

Trustee interview questions

This is a suggested starting point only. Please adapt for your own charity.

Start the interview by introducing:

1. The people who are interviewing the candidate.
2. The structure of the interview, and reassure them that you'd like them to feel that they can ask questions to find out more about the charity and the role of trustee.
3. Your charity (although you will want to know that the candidate has done some homework on your charity, in the interests of diversity do not favour applicants who already know the charity).
4. Your charity's challenges/opportunities and why you are recruiting for trustees with particular skills/knowledge/experiences (for example, we have acquired a new building so we are looking for someone with experience of income generation from room hire, sub-lettings, events).
5. The role of trustee – in the interests of diversity, do not assume that someone should know all about the role of trustee before the interview. Ask if they would like you to tell them more about the role.
6. The process – timeline and stages. Make it clear that you are interviewing potential trustees and that you will be offering the role to those with the closest match to the skills, knowledge and experience you are looking for, i.e. those whose input is likely to benefit the charity most. Candidates should not take rejection personally and shouldn't be put off applying to other charities if they are not successful with yours.

1. Why do you want to be a trustee? What appeals to you about our charity?
2. (Explain what the charity's challenges are) How could your experience help us to tackle any of these challenges?
3. How else could your experience support us? Please can you give examples.
4. What personal or leadership qualities would you bring to the board (for example, diplomacy, ability to see the big picture)?
5. Would you feel comfortable in speaking out when a conflict or tense situation arises? And how would you deal with this? Please give us an example of when this has happened to you.
6. What would your colleagues, friends or family say are your strengths?
7. What is one quality you would like to improve in yourself?
8. What training and/or development would you need?
9. (Explain what the time commitment is) Would your work or other commitments make the meeting times difficult (remember to think about moving meeting times if they are not convenient for the majority of trustees, or if current times are restricting your ability to recruit new trustees)?
10. Do you have any questions for us?