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#### Chair / Chief Executive relationships

Make sure roles are clearly set out in writing, and be sure to communicate this to all involved.

These roles will also need to be reviewed from time to time as the organisation develops.

#### news and opinion from a Chair's perspective

### Using a recruitment firm to appoint a chief executive

Rosey Foster, chair of Contact a Family told us why and how using a recruitment firm to find a new chief executive worked for them.

The former chief executive left suddenly having been selected for a government post, so, as chair, Rosey was responsible for the process of recruiting a new one. It was important that Contact a Family selected the right candidate for the post to take the charity to its next phase of development. As Rosey did not have time to do it all, the Board agreed to employ a firm that was willing to do the majority of the recruitment and selection process.

The charity went out to tender, and four recruitment firms were interviewed. Of these, Veredus was chosen to do the work because -

- They were willing to work to very tight deadlines
- They seemed to understand the voluntary sector and its needs
- Rosey felt she could work well with them, which was important as she would have to work closely with them.
- They were an established agency and not a one man band.

Looking back on the whole process Rosey makes a number of observations and comments about using the recruitment agency-

- It saved time. The agency did all the donkey work such as preparing the job description, person specification, adverts and information for the candidates.
- The agency did a fair amount of headhunting for the post, thus increasing the number of potential candidates.
- The agency gave regular reports on interest levels in the post.
- The agency helped with shortlisting, and observed the interviews (so they could give feedback on the candidates).
- The charity wanted a chief executive who was good with the media, and the agency organised for a media consultant to come in and test candidates.
- The agency gave feedback to the unsuccessful candidates, saving time for the members of the interview panel.
- Once the agency knows the charity it can be used more easily for any subsequent recruitment rounds.
- Once the chief executive was in post the agency phoned Rosey after 6 weeks and 3 to 4 months to check how the appointment was working out. They also contacted the new Chief Executive to check that the appointment was working out well for her.
- The agency is up to date with good practice and law regarding human

resources and recruitment, so you can be certain everything will be done properly.

- It is quite expensive. But the fees can be negotiated. The agency was willing to do as little or as much as Contact a Family required, and the charity ended up with a slimmed down version of the full package that the agency could offer. Contact a Family balanced up the cost against the need to get the right person and the time it would take if they had done all the recruitment themselves and used the saved CEO salary towards fees.
- Payments were staged as follows:
  - Up front
  - After the interviews
  - 6 weeks after the appointment, when the charity was satisfied the process was complete
- The charity negotiated a claw-back arrangement should something have gone wrong and the chosen candidate didn't take up the job for some reason.

Contact a Family provides support, advice and information for families with disabled children, no matter what their condition or disability. For more information please go to their website, [www.cafamily.org.uk](http://www.cafamily.org.uk).

The recruitment firm used by Contact a Family is Veredus. Their website is [www.veredus.co.uk](http://www.veredus.co.uk).

### **Resources to help chairs working with Chief Executives**

Working with a senior member of staff is one of the main roles of a Chair, but can be quite a tricky one to manage. Below is a list of a selection of booklets and books which are available.

*Recruiting a Chief Executive: A Guide for Trustees and Chairs*, £10

*Setting Chief Executive Remuneration*, £12.50

*Good Governance: The Chair's Role*, £15

*Good Governance: The Chief Executive's Role*, £15

*The Board's Responsibility for Appraising the Chief Executive*, £10

*Lost in Translation: A Complete Guide to Chair/Chief Executive Partnerships*, £10

All of the above are available from [www.ncvo-vol.org.uk](http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk)

*The Chief Executive's First 100 Days*, £30 from [www.dsc.org.uk](http://www.dsc.org.uk)

Free resources on board staff relations are also available from [www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/askncvo/trusteegovernance/?id=4460](http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/askncvo/trusteegovernance/?id=4460)

*The Chair and Chief Executive Toolkit* available free from [www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/askncvo/trusteegovernance/projects/?id=5786](http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/askncvo/trusteegovernance/projects/?id=5786)

### **Say it with trusteeplus**

You and your board give freely of your time, skills and resources to help your charity deliver the most it can to those in need of support. Even a simple 'thank you', especially when times are tough, can go a long way to showing trustees that the charity values their on-going support and contribution. Or if charity funds permit, why not consider gift

#### ANY OTHER BUSINESS?

Do let us have your feedback on this e-newsletter by replying to this email. Let us know if we are getting it right or how we can improve this e-newsletter. Chair focus goes out bi-monthly, and we want as much content as possible to be from you - we would really welcome your ideas and submissions.

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#### Keeping right on to the end of the road?

Succession – A personal perspective by Ray Collett MBE, Chair of Bolton CVS. [www.boltoncommunitynetwork.org.uk](http://www.boltoncommunitynetwork.org.uk)

I decided at our AGM in October 2007 that I would begin the process of standing down, not only as Chair, but also as a trustee, of Bolton CVS.

As I am up for re-election to the Board in October 2009, it seemed most appropriate that I would continue in both roles until then, at which point I would not make myself available for nomination.

Having been Chair of Bolton CVS for around 8 years, I am particularly aware of the enormous changes there have been in the role of a Chair of a successful CVS, and began to work on a sort of personal strategy to try and ensure a smooth handover when the time comes.

I started by producing a new Role Description for the Chair of Bolton CVS. The more I worked on this, the more I realised how we have moved on over the years, and how much more work and responsibility I am taking on compared to my predecessor!

It may be that my successor will not have the time to continue representing Bolton CVS to the extent that I have, and it is for that reason that I have written a Role Description. I have also written a local "Roles and Responsibilities of Trustees", and both of these documents, in draft form, have been sent to all Trustees. They will be discussed, amended and hopefully approved by our Human Resources Sub-committee, and subsequently by the Board, shortly.

At the request of CTN, I will write a progress report in the next few issues of this magazine, as it has become increasingly obvious that succession is a topic of debate in our sector.