

# WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHARITY TRUSTEE

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## **Why did you decide to join a charity board?**

Back in 2018 I decided that I wanted to give time to help an Irish charity, so I set out to find a charity which I could connect well with and one whose purpose aligned well with my own principles. Being a father of two, my wife and I would do anything for our children, as would any parent. Make a Wish has always worked so nicely to show care for its wish children. The purpose of Make a Wish is to grant the wishes of children with life-threatening medical conditions, to bring hope, strength and happiness. This really resonated, and when I met Susan the CEO of Make a Wish, and with some of the Board Directors, I knew the fit was right from the start. I joined the Board in mid 2019, and became the Chair at the end of 2021.

## **What are your typical tasks and duties on the board?**

The role of the Board is to help guide the charity to its best future, to deliver to the purpose of the charity. Together the skills, expertise and collective engagement of a board's directors drive positive collective impact. The directors are responsible for working with the management team to; set the strategic direction, set and follow good governance practices, provide financial oversight and manage risks and ultimately ensure the good practices and continued success of the organisation. We meet six times per year for board meetings, and in between meetings work groups and committees carry out tasks as delegated by the Board.

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## **What has challenged you in your trustee role?**

Like any role one of the key challenges I have found as a trustee is to listen well. It is important to listen to the needs of the organisation, and to listen to the people who deliver for it on a daily basis. Trustees need to have a disposition of curiosity to support and challenge the charity, and we can only do this by listening well.

## **What has been the biggest reward or benefit in becoming a trustee?**

The most rewarding part for me in being a trustee is seeing the purpose of the charity come to life. In Make a Wish this purpose is centred around our wish children, and to see the wonderful impact a child's wish has is one of the true privileges of my life so far. It is also a true joy to work with the wonderful team in Make a Wish and my fellow board directors. Everyone involved with Make a Wish cares so much and is talented in their area of expertise. As Chair of the charity it is a real honour to work with such a wonderful group.

## **What would you say to someone thinking about joining a charity board?**

I would say firstly do your homework and ensure that the fit is good for all. Secondly I would say that once you make the commitment, you will make the time, and you will get out of it way more than you put in.