



FROM HERE TO DIVERSITY

A Practical Guide to recruiting Black and Asian charity trustees



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Foundation

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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FOREWORD



The lack of diversity on trustee boards has long been a significant challenge for our sector.

All too often, charities have relied on trustees that are pulled from a small talent pool of candidates to the detriment of diversity in ethnicity, gender, age and lived experience, including from the LGBTQ+ community.

That's why in 2019, the Co-op Foundation made our first steps into tackling this inequality by awarding funding to the Young Trustees Movement to help double the number of trustees aged under 30 by 2024. It's also why last year we were excited to speak to Getting on Board and Action for Trustee Racial Diversity about the work they were doing to increase the number of Black and Asian trustees.

Discussions between our teams were so aligned and so impactful that just weeks later our trustees agreed a £20,500 grant to help develop this Guide and to support other important activities for the campaign.

But why does it matter?

The Co-op Foundation is Co-op's charity. We help people challenge inequality and co-operate for change so they can share a fairer future.

This fairer future can start in communities, it can start in schools, in partnerships or in work. But it can also start in charities where there is a well-documented inequality in leadership. In fact, research shows that only 8% of trustees in UK charities are from Black and Asian backgrounds and fewer than 3% are "women of colour".

We have to overcome this if we want to build a charity sector that is best equipped to tackle inequalities in their own communities. While I'm confident that all trustees volunteer their time to the best of their abilities, all too frequently a Board's overall life experiences can lack the diversity of the communities they are looking to support.

We believe this is where Black and Asian Trustees of all ages can add substantial experience, knowledge and leadership. This Guide is a real step forward to making this happen. It will help charities build their Board diversity while also supporting potential trustee candidates on their journey to trusteeships. We are absolutely delighted to see it come to life today as part of the Action for Trustee Racial Diversity campaign's aim to facilitate 10,000 more Black and Asian trustees by 2026.

Thank you to Malcolm and the team for bringing this together. It will make a difference by helping to build more effective charities who can in turn support and enable stronger communities.

We look forward to working together so the Co-op Foundation can build our learning and continue to improve the diversity of our own Board. We also have work to do, and we're committed to getting better.

Read more about how we're tackling inequality at the Co-op Foundation at www.coopfoundation.org.uk

Jamie Ward Smith
Chair, Co-op Foundation

PREFACE

Malcolm is the Founder of Action for Trustee Racial Diversity

Throughout 2020, the lessons of Covid and the messages and drive instilled by key events including the Black Lives Matter movement and the shocking murder of George Floyd in the USA have served to highlight the significant racial disparities in the UK and bring them to the forefront of the public agenda. Commentators on these globally important events have spoken of them as a moment in time, a catalyst for change.

Whilst we see that an increasing number of charities are taking up the challenge of positive action and anti-racism strategies, for many others awareness and understanding of the gravity of this issue still seems to be sadly lacking. My hope is that these events and the subsequent public reaction have created **momentum** which will cause positive and sustainable change to both the lives of people from Black and Asian backgrounds and to the local and wider communities which charities serve.

The Action for Trustee Racial Diversity (ATRD) campaign launched in 2019, with the central aim of addressing significant under-representation of people from Black and Asian

backgrounds on charity trustee Boards. One of our first activities was to carry out a mapping survey to understand better the barriers and challenges to the lack of racial diversity on charity boards.

Our findings painted a fairly bleak picture. They showed that all too often other organisational priorities take precedence over diversity and that good practice is not being shared widely or known about. It was clear to us that there was an overwhelming need for more access to, and indeed knowledge of, Black and Asian networks. It was also clear from the survey that the barriers to entry were wide and often attributable to lack of knowledge, lack of resources, lack of commitment and resistance to cultural change.

This Guide builds on those findings. It shares the considerable learning gained from this much-needed campaign. It provides practical advice, guidance and support to charities wishing to increase the racial diversity of their trustee Boards. This under-representation has been a long-standing indictment of the state of the sector. This Guide highlights the telling statistics and offers approaches



and solutions for charities genuinely looking to take firm strides towards increasing their diversity. I very much hope that if this Guide is still in wide use in 2026 – five years from the time of writing – ATRD and its supporters will be able to paint a brighter and more optimistic picture of the sector.

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 charity Boards. We hope that you will find this Guide useful and that its visible impact inspires similar efforts on behalf of other groups which are similarly under-represented on trustee Boards, such as people with disabilities.

I'm delighted - in one way - that the profile of the ATRD campaign has grown considerably since my blogs highlighting the racial under-representation on trustee Boards were shared by key organisations working within the sector. However, it's a harsh comment on the sector that this specific and longstanding issue has not to date been addressed in any significant, focused or co-ordinated way. This campaign only began some two years ago, and I'm frequently being asked to sit on "expert" panels. It's been a steep learning curve!

About Action for Trustee Racial Diversity (ATRD)

ATRD is a volunteer-led independent campaign working with cross sector partners to address the under-representation of people from Black and Asian backgrounds on charity trustee Boards.

