



Engage, elevate and empower
learners with diverse needs

Welcome from the Chair

I am delighted that you are considering the opportunity to become an ASDAN trustee.

We are a welcoming, professional and committed board of trustees, united by our shared belief in the power of education to transform lives. Collectively, we provide strategic leadership and strong governance, to help ASDAN achieve its mission: to engage, elevate and empower young people through accessible, life-changing learning.

As we continue with our ambitious strategy, we are now seeking to further strengthen our board expertise through the appointment of two new trustees who will play a significant role in shaping our future.

We are seeking to appoint:

A finance trustee to strengthen the board's financial oversight and governance capability. This individual will provide robust challenge and assurance across financial sustainability, risk, investment decisions, reserves strategy and audit matters, ensuring the board continues to benefit from strong financial scrutiny.

A strategy trustee to support ASDAN's next phase of growth and transformation. This role will bring expertise in organisational strategy, innovation and change, helping the board to identify emerging opportunities and risks, challenge assumptions and ensure our long-term ambitions remain aligned with our charitable purpose.

As a trustee, you will join a board made up of experienced professionals from a wide range of sectors. Each trustee brings valuable expertise, different perspectives and a shared commitment to ensuring ASDAN continues to thrive and make a meaningful difference to learners.

Whether you are an experienced trustee or considering your first board appointment, what matters most is your willingness to contribute your knowledge, ask thoughtful questions, provide constructive challenge and work collaboratively with fellow trustees and the executive team.

If you share our commitment to inclusive education and want to help shape the future of a respected international charity, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Brian Doidge

Chair of the Board of Trustees

Appointment of new Trustees

We are seeking to appoint two experienced trustees to strengthen our board in the following areas:

Finance trustee

Providing expertise in:

- financial governance
- audit and risk
- financial sustainability investment and reserves strategy

Strategy trustee

Providing expertise in:

- organisational strategy
- innovation and transformation
- growth and long-term planning

Successful candidates will be appointed by the board of trustees in September for an initial three-year term, renewable for up to nine years.

Brian Doidge

Chair of the Board of Trustees,
ASDAN

Brian is a Chartered Manager and Chartered Marketer, who brings a range of commercial and sector related skills to our board. In addition to a career in academia, Brian has been a Senior Manager within some of the world's largest private sector organisations.



Message from the CEO

ASDAN is evolving and I am excited to share how we are building on our legacy to shape a bold and ambitious future.

For more than 30 years, we have been committed to supporting young people to develop the personal, social and work-related skills they need to thrive. Today, that mission feels more important than ever. Learners across the UK and internationally continue to face increasingly complex challenges, and we believe every young person deserves recognition, opportunity and the support to realise their potential. Equally important are the educators who inspire, encourage and empower them every day.

Our 2025–2028 strategy reflects that commitment. We are strengthening our qualifications and curriculum offer, investing in innovation and digital capability, expanding partnerships and continuing to develop learning opportunities that respond to the changing needs of learners, educators and employers. We are also deepening our work with schools, colleges, training providers and employers to ensure learners develop the essential knowledge, skills and confidence they need for life, learning and work.

As we look to the future, we remain firmly focused on impact – engaging learners with diverse needs, celebrating their achievements and empowering them to shape their own futures. We continue to grow our national and international reach, working alongside partners who share our belief that education should be inclusive, meaningful and transformative.

Everything we do is rooted in our values of being ethical, collaborative, diverse and innovative. These values guide how we work with one another, with our partners and, most importantly, with the learners we exist to serve.

If you are considering joining ASDAN's board, thank you for taking the time to learn more about us. This is an exciting period in our journey, and we look forward to working with people who share our passion for creating opportunities and transforming lives through a fairer, more inclusive education system.

Melissa Farnham
Chief Executive Officer

Melissa Farnham
Chief Executive Officer,
ASDAN



About ASDAN

ASDAN is a registered charity (No. 1066927) and an awarding organisation, based in Bristol, with a mission to **engage**, **elevate** and **empower** learners with diverse needs.

For over 30 years, we have worked with schools, colleges, training providers, employers and educational organisations across the UK and internationally to deliver meaningful learning opportunities that recognise achievement, build confidence and prepare young people for further education, employment and life.

Our curriculum programmes and regulated qualifications are designed to support learners of all abilities, with a particular focus on those who face barriers to engagement, participation or achievement. We are committed to ensuring that every learner has the opportunity to develop the personal, social and employability skills needed to realise their potential.

