

# TRUSTEE Q&A

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Merchants Quay Ireland  
Homeless & Drugs Services



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## **Why did you choose to take on a voluntary trusteeship?**

I had a desire to do something useful that would apply my professional skills in a way that might help others. Trusteeship allowed me to do that.

## **What have you learnt by being on a board?**

I have learnt the importance of always keeping the person to the forefront of decisions. I have learnt about addiction (the charity I work with supports people with drug addiction) and the extent to which it harms families for generations. I have learnt how professional the charity/NFP sector can be. I have also learnt about restricted funds!

## **What challenges did you encounter whilst being on a board?**

Understanding the breadth of activities carried out by the charity and the sector and the interplay between charity/giving and government funding.

## **How did you approach conflict resolution on your board?**

I have been fortunate and haven't experienced conflict on the board. Differences of view/perspective exist and these are respected and welcomed and help to get to the better decision.

### **How would you describe time management with respects to your day-job and voluntary board position?**

It's important to understand the commitment to the board and to make time for it. I am lucky in that my employer is very supportive of my board membership. They see benefit in both Corporate Social Responsibility and also in the benefits and experiences board membership gives me as an employee in my day-job.

### **How important was teamwork and collaboration in relation to board effectiveness?**

The different perspectives/experiences and views of the board as a team allows decisions to be taken on a well informed basis and hopefully drives better decisions.

### **How has your board experience affected you personally?**

I have gained better understanding of the struggles of people who, on a day to day basis, would never enter my life. It has given me a better appreciation for people who work in the sector full time and hopefully made me a more empathetic person.

### **What advice would you give to someone considering joining a charity board?**

Get to know the other board members and the management/full time staff. Hopefully before you even consider joining, you are aware of and have a connection with the underlying work of the charity but in talking with the board and management you will get a sense early on about your own fit for the organisation and the way it operates. I worked on board sub-committees before joining the full board and I found it a really useful way to learn about the organisation.