find new trustees are predominately informal and focused upon the existing networks and contacts already known to current board members and to the Chair. In the majority of cases recruitment processes and practices remain informal and there is a lack of formalised process associated with trustee induction (occurring in just 10% of cases). A very large proportion of the total number of grant-making trustees reporting in this research are older in years, 58% above or at the age of retirement. Less than a quarter of respondents have a job description associated with their role as a trustee and 70% have been in office for 5 or more years (53% for full sample frame).

The immediate picture that might be drawn from these research findings is then one of a largely narrow, unrepresentative, closed, self-supporting and reinforcing community of trustees.

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However, care must be taken when drawing obvious conclusions from this analysis, not least due to the distinctive nature of the source of many trustee positions established in the grant-making sub sector of the broader charity sector.

The vast majority of trustees reporting (70%) operate within grant-making trusts with an annual income below £100K. Many of the boards within which they operate are smaller by comparison with the sector as a whole (72% with seven or fewer members, 20% with three or fewer members) and the boards meet with less frequency (56% three or less times per year.) Seventy two percent (72%) of respondents indicate that it is the trustees alone who both govern and manage the charity on a voluntary basis.

More important, a significant source of grant-making endeavour emanates from personal and/or family initiatives (estimated at 64% of total activity^{xiii}). A balance must therefore be drawn between the positive virtues associated with greater board diversity and the recognition that more often than not these organisations are small in their internal capacities and organisational resources; they rely completely (or almost completely) upon voluntary endeavour and they are matching limited resources to identified needs involving relatively low levels of risk (by comparison with charities in the top quartile for annual income).

Whilst it is rightly the case that trustees in grant-making foundations are held accountable for the public benefit associated with their outcomes and impact, it should not be forgotten that the principal source and continuing spirit within which much of this philanthropic endeavour is maintained is often highly personal, private and family based.

Understanding of Trustee Legal Responsibilities

Previous research had indicated that as many as a third of charity trustees were not aware of their position or legal responsibilities as a trustee.xiv Conversely the majority of charity trustees responding in the full sample of this research recognise both their standing as trustees (79%) and, in general, their legal obligations when acting as trustees (82%).

Trustees in grant-making foundations offer an even more resounding response to these two questions. Ninety percent report that they are clear that they operate as a trustee in their charity and 91% indicate that they are aware of their legal responsibilities as part of their fulfilment of the trustee role (52% fully aware.)

Trustees in grant-making foundations were asked a series of questions relating to their collective legal responsibilities as trustees. The results report very high levels of expressed confidence in raising potential conflicts of interest (96%) at the board and in addressing practices not conducive to the objects of the charity (98%). Similarly, their confidence in the measures implemented to protect the charity in the light of fraud offers reassurance (77%), as does the high correct return that they remain collectively responsible for all decisions of the board (80%). However, trustees appear less assured about their collective responsibility for decisions that they have not participated in, with a third of respondents (33%) getting the answer wrong and a further 9% offering no view.

Overall though, trustees in grant-making foundations offer excellent grounds for confidence in their legal competence as trustees.

Table 8 Joint Legal Responsibilities of Trustees				
Issue	Yes	No	Not sure	
Raise inappropriate practices at board	98%	2%	1%	
Raise conflicts of interests at board	96%	2%	2%	
I am legally responsible for all board decisions	80%	8%	12%	
Confidence in measures to protect fraud	77%	7%	16%	
I am only responsible for the decisions I participate in	33%	56%	11%	
Overall confidence in legal responsibilities	Very confident 37%	Fairly confident 53%	Neutral 9%	

Skills and Competences Represented at the Board

The results presented in table 9 demonstrate that trustees in grant-making foundations are more confident than their equivalents in the wider charity sector that they have the right level of competence and skill at board level.

Financial and accounting skills are particularly prominent, although by comparison legal skills and those associated with the avoidance of fraud are less well developed. In all instances within this section of responses, grant-making foundation trustees are more confident than their counterparts in the wider charity sector that they have sufficient levels of skill at board level.

