



Engage, elevate and
empower learners with
diverse needs

Welcome from the Chair

I am delighted that you are considering the opportunity to become a Trustee at ASDAN.

We are a welcoming, professional, and committed team of Trustees, united by a shared belief in the power of education to transform lives. As a Board, we provide strategic guidance and governance to help ASDAN meet its mission: to engage, elevate, and empower young people with diverse needs.

This is an exciting and pivotal time to join us. With a bold new strategy in place, we are investing in digital innovation, expanding our reach, and deepening our partnerships. We are looking for three new trustees to bring fresh insight and expertise, particularly in digital learning, marketing and communications, or commercial strategy within charitable organisations.

A wonderful opportunity to apply your unique skills and experiences in service of a cause that truly matters. As a Trustee, you will not only contribute to our work, but also learn from and collaborate with a passionate team drawn from a wide range of sectors. It is this mix of perspectives from education, care, business, and beyond that strengthens our governance and enriches our collective thinking.

We are currently seeking individuals who share our commitment to inclusive education and who are able to bring both supportive insight and constructive challenge to the Board. Whether you are an experienced Trustee or looking to step into this kind of role for the first time, what matters most is your willingness to engage actively, work collaboratively, and contribute to the next stage of ASDAN's journey.

I hope this pack gives you a strong sense of who we are and what we stand for. If you feel aligned with our vision and values, and are ready to play a meaningful role at a significant moment in our history, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Brian Doidge

Chair of the Board of Trustees, ASDAN

Appointment of new Trustees

We are seeking passionate, experienced individuals to join our Board of Trustees, bringing their expertise to help ASDAN achieve its future goals.

We are particularly interested in candidates in one or more of the following areas:

- Digital learning and IT
- Marketing and Communications
- Commercial experience of charitable organisation

The successful candidates will be appointed by the Board of Trustees and will serve for an initial three-year period, which can be extended up to a maximum of nine years in total.

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.

Since our foundation, 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 urgent and important than ever. Learners across the UK, particularly those facing poverty, exclusion, or unmet needs, deserve recognition, opportunity, and support. And so do the educators who walk alongside them.

Our 2025–2028 strategy reflects that commitment. We are investing in innovation, strengthening our qualifications and curriculum offer, and launching a new digital platform to better support learning and track progress. We are also deepening our work with partners to help educators nurture the essential skills that young people need for life, learning and employment.

As we look to the future, we remain focused on impact – engaging learners with diverse needs, elevating their achievements, and empowering them to shape their own futures. We are also growing our international reach, expanding into regions where inclusive, skills-based education is a shared priority.

Everything we do is rooted in our values: ethical, diverse, collaborative, and innovative. Whether you are a partner, educator, funder, policymaker or supporter, thank you for being part of ASDAN's journey. And if you are just discovering us, we're glad you are here. This is a pivotal moment for our charity, and we look forward to working with all who share our belief in a fairer, more inclusive education system.

Melissa Farnham

Chief Executive Officer,
ASDAN



About ASDAN

ASDAN is a registered charity (No. 1066927) and a private company limited by guarantee (No. 03426251), based in Bristol. Since 1991, we have been committed to transforming the lives of young people by offering accessible, practical, and meaningful educational opportunities that promote personal growth, boost confidence, and open pathways to brighter futures.

We design curriculum programmes and regulated qualifications that engage, elevate, and empower learners – particularly those who face significant challenges in education. Our work focuses on supporting learners who are:

- Facing poverty or social disadvantage
- Experiencing barriers to engagement and attainment
- Living with special educational needs or disabilities
- At risk of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training)

Our goal is to make education inclusive and impactful. We do this by developing courses that are learner-centred and outcome-focused – enabling progression into further education, training, or employment. Alongside our courses, we work closely with educators to support the development of essential personal, social, and employability skills in every learner.

