

# Checklist: Trustee-staff relationships

Third Sector, 19 January 2010

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Good trustee-staff relationships are extremely important in charities, but they are often less than happy and can be difficult to manage.

Trustees can forget that staff are often working to their limits and need encouragement, while staff tend to think of trustees as a different species. This can lead to poor communication. It is up to the chief executive to ensure that trustees are well informed about all staff concerns - not just about what they might like to hear.

A well-run board often allocates areas of interest to its members. Without interfering in day-to-day management, these trustees should try to stay informed and even spend some time with staff working in their designated areas. This should ensure that staff feel their hopes and concerns are heard at board level.

This is particularly important in the current difficult period, during which many charities are making redundancies. It can be comforting to the staff to know that the board makes such difficult decisions based on personal involvement and knowledge.