We aim to support charities to bridge the 6% under-representation gap (from 8% to 14%.) by recruiting an additional 10,000 Black and Asian trustees by 2026. We will achieve this by:

- Producing a practical Guide for charities on how to recruit Black and Asian trustees.
- Developing and making available to charities a unique live database of Black and Asian network organisations across sectors and spanning the UK to address the key issue of charities' lack of access to more diverse networks.
- Raising awareness of the benefits of racially diverse trustee boards and the skills, experience, including lived experience, and different perspectives which trustees from Black and Asian backgrounds would bring.
- Helping to remove the barriers which people from Black and Asian backgrounds face in seeking to become charity trustees.

N.B. The term "BAME" is used in this Guide by many of the Black and Asian Minority Ethnic organisations listed in the ATRD campaign database of Black and Asian network organisations. It is their description of themselves and not a term which this Guide will use otherwise. We will use "Black and Asian" as, in the opinion of ATRD, those groupings primarily cover the ethnic minority groups which this campaign is specifically championing. We understand fully that others will prefer other terms such as "Black and Brown".

We have also included several case studies throughout the Guide. Occasionally terms such as "BAME" are used in the case studies. However it is not the term which ATRD would use.

In that context, language is also clearly a barrier to increasing Board racial diversity. We suggest that the more open and honest Board discussions are around language, the greater will be the awareness and then, hopefully, better mutual understanding. No-one gets it right all the time. Perhaps half the battle is about openly acknowledging that.

"I just wanted to thank you again for your time and expertise.. You gave us some real insight and I feel we had some very useful discussions, both with you and amongst ourselves."

Debbie Gibbon
Telford CVS

Hopefully, in the not too distant future, we'll all be "experts" in understanding and knowing how to tackle racial inequalities in the charity sector. Significantly, at the time of writing, the campaign has been approached by over 70 organisations seeking help to increase the racial diversity of their Boards. This figure increases every week.

We hope that you will find this Guide useful, that it helps to shape and inform your approach for your future trustee vacancies, and achieve a visible impact on the face of trustee boards across the UK.

Malcolm John

Founder
Action for Trustee Racial Diversity

"ATRD is providing a unique, practical and effective way to make positive change in a key sector in our society."

