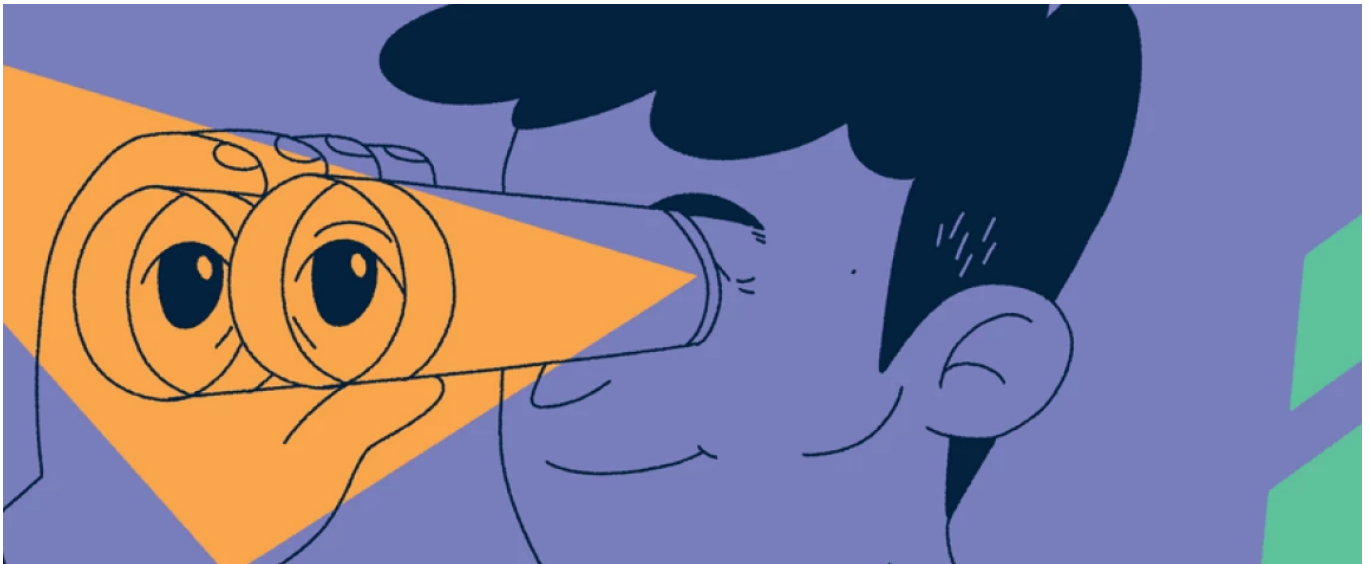


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Are you looking to find experienced trustees for your MAT?

15 November 2023 | 4 minute read



Governors for Schools recently launched a Trustee Recruitment Service to support academy trusts of all sizes and phases across England





The service focuses on identifying experienced leaders from the corporate, charity or third sectors who're seeking to offer their time on a voluntary basis to sit on trust boards. Individuals whose skills, knowledge and governance experience can help to ensure accountability and scrutiny.

We caught up with **David Ardill**, Head of Trustee Recruitment, to learn more about the offer and to hear from trusts who've successfully used the service.

Firstly David, how do you go about finding qualified or experienced volunteers?

We use a number of tools to help identify volunteers who have the skills required by trusts. First and foremost, we have a strong and engaged network of individuals who have already expressed an interest in roles – they may be looking to start their education governance journey or may have been a governor or local academy governing board member previously and are looking to progress their involvement. We also work with a number of corporate partners who're supporting their senior leaders and experienced staff to find volunteer roles – both as an opportunity to 'give back' for social responsibility purposes, but also for career progression, CPD and/or future planning, including helping support those individuals preparing for retirement.

We also use 'sharp tools' such as headhunting to target specific challenges or areas of great need and we work with a number of external networks and partners to promote our roles to their networks of members.

Our volunteers typically possess extensive senior/strategic leadership experience, exposure to significant budgetary responsibility and multi-site working; many will also possess industry credentials such as chartered accountancy or legal qualifications. All of the volunteers we work with and identify for trust board roles have been screened and assessed for suitability and eligibility, including an in-depth assessment with our expert adviser to understand their motivations, ethos and interests behind their decision to get involved.

Have you been able to meet trusts' specific needs?

In the vast majority of cases we're successful in meeting the specific needs of a trust and are able to build a flexible programme of recruitment based on the characteristics and challenges of the trust. We work collaboratively with trusts to adjust and adapt our approach depending on need, timeline and/or developments that may affect the requirements, such as growth or mergers. Some challenges are greater than others but we believe in working carefully and methodically to find the right person for a board, and not just a 'quick fix' to meet a body count or quota.

Most people will have heard of Governors for Schools already.

How is this service different?

The Trustee Recruitment Service builds on many of the great features of the Governors for Schools service which has been operating for the last 25 years. As a premium offering, the Trustee Recruitment Service works more like a headhunting service, carefully engaging with the trust as a client to build a bespoke programme, identifying specific skills and expertise to meet current, upcoming and longer-term challenge and priorities – in line with the strategic planning of an academy trust.

Whilst our governor and local-level recruitment services will continue as they always have done, the Trustee Recruitment Service specialises in sourcing people who can make a difference to the bigger picture, strategic, cross-trust context. As the skills, experience, knowledge and expertise required to be a successful and impactful trustee differ considerably from those sought for local governing roles, this is an area in which we specialise – engaging and preparing our volunteers to make sure not only their skills fit, but also that they're a good match in terms of ethos, personality and profile.

We have an [extensive resources section](#) on our website, including the Becoming a Trustee intro e-Learning module devised with the Confederation of School Trusts and a more in-depth 'First 100 Days as a Trustee' e-Learning, designed to help equip volunteers with knowledge as they start their role.

“ We've found the service easy to use. We had a conversation with the team to outline our requirements and we then heard about several potential trustees. All communication with the team has been prompt and clear. In a relatively short period of time the service has found us two potential trustees who fit our requirements. ”

Great Learners Trust, Buckinghamshire (9 schools)

What has the feedback been like so far?

It's been great. We've had some lovely feedback from trusts on the quality and engagement of the service, with many choosing to return to us for additional support following their first appointments. This is great to see and shows we're doing it right!

Interested to learn more? You can register as a would-be trustee or register a vacancy for your trust on the Trustee Recruitment Service website.

[Find out more](#)

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