

Trustee Connect sessions



As part of the Capacity Building Team's training offer, we piloted our first Trustee Connect session in November 2024. We offered these sessions in the evenings as we know that many trustees have limited availability during working hours and we wanted to offer times which might better suit a greater number of trustees.

The sessions have been online to date however, we will be hosting an in-person event later this year and as a follow up to our Get To Know Trusteeship event.

There have been various themes for Trustees Connect sessions and these have included: trustee recruitment, diversifying the board, strategic planning and financial responsibilities for charity trustees.

The sessions are always available to any trustees of City of Manchester charities; new and existing trustees are all welcome; experience level doesn't matter.

The aim of these sessions is to create a safe space for new, existing or even experienced charity trustees to come together, share their experiences and best practice, and to ask questions. There is often some input provided by Manchester Community Central or from trustees but there is also flexibility and time to discuss any common or recent issues and successes that trustees bring to the session and to collectively input and problem solve.



Alongside the friendly and informal approach, keeping the attendance numbers small has worked well and has helped reduce barriers to participation for those who may not usually contribute due to lack of confidence or feeling that they aren't inexperienced enough. Trustees have had more opportunities to be heard and have felt more able to ask questions relevant to their roles and to ask questions which they don't always feel able to ask within their own charity boards.

The sessions are spaces which help to reassure new trustees that what they are doing is relevant and appropriate, and/or has helped them identify areas of learning and change for themselves, or even for their boards. It provides space to ask any trustee related/governance question -no such thing as a 'silly question'.

We've had some great people attending who have been trustees for several different charities throughout their time, and these have helpfully shared their knowledge and experience. This has supported more newly appointed trustees to feel more informed and confident to ask relevant questions of their own boards, even to scrutinise their own charities' governance, policies and procedures, finances, etc. at subsequent trustee board meetings (a positive 'ripple' effect of good governance!).

Most importantly, the sessions also support trustees and boards to know what help and support is available in the sector and where to ask for support if needed, now or in the future.

As a result of the Capacity Building Team hosting these sessions and hearing trustees share their knowledge and experience, we have been able to build relationships with more charities and have been able to identify trustees who are happy to support trusteeship to benefit others, for example, being part of future trustee events and training sessions. We have recently approached several trustees who attended our trustee connect sessions to ask them to be guest speakers and panel members at other trustee events and have been delighted to have many positive responses to this and a willingness to support others.

We have also been able to target invitations for trustee events and training to newly formed charities whom the Capacity Building team has helped in recent times, for example, charities we have supported with strategic planning and charity



registration applications. This builds on our relationships formed through previous group support and providing continuity for groups engaging in other Manchester Community Central support services and networking opportunities, such as our Community Explorers networking forum and GM Sanctuary Seekers Community Response Group.

Feedback from those attending Trustee Connect Sessions:

“Hearing other trustees experiences was the most valuable part of the session”.

“I really enjoyed the session last night. It was great to meet other trustees”.

“Thank you for the session. It was good and thanks also for the strategic planning template you provided”.

“Thank you everyone for your advice - and Jane and Helen for hosting. An enjoyable session”.

“Thank you ... it’s been really helpful...”.

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