Rod Roman
Trustee
Telford CVS

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INTRODUCTION

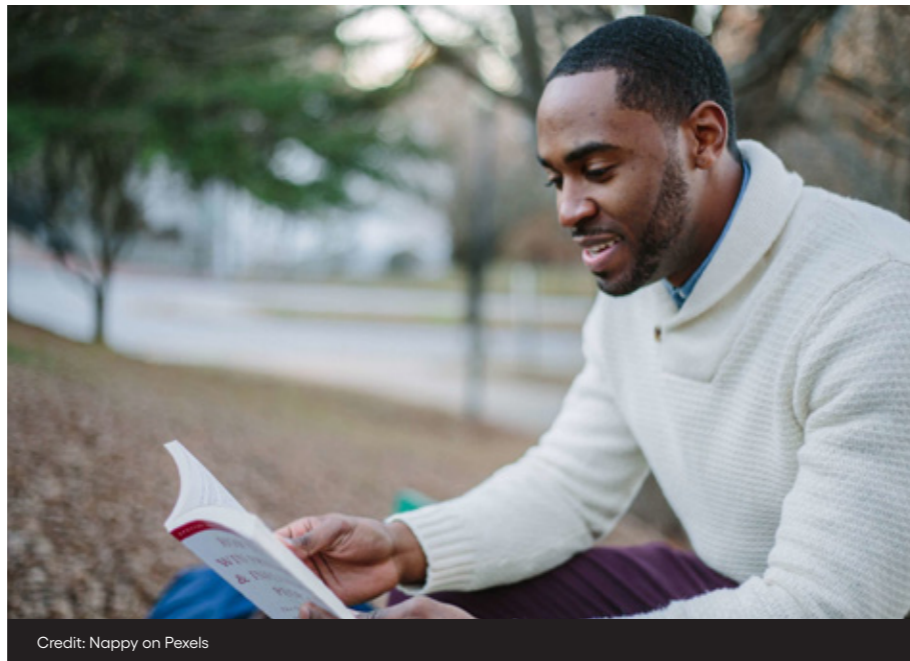


RACIALLY DIVERSE TRUSTEE RECRUITMENT: THE CURRENT LANDSCAPE

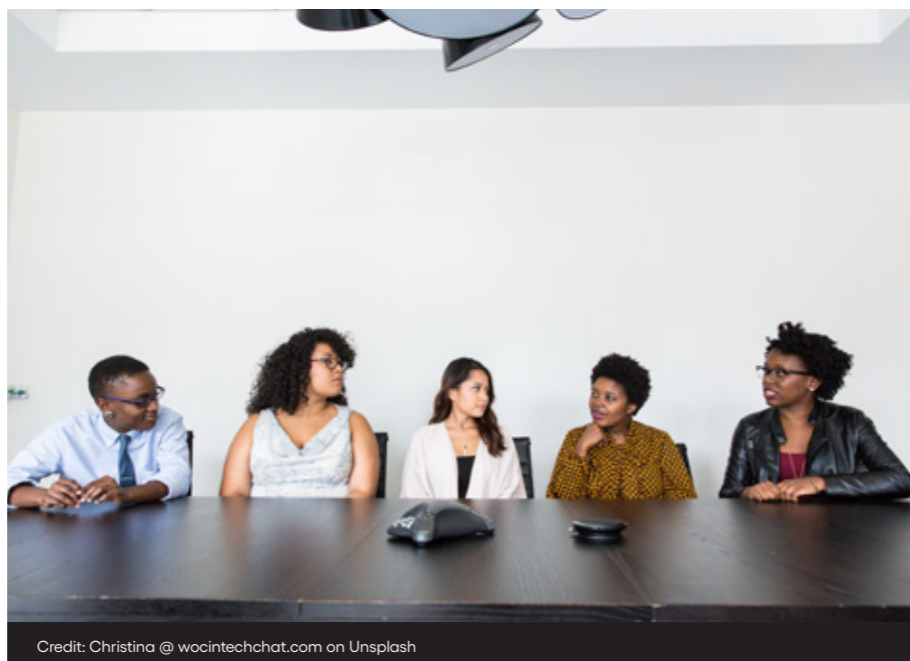
There are astonishingly more than 100,000 trustee vacancies in the UK every year.

Our vision is to bridge the 6% under-representation gap by seeking to facilitate the recruitment of an additional 10,000 Black and Asian trustees by 2026. This would raise the percentage of Black and Asian trustees from 8% to 14% and reach the promised land of proportionate representation. 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.

Too much work to combat inequalities exists in silos. We don't expect this campaign and this Guide to fundamentally change the landscape on its own. We will continue to develop partnerships with key organisations in the charity and other sectors, including trustee recruitment consultancies, to increase our reach, impact and supporter network so that our work might be sustained well beyond the span of the campaign.



Credit: Nappy on Pexels



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THE STARK REALITY

Nearly 3/4 of charities have reported difficulties hiring trustees.

Many want to recruit people with professional skills which will be readily transferable to a trustee role. However, the fact that more than 70% of charities recruit informally, and largely through their existing networks, results in a startling lack of diversity among trustees. This Guide and the wider ATRD campaign both readily acknowledge that diversity embraces a broader range of attributes and characteristics than race alone. We are supportive and understanding of the large number of organisations in the sector which champion and support the broader diversity agenda. However, we are bold enough to suggest that the following figures reinforce our assertion that the issue of racial diversity is where there has been least progress.

8%

of trustees in England and Wales are from Black and Asian background
[Taken on Trust, Charity Commission 2017]

34%

of UK major charities have all white senior leadership (both voluntary and professional)
[Green Park 2017]

2.9%

of trustees in England and Wales are "women of colour" - fewer than 20,000 out of 700,000 trustees
[Inclusive Boards 2018]

only 4

all-BAME boards in England and Wales: 50% fewer than in 2016
[Inclusive Boards 2018]

62%

of the top charities, by income, have all white boards
[Inclusive Boards 2018]

92%

of trustees are white, older, and above average income and education
[Taken on Trust, Charity Commission 2017]

6.6%

the proportion of ethnic minority individuals on large charity boards, representing 418 of a total of 6338 trustees
[Taken on Trust, Charity Commission, 2017]

To put the figures above in context, 14% of the population in England and Wales is from a non-white background. In many areas, this figure is much higher, rising to 36.8% in London. It is clear then that the figures paint a woeful picture of racial under-representation.

DRIVING FORWARD CHANGE

The ATRD campaign champions charities focusing on the skills and experience they truly need on their Board.



Credit: Education and Employers

From there, it aims to give practical advice to help charities target trustee recruitment according to their specific needs. This includes approaches to help them reach out in less traditional ways to attract more racially diverse candidates. The focus on skills and experiences avoids accusations of tokenism. We want to reduce the

extensive scale of informal recruitment by providing smaller charities, particularly, with resources to reach and engage Black and Asian networks effectively and affordably.

This Guide, and the ATRD campaign more broadly, aims to achieve a significant increase in the numbers of

Black and Asian trustees on charity Boards. We intend to do this by providing practical solutions, advice and signposting both for charities seeking to increase the racial diversity of their trustees and for recruitment consultancies acting on behalf of charities.

“As a specialist recruitment agency in the charity space, we know that we need to connect at a deeper and more impactful level with Black, Asian and ethnic minority communities and candidates in order to do our part to tackle racism and representation issues at all levels. Whilst we had started some of this work independently, linking up with Malcolm John and the Action for Trustee Racial Diversity campaign has enabled us to take much greater strides forward in identifying and developing the relationships that help us to reach a much more diverse talent pool. Malcolm is incredibly insightful, helpful and understanding, and our relationship with him and the campaign continues to be central to our growth and our ability to better support the charities we work with.

Amelia Lee, Regional Director, Charity People

CHAPTER 1: OVERCOMING THE BARRIERS TO A MORE RACIALLY DIVERSE BOARD

