

## Trustees' Week 2022

7<sup>th</sup> -11<sup>th</sup> November is Trustees' Week 2022, a time for us to come together to celebrate the achievements of our trusty trustees!

The national theme of this year's celebration is "making a difference in changing times". As our external environment continues to change, we are all facing new challenges. The positive impact made by trustees more valuable now than ever, as the organisations they work so hard to steer and support emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic and face the tough cost of living crisis ahead. The commitment, time and effort given by trustees to help their organisations and the communities they support is truly remarkable. Thank you.

### What are Trustees?

Trustees are the group of people (also called the Board of Trustees) who act in the charity's best interests, set the strategy or plan, make key decisions and oversee the running of a charity. It is not the role of a trustee to carry out the day-to-day activities of the charity. However, if it is a small charity, the trustees may have more than one role, so in addition to being trustees, they may also carry out the day to day operational tasks and deliver services in a volunteer capacity. It's important to ensure these are clear and separate roles which happen to be carried out by the same person.

### Trustees responsibilities

Trustees have a duty to ensure good governance of their organisation. Trustees need to understand what their role does, and does not, include so that trustees can run their organisation well. If each trustee knows and delivers their role well, the organisation will excel at good governance and is likely to be a strong and healthy group.

Our sector is full of amazing groups delivering excellent and much-needed services and projects. Trustees work hard, without payment and good governance is the essential 'glue' that should enable and support your organisation's work and impact and will help make it more resilient to change.

The Charities Act 1993 (S97) defines charity trustees as "the persons having the general control and management of the administration of a charity".

- Charity law clearly defines trustees as the people with control. This means that trustees are legally responsible for the charity, its assets (money, equipment, building and any other resources) its actions and decisions
- Ultimate responsibility and ultimate authority lies collectively with the board of trustees. Trustees can delegate tasks (e.g. preparing the accounts), to a staff member or to a volunteer but the responsibility stays with the trustees. This is the case even if a charity is not registered.
- If the charity is incorporated and trustees have acted legally and responsibly, then individual trustees are not at risk. Trustees are an accountable group and should not act or tackle decisions as individuals working alone
- In smaller organisations which do not have paid staff, the charity trustees are likely to be the same people carrying out the day to day work. It is important

that trustees are able to separate operational and service delivery activities from their trustee role.

**Capacity Building and trustees**

Helping groups better understand the role of and supporting Trustees is part of our capacity building support at Sobus. If you would like a 1-2-1 discussion with us about strengthening or developing the skills and governance of your organisation and supporting your trustees, please get in touch.