Our work particularly supports learners who are:

- facing poverty or social disadvantage
- experiencing barriers to engagement and attainment
- living with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND)
- at risk of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training)
- benefiting from practical, inclusive approaches to learning

Through our work with educators and partners, we help create learning experiences that are engaging, relevant and life-changing. Alongside our qualifications and curriculum programmes, we support teachers and practitioners with high-quality resources, professional development and innovative approaches to teaching and learning.

Today, ASDAN supports thousands of learners each year across the UK and internationally. As we deliver our ambitious 2025–2028 strategy, we continue to invest in innovation, strengthen our educational offer, expand our partnerships and ensure that our organisation remains financially sustainable and responsive to the changing needs of education.

Our purpose remains clear: to create opportunities that enable every learner to succeed, regardless of their starting point.

Our people

Led by Melissa Farnham, Chief Executive Officer, ASDAN's Executive and Senior Leadership Team works collaboratively to deliver the organisation's strategic priorities, and comprises:

Gareth Reynolds – Director of Education and Impact

Tom Foulk – Head of Finance

The Board of Trustees

ASDAN's board comprises dedicated, non-executive voluntary trustees who also act as company directors. Together, they bring a wide range of expertise and a deep, shared commitment to ASDAN's mission: to engage, elevate and empower learners with diverse needs.

Our trustees are accomplished leaders and professionals drawn from a range of sectors, each bringing valuable perspectives shaped by their own lived and professional experiences. United by a strong belief in the power of inclusive and transformative education, they contribute expertise across areas such as education, governance, finance, human resources, strategy, digital, safeguarding and organisational development.

Every trustee offers unique insight and adds to the collective strength of the board. Working closely with the chief executive officer, trustees provide strategic oversight, constructive challenge and assurance to support ASDAN's long-term success.

You can learn more about our current board members here: [meet our board](#).



 Elsa Hogan,
ASDAN Trustee

How the board works

Time commitment

The board meets at least four times a year during office hours, with meetings usually held in person at ASDAN's Bristol office. These meetings provide the opportunity for strategic oversight, informed decision-making and collective leadership.

Trustees also contribute through online committee meetings and time-limited working groups, where they provide detailed oversight, challenge and assurance across key areas of governance, strategy, finance, risk and organisational development.

Trustees are expected to attend board and committee meetings, prepare thoroughly by reading papers in advance, and contribute actively to discussions and decision-making.

Beyond formal governance responsibilities, trustees are encouraged to engage in the wider life of ASDAN. This may include attending organisational events, supporting strategic initiatives, engaging with staff, partners and learners, and participating in a structured Trustee Development Programme, which provides ongoing professional learning, sector insight and a deeper understanding of the organisation.

An annual trustee and executive team away day brings trustees and senior leaders together for strategic reflection, long-term planning and collaborative discussion. It provides an opportunity to strengthen relationships, build shared understanding and ensure continued alignment around ASDAN's vision, strategic priorities and future direction.

We estimate the overall time commitment to be approximately 2 days per month, including meeting preparation, attendance at board and committee meetings, and participation in development activities.

The role of trustee is an unremunerated voluntary position, but reasonable expenses for in-person meetings will be reimbursed.

Terms of office

Trustees have a term of office of three years, and can serve for a maximum of three terms, which equates to nine years in total.

Overall purpose of the role

Trustees are legally responsible for the governance of the charity. This means they must make sure that ASDAN achieves its objectives, which are set out in its governing documents. The trustees ensure that ASDAN has a strategy, and that its assets and resources are only used for charitable purposes in line with the governance documents. Trustees make sure that ASDAN operates in line with any relevant laws, particularly the Charities and Companies Acts.

Trustees have a collective responsibility – they work together for the best interests of ASDAN.



 **Dr Dean Smart,**
ASDAN Vice Chair

Main responsibilities

As a trustee of ASDAN, you will work collectively with fellow trustees to provide strategic leadership, effective governance and oversight of the organisation. Key responsibilities include the following:

