



Community First
Academy Trust

Non-Executive Director Application Guide

Community First Academy Trust
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Great trustees build, grow and sustain great academy trusts. This guide offers advice on how to attract and recruit new independent trustees/non-executive directors and members to your trust from the world of business and the professions.

Non-Executive Director

Salary: Unpaid, voluntary

Start Date: ASAP

The key challenges for the board over the next 12-24 months are:

- Raising achievement - closing the gap and continuing to exceed national for all measures.
- Growth - ensuring buy-in from strong and schools requiring support in the region close to Wigan to grow the trust's North West hub by exploring the potential of working with schools in St Helens.
- Financial sustainability – the trust is in a stable financial position and wishes to grow in a manner that supports the schools effectively.
- Ensuring effective governance. The trust is currently reviewing all of its governance arrangements and is expanding the size of the board to ensure greater governance capacity. Identifying appropriate skills to help deliver effective governance is essential.

Why become a non-executive on an academy trust board?

By working together, inspirational educationalists and talented business leaders can provide a better future for the next generation. Improving the life chances of young people, particularly the disadvantaged, is critical to the UK's social and economic success.

The non-executive director role with a multi-academy trust is profoundly rewarding:

- Giving back: helping the next generation on their way up;
- Improve the life chances of young people, particularly those from the most deprived backgrounds;
- Raise standards in schools improves the calibre of school leavers and supports the wider regional economy;
- A role that fits your career and aspirations;
- Gain unparalleled leadership experience utilising your expertise in a completely new sector;
- Gaining company and charity non-executive experience.

The growth in the number of academy trusts has generated exceptional demand from trusts for business leaders to join their boards. Education leaders recognise that they cannot transform standards alone.

About Community First Academy Trust (CFAT)

CFAT was one of the first Multi-Academy Trusts (MAT) in Wigan with plans to become a family of high performing primary and secondary academies, who, by working together will make a significant impact on the life chances of young people in our communities.

The whole purpose of a school is that children come first and everything that is done must reflect this goal.

Delivering teaching excellence is our overriding focus. Our family of schools work strategically together to deliver long term sustainability through efficiencies and savings that release resources to improve the rate of progress for all our children. This enables us to deliver the excellence in education that our communities deserve, by the sharing of best practice and the delivery of continuous and sustained improvement.

So far this has developed a strong focus on education whilst not losing sight of the individual child, alongside a range of back office developments that deliver a robust infrastructure for the future. This includes central finance, IT, HR and premises / estates management. Leadership development, succession planning and capacity building are also major priorities for the Trust.

Time commitment

The Members board typically meets once per year.

Trustees typically meets three to four time per year.

Location of Board Meetings and Trust Website

Board meetings are held at Platt Bridge Community School, Rivington Ave, Platt Bridge, Wigan, WN2 5NG

Governance Structure

<https://www.cfat.org.uk/trust-information/statutory-information>

Background on academy trusts

Academy schools, which are charities run independently of local authority control, now account for 71% of secondary schools and 26% of primaries – and their number is growing all the time.

Many of these schools are grouped together as multi-academy trusts (MATs). There are currently 980 multi academy trusts of 2+ schools. If the schools are to fulfil their potential, the trusts need non-executives (known in charity law as trustees) to bring a wide range of skills and experience to help guide strategy, ensure their ambitions can be soundly financed and keep their schools up to the mark delivering for their pupils.

“Academy boards must be ambitious for all children and young people and infused with a passion for education and a commitment to continuous school improvement that enables the best possible outcomes. Governance must be grounded in reality as defined by both high-quality objective data and a full understanding of the views and needs of pupils/students, staff, parents, carers and local communities. It should be driven by inquisitive, independent minds and through conversations focused on the key strategic issues which are conducted with humility, good judgement, resilience and determination.” *Source: Governance Handbook, Department for Education (2017)*

Trusteeship is a voluntary, unpaid role for people who have the energy and skills to make a real contribution to shaping the future of our schools. You do not need to have any specialist knowledge of education.

Applications

If you are interested in applying for the role please send your CV and a short expression of interest detailing which role you are applying for to c.holden@cfat.org.uk

Please note candidates should live within reasonable travelling distance of the trust and/or have a link with the region.

For more information, please call 01942 487973.

Key dates

N/A