

TRUSTEE Q&A

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Why did you choose to take on a voluntary trusteeship?

A passion for giving back and for the following reasons ...

1. The TeenLine Charity & People:

After learning about the vital work Teenline do in supporting young people it became an easy decision to join the Board. Maureen Bolger founded the charity in 2006 following the death of her son, Darren who took his own life in 2003. Maureen wanted to provide a safe place for teens to talk. Currently over 40 people give of their time voluntarily to Teenline from the helpline, office & board volunteers which I continue to find inspiring.

2. Personal:

The areas of mental health and wellbeing, support for young people, and work to reduce our teen suicide rates are all issues that have a personal connection to me, especially now as a Mum of two pre-teens. Our volunteers make a huge difference to the young people calling the lines supporting over 2,000 calls a month.

3. Professional:

Taking on a board position was a goal I had long set for my professional growth. I am interested in pursuing further Board roles in the future, so it has been invaluable to gain this experience. Also because of the work I do in Cpl I'm very aware of the struggle to shift the dial on female representation on boards - I felt it was the right time and opportunity to get off the fence myself!

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

'Go for it!' You can make a profound difference to both the charity and to yourself.

I would also advise joining a charity that you feel a genuine connection to in light of the time commitment required – a belief in the charities' purpose and values is key to staying the course.

It's important to do your due diligence so that you go into the role with your eyes wide open. While it is a voluntary role, you are exposed to the risk that any Trustee role of a Board brings with it.

What challenges did you encounter whilst being on a board?

Balancing the strategic priorities with the tactical demands is an ongoing challenge, particularly given our reliance on donations and fundraising to finance the service.

Ensuring that we have the right balance of skills and experience on the board is another one– at the moment we are recruiting for legal and clinical experts for anyone who might be interested.

Lastly juggling the role's responsibilities with everything else going on, a universal challenge!

What have you learnt by being on a board?

It has been an excellent learning journey. Our board bring a wealth of professional and life experience from a wide range of roles and sectors which is enriching to be around. The diversity of leadership, skills, energy, ideas and thinking adds great value not only to Teenline but to each other.

When I joined the board it had been through a period of significant change. This change presented the opportunity to get involved in a broad variety of Board work from governance, strategy, operations and more that may not have presented had I joined a more established board. I currently serve on the governance and fund-raising sub committees which has strengthened my experience in compliance, risk mitigation and governance.

Getting involved in a charity as a Trustee has been hugely rewarding on every level - I would highly recommend it.