

TRUSTEE Q&A

SUSAN LOOBY

TRUSTEE OF FAST

LECTURER



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Why did you decide to join a charity board?

In 2018 I was at a junction in my career and decided following a long and successful career in financial services as a senior executive to change my career to a lecturing position with the School of Business, TU Dublin, and to combine this with a position on a not-for-profit board. During this time I decided to get training in board governance and in July 2020 I received a Diploma in Company Direction with the Institute of Directors Ireland. I have always been very engaged in my local community, volunteering on a number of committees and clubs and in late 2020, I was delighted to get on the board of Finglas Addiction Support Team (FAST) and to also Chair their Audit, Finance and Governance Committee. Working as a lecturer and volunteering allows me to give something back to society where I bring the benefit of over 20 year's experience working as a senior executive and Chief Financial Officer to my students and to the not-for-profit sector.

What have you learnt by being on a board?

Being on a board of a not-for-profit firstly is very interesting and I really enjoy engaging with the other board members and the executive team. It really keeps you engaged and focused on how you can support the executive management and the team and contribute to the great work being done by them.

What challenges did you encounter whilst being on a board?

Specifically I needed to learn a lot about addiction support services and the public sector funding around that and the challenges faced in the sector.



How have you found serving on a board remotely/virtually?

Virtual meetings worked well but when we returned more recently to face to face meetings we realised just how much better being in a room with fellow trustees is. We will however consider having a hybrid meeting going forward where someone could attend virtually if they cannot make the meeting in person.

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

Time management works very well as we have a schedule of all the AFG Committee meetings and Board Meetings during the year so we have plenty of advance notice and the executive team send out the information a week prior to all meetings.

How important is teamwork and collaboration in relation to board effectiveness?

We had a board effectiveness review carried out by BoardMatch which we found very beneficial as it allowed us to reflect and focus on how the trustees collaborate and work together. Teamwork and collaboration are hugely important in relation to board effectiveness and the Chair position is vital in giving everyone an opportunity to contribute during board meetings.

How has your board experience affected you personally?

I thoroughly enjoy meeting and working with the other board members as meetings are always lively and engaging. As a board, community engagement is vitally important and it is really moving listening to service users tell their stories on how they have turned their lives around with the help of our addiction support services and this is what really drives home why I am volunteering on a charity board.

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

I would advise them to consider training in board governance first and to then consider if they can allocate the time needed. I would ensure that the board you are joining and the not-for-profit is well run and they can offer you professional indemnity insurance.