Governance	
1	Understanding ASDAN's charitable purpose, vision and governing documents, ensuring the organisation operates in accordance with its objects and values.
2	Contributing to the development of ASDAN's long-term strategy, including financial sustainability, and monitoring progress against agreed objectives.
3	Applying your skills, knowledge and experience to board discussions, exercising independent judgement while acting solely in the best interests of ASDAN.
4	Identifying and overseeing strategic risks, ensuring appropriate systems of assurance, mitigation and control are in place.
5	Supporting the continuous development and effectiveness of the board, including participating in regular board performance reviews.
6	Contributing to board succession planning, including the recruitment, appointment and induction of new trustees and the chair.
7	Preparing for, attending and actively contributing to board and committee meetings, and undertaking agreed actions between meetings.
8	Upholding the highest standards of governance, including compliance with policies relating to safeguarding, confidentiality, data protection and conflicts of interest.
9	Championing ASDAN's commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of governance and decision making.
Working with the Executive Team	
1	Maintaining appropriate boundaries between governance and operational management, recognising the distinct roles of the board and executive team.
2	Providing constructive support, challenge and strategic oversight to the chief executive officer and executive team to help deliver ASDAN's strategic objectives.
3	Supporting the appointment, induction and succession planning of the chief executive officer and executive team where appropriate.
Ambassadorial Role	
1	Acting as an ambassador for ASDAN, promoting its mission, values and impact with confidence and credibility.
2	Representing the board's agreed position when engaging with external stakeholders and supporting opportunities to strengthen ASDAN's profile, partnerships and influence.

Who are we looking for?

ASDAN is seeking to appoint two exceptional trustees who will bring strategic insight, independent judgement and specialist expertise to our board.

This is an exciting opportunity to help shape the future of an international education charity that supports hundreds of thousands of learners each year. Working alongside fellow trustees and the executive team, you will contribute to ASDAN's strategic direction, financial sustainability and long-term success, ensuring the organisation continues to deliver meaningful impact while remaining true to its charitable purpose.

The Person

You do not need prior board experience as training and mentoring will be provided. We are looking for:	
• strategic thinking and sound judgement	• integrity and strong ethical standards
• collaborative leadership	• commitment to educational inclusion
• excellent communication skills	• passion for improving outcomes for young people
• independent thinking and constructive challenge	• willingness to devote time and expertise to the role

Finance trustee

The opportunity

We are seeking an experienced finance professional to strengthen the board's financial oversight.

The successful candidate will help ensure the board continues to receive high-quality financial scrutiny and independent challenge across all aspects of ASDAN's financial governance.

This is an opportunity to make a significant contribution to the long-term sustainability of a respected international charity during an exciting period of organisational development.

We are looking for someone with experience in the following areas:	
• Senior financial leadership	• Investment oversight
• Audit and assurance	• Reserves strategy
• Risk management	• Charity or corporate finance
• Financial governance	

Candidates might currently be or have been any of the following:

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| • Chief Financial Officer | • Investment professional |
| • Finance director | • Chartered accountant |
| • Audit partner | • Chair or member of an audit committee |

You will contribute by:

- | | |
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| • providing robust financial challenge | • advising on reserves strategy |
| • supporting effective risk oversight | • strengthening governance and assurance |
| • scrutinising investment decisions | |

Strategy trustee

The opportunity

ASDAN is entering an exciting phase of growth and transformation.

We are seeking an experienced strategic leader who can help the board look beyond the immediate horizon, identify future opportunities and risks, and ensure ASDAN continues to deliver maximum impact for learners.

We are looking for someone with experience in the following areas:

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| • Organisational strategy | • Strategic planning |
| • Business transformation | • Change management |
| • Innovation | • Education, charity or commercial leadership |
| • Growth | |

Candidates might currently be or have been any of the following:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • Chief executive | • Education leader |
| • Strategy director | • Charity executive |
| • Transformation director | • Senior public sector leader |

You will contribute by:

- | | |
|---|--|
| • shaping ASDAN's strategic direction | • horizon scanning future risks and opportunities |
| • bringing fresh perspectives and challenge | • ensuring strategic decisions align with ASDAN's charitable mission |
| • supporting innovation | |

Our commitment to diversity

ASDAN is committed to building a board that reflects the diverse communities we serve.

We warmly welcome applications from people of all backgrounds and particularly encourage applications from individuals from under-represented groups.

We also welcome candidates with lived experience of educational inequality, disadvantage or social exclusion.

What we offer

We provide:

- a comprehensive induction programme
- ongoing trustee development
- mentoring and support
- opportunities to contribute to strategic projects
- the opportunity to make a genuine difference to thousands of learners each year

Reasonable expenses incurred while undertaking trustee duties will be reimbursed.

How to apply

Please submit:

- your CV
- a covering letter explaining:

Why you are interested in becoming an ASDAN trustee

Which trustee role you are applying for
(finance trustee or strategy trustee)

What knowledge, skills and experience
you would bring to the board

Applications should be sent to:

emmawakeman@asdan.org.uk

Application deadline:

Tuesday 1 September 2026

Emma Wakeman
Clerk to Trustees, ASDAN



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