

CHAIR Q&A

NOELLE CONDON



CHAIR OF CRY IRELAND



"The role is very fulfilling, and it is an honour to be involved in promoting awareness about Sudden Cardiac death and supporting families who have been impacted by Sudden Cardiac Death."

Why did you decide to go forward for a Chair role?

I was approached by the outgoing Chair to put myself forward for the Role. It was not something that I had planned and therefore had to take some time to consider what this would mean both for myself and the Charity. After some consideration I put myself forward as I believed that I would bring value both to the Charity and the Board if I took on the role as Chair.

How did you find the transition "diving" into the Chair role?

I was very fortunate to have served on the Board of CRY for two years before this and therefore was very familiar with the key issues and also know the Trustees. Also the outgoing Chair remained on the Board to assist with the transition. This was very beneficial as it provided a mentoring role and also some one to act as a sounding board.

Notwithstanding my experience and knowledge of CRY, it was more challenging than I had expected. As a trustee while you have accountability as a Trustee and you have some control over the level of involvement in the Charity. However as Chair you are involved in a wide range of issues and it is important that you remain in an oversight and strategic role and try not to get too much in the operational detail. However with a small charity this has been done.



Did you undertake any training?

When I first joined the Charity I participated in Boardmatch training for Boards of Charities. I am also completing the Institute of Directors Chartered Director Programme.

What piece of advice did you get as a Chair that was key in your role?

Important that the Chair leads and sets the right tone. As part of my current training I have come to realise how important succession planning is. I am currently engaging with Boardmatch to carry out a skills audit in the Charity and also to look at the Board's effectiveness.

Has there been any challenges?

I took on the role last September in the middle of a Pandemic, so the biggest challenge has been leading a Virtual Board. As a new Chair I have not had the opportunity to meet with the other Trustees on a one-to-one basis. We are having our regular meetings through Zoom, but this does not always lend itself to strategic conversations. These meetings lend themselves more to conformance rather than performance discussions. The other challenge is the time commitment, I underestimated the investment required as a Chair and in particular how to fit the role around my full time job.

What advice would you give to someone who is thinking about joining a Board as a First Time Chair?

To be appointed as the Chair of a Board is great honour and brings with an increased level of responsibility which can be very rewarding. No matter what the size of the Charity a significant level of commitment will be required and usually more than you have estimated as lot goes on behind the scenes. If you are in a full-time role elsewhere important to consider how both can be accommodated.