Core service delivery skills are also well represented by trustees of grant-making trusts in these results, not least the assurance that the needs of clients and beneficiaries are being met through high levels of expertise in service delivery. Safeguarding skills appear less well developed and might be considered appropriate for further development - not least as 26% of respondents from grant-making foundations regards these competences as not applicable to them at the current time.

Table 9		Skills & Competences Represented at the Board				
	Sufficient skills	Mainly sufficient	Moderate	Few	Severely lacking	N/A
Regulatory & Compliance Skills						
Legal	36% 26%	31% 24%	14% 25%	11% 16%	<mark>2%</mark> 4%	<mark>6% 4</mark> %
Financial/Accounting	70% 55%	22% 26%	6% 14%	0% 3%	0% 1%	3% 1%
Governance	51% 40%	32% 35%	<mark>8%</mark> 16%	<mark>2%</mark> 4%	0% 0%	<mark>8%</mark> 5%
Detecting & Avoiding fraud	30% 24%	39% 32%	16% 25%	<mark>7%</mark> 11%	<mark>2%</mark> 3%	<mark>6%</mark> 5%
Service Delivery Skills						
Expertise in service delivery	53% 57%	32% 28%	<mark>4%</mark> 10%	<mark>1%</mark> 1%	0% 0%	11% 4%
Needs of clients/beneficiaries	55% 49%	29% 32%	<mark>5%</mark> 10%	<mark>2%</mark> 1%	0% 0%	9% 8%
Volunteer management	19% 27%	23% 34%	<mark>8%</mark> 18%	<mark>0%</mark> 4%	0% 1%	50% 169
Safeguarding skills	32% 42%	27% 29%	12% 14%	<mark>3%</mark> 4%	0% 0%	<mark>26%</mark> 11%
Functional Skills						
Strategic Planning	44% 40%	32% 32%	11% 20%	<mark>3%</mark> 3%	0% 0%	9% 5%
People/HR skills	28% 30%	30% 35%	13% 19%	<mark>2%</mark> 5%	<mark>0%</mark> 1%	27% 10%
Fundraising	26% 26%	19% 28%	7% 24%	4% 9%	0% 2%	44% 119
Marketing	18% 15%	17% 26%	18% 27%	4% 12%	<mark>2%</mark> 3%	42% 179
Campaigning	13% 14%	17% 24%	13% 23%	<mark>3%</mark> 12%	1% 2%	53% 25%
Digital/On line	22% 21%	27% 32%	26% 27%	<mark>6%</mark> 10%	0% 2%	18% 89
Trading/Commercial skills	27% 18%	20% 24%	<mark>8%</mark> 21%	<mark>2%</mark> 10%	<mark>1%</mark> 2%	42% 25%
	*Grant-maki	ng founda	tion truste		* A1	l trustees

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Perceptions of skill competence levels in core functional skills appear more evenly spread. Given the grant-making focus maintained by foundations it is not surprising that marketing, fundraising, campaigning and trading skills are not so highly represented. The ability to communicate more effectively with a range of different stakeholder communities (including funding partners, regulators and beneficiaries) has been shown to enhance non-profit effectiveness. The capacity to develop more effective communications through the development of marketing and campaigning competences might be addressed through development opportunities moving forward.

Whilst similarly underdeveloped across all charities, trustees in grant-making foundations also appear slow to embrace the possibilities afforded by digital and online technology. Here again umbrella bodies might fashion appropriate development opportunities for trustees moving forward.

John Kingston, a past Chair of the Association of Charitable Foundations, noted that the distinctive nature of grant-making foundations often affords them greater certainty in medium to longer term financial security^{xv}. In turn, this has contributed to higher standards and competencies with regard to strategic planning, financial planning and investment management by trustees operating within grant-making foundations.

These research findings support this assertion. Perceptions of competence amongst grant-making foundation trustees in strategic planning, finance and accountancy are significantly higher than those recorded for the broader data set and are the highest compared to each of the other data sub sets studied in the research.

Sources of Information & Advice

Trustees most value the advice and support is that gained from their fellow trustees – for trustees in grant-making foundations this is marginally more important than for trustees as a whole. Similarly, information provided via the Charity Commission website and through the Commission's publications are significant sources of information and guidance to both sets of trustees.

