

How federated charities can strengthen their support for trustees and boards

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15th July 2026

The research

- Aim of the research
- 11 interviews completed, with 14 contacts
- Mostly with people from the national charity, in a range of roles
- Federations vary considerably. Between them, the federations interviewed have 1,300 charities and 9,350 trustees.

Insights

1. Governance is universally seen as critically important
2. Governance challenges are similar across federations
3. Differences within federations can make standardised governance support difficult
4. There are more similarities than differences in how governance is supported
5. Crisis support and quality assurance are the most common forms of governance support
6. Governance support isn't as proactive as some federations would like
7. There is a tension for the national charity between being a supportive partner and an “assessor” of governance

Barriers to further trustee and governance support

1. Narrow conduit to trustees through CEOs and chairs
2. Low trustee take-up
3. Funding and capacity
4. Expertise
5. “Politics”

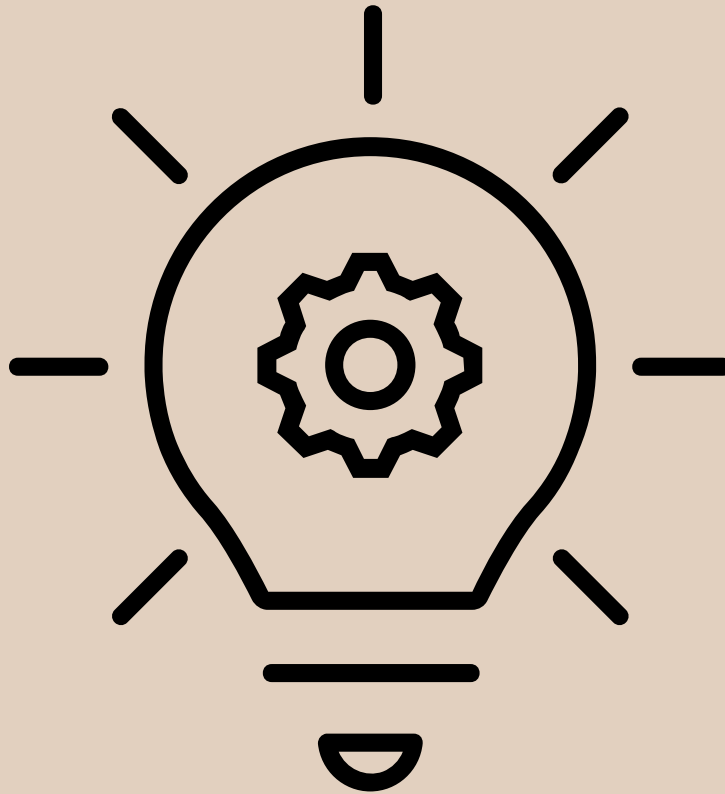
How federations would like to improve governance support

1. More trustee-specific learning and networking
2. Better data on trustees
3. Co-production of trustee support with trustees
4. More support for trustee recruitment
5. Access to external capacity or expertise
6. Future-proofing federations

Recommendations to federations

1. Build direct trustee communication channels
2. Map governance trends and challenges
3. Research the needs of trustees, to review and develop support programmes
4. Review the balance of reactivity and proactivity in your governance support offer
5. Develop trustee learning and networking programmes
6. Improve trustee succession pipelines, including collecting better data on trustee attributes
7. Use trustee expertise as a resource for the whole federation
8. Build stronger shared learning between governance-support functions across federations

Questions



Questions for breakout rooms

- Do you recognise the report's insights in your federation?
- Would we have different findings if we had interviewed Chairs, CEOs and trustees from local charities?
- Are the recommendations sensible? Would you add anything?
- What, if anything, could Eastside People do to add value?