

## Board appraisal toolkit: the self-assessment grid

	Should we be worried? Self assessment grid		
	<i>Cause for concern?</i>	<i>Needs attention</i>	<i>Still room for improvement?</i>
<b>Energy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It feels like hard work.</li> <li>• People commit to do things but don't (or do them too late).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We put in the hours but it's not clear that what we do as a board really makes a difference.</li> <li>• We don't get better at what we do, there's no sense of progression.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There's no sense of fun.</li> <li>• We don't challenge ourselves and the management team enough, there's not enough cut and thrust in discussion.</li> </ul>
<b>Understanding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's not clear where we're headed.</li> <li>• We lack financial skills, we rely too much on the treasurer.</li> <li>• We're not sure of our responsibilities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trustees do not have a grasp of the charity's work.</li> <li>• We can't cite evidence of users' needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trustees lack insight into the priorities of the organisation's stakeholders.</li> <li>• We are not up to date on the external environment for our work.</li> </ul>
<b>Information for the board</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information often comes late to the board, and does not contain all we need.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our papers do not tell us the essentials of what we need to know. They are not framed to help us make decisions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Papers to the board are too 'closed'; the scope for creative thinking is hindered.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is lots of last minute verbal reporting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information is provided but there is not enough analysis.</li> </ul>	
<b>Meetings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The same few people are vocal; most of the other members don't contribute.</li> <li>• We have serial non-attendees.</li> <li>• Our meetings tend to over-run.</li> <li>• Too little gets written down.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have a traditional approach to meetings.</li> <li>• We have fixed habits about how we do things.</li> <li>• Meetings are too long.</li> <li>• We don't try out new approaches.</li> <li>• We don't assess how productive each meeting has been.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The board spends a lot of time on fiduciary work with little space for generative and strategic work.</li> <li>• We don't discuss the priority issues in enough depth.</li> <li>• Our meetings don't generate energy.</li> </ul>
<b>Chair</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The chair does everything.</li> <li>• No one wants to be chair.</li> <li>• The chair does not lead effectively.</li> <li>• The chair is struggling to do the job.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The chair and the chief executive, plus honorary officers are running the organisation.</li> <li>• There is no succession planning for chair or trustees.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Honorary officers do not act as an effective team.</li> <li>• Honorary officers act like a cabal and don't involve the rest of the board.</li> <li>• The chair does not use our skills and knowledge.</li> </ul>
<b>Teamwork</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are conflicts on the board that we ignore.</li> <li>• An inner group talk to each other all the time outside of meetings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We only see each other at board meetings.</li> <li>• We don't really know each other, or understand what skills and experience each of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We don't have opportunities to build trust and understanding.</li> <li>• We don't ring each other to mull over governance matters</li> </ul>

		<p>us has to offer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are too polite in our discussions.</li> </ul>	<p>that concern us.</p>
<b>Our results</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We haven't written down what our targets are.</li> <li>• We have only anecdotal evidence of our effectiveness.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We do not monitor how we are doing against our targets.</li> <li>• We do not have year on year comparisons to look back on.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We do not use our mistakes to help us learn.</li> <li>• We don't compare how we are doing to others.</li> <li>• There is no depth to our analysis of our results.</li> </ul>
<b>Diversity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The members of our board have similar backgrounds and life experiences.</li> <li>• We don't know how to ensure the users' voice is represented.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is limited diversity in the identity and backgrounds of our members (e.g. marital status, educational background, gender, faith, disability, sexual orientation, age ethnicity).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's not clear how we make best use of the diversity we have on our board.</li> <li>• We don't properly understand how our services meet different users' needs.</li> </ul>
<b>CEO</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The chair and CEO do not get on.</li> <li>• The CEO has a different vision to the board on the future of the organisation.</li> <li>• The CEO is not up to the job.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The CEO is limiting our access to information and senior staff-we see only what the CEO wants us to see</li> <li>• The board do not properly value the role and contribution of the CEO.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our CEO is holding us back – we need a different style and skills set for the next stage.</li> <li>• We are over-dependent on a particularly able and talented CEO.</li> </ul>