Table 10

Sources of Advice & Support to Trustees

	Vanue Oudea Madametale National Notice					A1/A
	Very	Quite	Moderately	Not very	Not at all	N/A
	important	important	important	important	important	
	source	source	source	source	source	
Internal Sources of Advice						
Fellow board members	39% 37%	37% 36%	15% 17%	4% 5%	0% 1%	5% 4%
Chair of the organisation	26% 30%	23% 28%	14% 16%	5% 6%	1% 1%	30% 19%
CEO of the organisation	12% 19%	<mark>8%</mark> 16%	6% 8%	2% 3%	0% 1%	72% 52%
The organisation's website	5% 10%	7% 16%	9% 18%	8% 11%	7% 9%	63% 37%
Our parent charity/National HQ	5% 10%	5% 12%	6% 9%	3% 5%	2% 3%	79% 62%
Internal publications/guidance	5% 9%	10% 18%	14% 18%	6% 8%	2% 4%	63% 43%
Internal training courses	1% 7%	<mark>8%</mark> 15%	9% 15%	7% 9%	4% 5%	72% 50%
External Sources of Advice						
Charity Commission website	44% 42%	25% 29%	16% 18%	6% 7%	3% 1%	<mark>6%</mark> 3%
Charity Commission publications	34% 29%	30% 30%	17% 22%	7 % 9%	3% 4%	9% 6%
Professional advisors	26% 20%	25% 24%	17% 18%	5% 8%	<mark>2%</mark> 4%	26% 26%
Professional bodies	<mark>8%</mark> 15%	27% 24%	15% 18%	6% 10%	3% 4%	41% 29%
Voluntary Sector Advice bodies	6% 13%	12% 21%	15% 20%	10% 11%	4% 7%	52% 28%
External training and events	5% 13%	13% 28%	16% 25%	9% 9%	5% 3%	52% 22%
External publications/guidance	11% 9%	<mark>22%</mark> 19%	<mark>21%</mark> 20%	8% 11%	2% 5%	36% 36%

^{*} Grant-making foundation trustees

*All trustees

Interestingly, for trustees within grant-making foundations, professional advisers are recognised as an important source of information and guidance, more so than for trustees as a whole. It is possible that this finding reflects the central significance of investment management to the effectiveness of grant-making foundations' performance and the pivotal role that investment advisors play in this process.

Clearly, apart from their fellow board members, trustees from grant-making foundations look primarily to external sources for advice and support and most important amongst these are the services currently offered by the Charity Commission.

The relatively small size of the organisations within which a majority of these trustees operate - their lack of material and people resources, makes it inevitable that the generation of internal advice and support will be significantly curtailed other than from the informal advice provided by fellow board members. In turn, an over reliance on other board members for advice and support might well exaggerate the narrowness of the sources of new or alternate approaches to governance and management introduced at board level, impairing the quality of discussion, debate and decision-making that is associated with more diverse boards.

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Table 11 Sources of Advice and Support to Grant-making Foundation Trustees							
Most Important Sources of Advice	Impt.	Least Important Sources of Advice	N/A				
Fellow board members	76%	Chief Executive Officer	72%				
Charity Commission Web Site	69%	Internal Training Programmes	72%				
Charity Commission Publications	64%	Organisation's Web Site	63%				
Professional Advisors	51%	Internal Publications	63%				
Chair of Trustees	49%	Voluntary Sector Advice Bodies	52%				

For trustees operating within grant-making foundations access to relevant digital and online skills was found to be significantly lower than for other core skills. Nearly a fifth of grant-making trustees (18%) regard digital and online skills as not applicable to their charity board. It is not surprising then that this finding is reinforced by a lack of use of a website to impart information and advice. It would appear that for the majority of grant-making trustees responding in this research, digital communication and the enhanced targeting of key stakeholder groups that it affords (through the web and otherwise) has not been fully adopted. There is scope here for further follow up work to impart the benefits of digital communications to grant-making trustees, particularly those operating in smaller grant making trusts.

Similarly, despite the fact that voluntary sector umbrella organisations such as the Association of Charitable Foundations have produced an excellent range of professional practice guides designed specifically to help trustees and staff to meet the challenges associated with their role, current perceptions of these organisations as important sources of advice and support remain low.xvi

Again there are opportunities here for these organisations to reengage, particularly with smaller grant-making foundations, to offer the advice and guidance that they cannot provide to their trustees themselves. Strategic alliance to this effect with the Charity Commission might prove particularly beneficial to all parties concerned. As Jenkins (2012) notes, "Tailored relevant information...... and strengthened peer networks would support more confident and creative governance and financial management.xviii "

Conclusions

The vast majority of trustees from grant-making foundations responding to this research are extremely positive about the role that they perform as trustees, its importance to society and the personal reward and satisfaction that they gain from being a charity trustee. Ninety two percent (92%) found their role as a trustee in a grant-making foundation to be rewarding, forty percent (40%) found it to be very rewarding.

Trustees in grant-making foundations remain confident about their competence to embrace their legal responsibilities as trustees and this confidence is largely borne out by the results designed to test their legal competence contained in this research.

They recognise the central importance of financial, legal, investment and strategic planning expertise to the distinctive nature of their trustee role, operating as they do within a grant-making environment. They appear less assured in competences associated with marketing, campaigning and digital communications. They clearly gain their principle source of advice, guidance and support from their fellow trustees.

Whilst their perceptions of themselves, their fellow trustees and the importance of the role that they play is broadly positive, some of the characteristics of trustees represented here are perhaps a little disconcerting.

Trustees sited within grant-making foundations appear to be drawn from a very narrow cross section of society, narrower even than those forming the broader sample of trustees analysed in the larger study. Men and white trustees dominate, alongside those drawn from older, more affluent sections of society. Little appears to be happening to address these issues through the recruitment processes widely adopted to find and secure new trustees. The fact that these trustees look largely to themselves for recruitment support and more generally for advice guidance and support, will do little to promote greater diversity amongst new trustees coming forward.

Taking each of the above points into consideration, we conclude that charity trustees should be further supported to actively embrace the introduction of different people, new ideas, skills and experience to trustee boards, and to target the recruitment of trustees from more diverse sections of society.

This might be achieved through implementation of both a national campaign to further promote the benefits of charity trusteeship, and through more targeted campaigns focused sub sector by sub sector to promote the worth of charity trusteeship and the benefits it delivers to clients and beneficiaries, to society at large and to those who act as trustees themselves.

Any such drive toward greater diversity in trustee boards in grant-making foundations will want to take account of the very small size of many of these institutions. It is within such institutions that the vast majority of grant-making trustees reside.

In the context of the grant-making foundation environment, any campaign promoting greater board diversity will need to temper its approach in the light of the importance of the highly

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personal sources of the assets of many of these charities; the often private nature of the philanthropy that they support and the family based governance that lies at the heart of many of these institutions. Foundation trustee boards often remain smaller than their mainstream counterparts, they meet less frequently and their area of benefit and activity is more closely prescribed.

We also conclude that the Charity Commission and the Office for Civil Society, the Association of Charitable Foundations along with other key stakeholders in the charity sector, should review and enhance their advice, support and communications to reflect and draw upon developments in digital technology.

The latter body, the Association of Charitable Foundations, already provides a suite of excellent publications designed to support trustees in grant-making foundations. Despite this, the perceptual response of trustees in this research to initiatives from voluntary sector umbrella bodies was poor by comparison to other sources of information and advice. This offers a clear opportunity for the Association to develop additional product and service offerings to support charity trustees in grant-making trusts, specifically those in smaller organisations that do not have the resource capacity to provide appropriate guidance, support and training themselves.

Strategic and tactical alliances with the Charity Commission and with professional advisors in this respect are likely to enhance the awareness and uptake of any such product or service offerings.

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Cass Business School

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Sir John Cass's Foundation

Sir John Cass's Foundation has supported education in London since the 18th century and takes its name from its founder, Sir John Cass, who established a school in Aldgate in 1710. Born in the City of London in 1661, Sir John served as an MP for the City and was knighted in 1713.







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