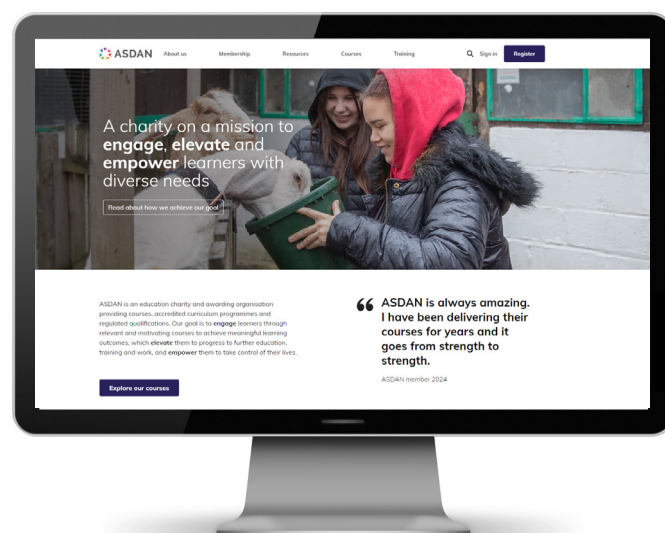
 Read more about who we are on our [About us page](#)

 Explore our latest impact in the 2025 Impact Report: [Download the Report](#)

Our people

Lead by Melissa Farnham, Chief Executive Officer, our directorate team comprises:

- **Zoë Elder**, Education, Research and Innovation
- **James Foyle**, Operations
- **Louise Harvey**, Infrastructure and 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 our mission: harnessing the power of education to transform lives.

Our Trustees are accomplished leaders and professionals drawn from a wide 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 deep expertise across areas such as education, governance, finance, human resources, technology, and safeguarding.

Every Trustee offers unique insight and adds to the collective strength of the Board. You can learn more about our current Board members here: [Meet our Board](#).

For a closer look at the people behind the roles, read the personal reflections of two of our Trustees:

- [Victoria Fitzgerald](#)
- [Dean Smart](#)

How the Board Works

The Board meets at least four times a year during office hours, and meetings are held in person at our Bristol office*. These sessions provide vital space for oversight, decision-making, and strategic direction.

In addition to the main Board meetings, Trustees actively contribute through sub-committees and short-term working groups, which focus on key areas of ASDAN's operations and development. These currently include:

- Performance, Audit, Risk and Compliance
- People and Development
- RISE (Responsibility, Inclusion, Safeguarding and Ethics)
- Digital Learning Platform (working group)

Beyond formal governance duties, Trustees are encouraged to engage meaningfully in the wider life of the organisation. This includes attending ASDAN events, supporting strategic initiatives, and connecting with our staff, partners, and learners.

An annual away day brings Trustees and senior leaders together for deeper strategic reflection, long-term planning, and team-building, ensuring alignment and shared vision for the future.

* The role is an unremunerated voluntary position, but reasonable expenses for in-person meetings will be met.

Who are we looking for?

ASDAN is seeking to appoint three dynamic and committed Trustees to join our Board. We are looking for individuals who bring energy, fresh perspectives, and a passion for inclusive education, and who can help strengthen our governance and support our strategic ambitions.

The Role

As a Trustee, you will play a vital role in shaping ASDAN's future. You will contribute to our strategic direction, ensure strong governance, and champion our mission to transform lives through learning. Working collaboratively with fellow Board members and the Executive Team, you will help ASDAN remain effective, resilient and relevant.

Key responsibilities
• Shape ASDAN's strategic vision and direction
• Provide oversight on governance, compliance, and financial performance
• Champion our values and mission in all decision-making
• Constructively support and challenge the Executive Team
• Represent ASDAN externally and act as an ambassador when appropriate

Legal Duties
• Understand and uphold the legal responsibilities of trusteeship
• Ensure compliance with ASDAN's governing documents and legal obligations
• Protect the charity's assets and ensure responsible resource management
• Maintain transparency and accountability to stakeholders and regulators

Who are we looking for?

The Person

You do not need prior board experience as training and mentoring will be provided. We are looking for:

- Strategic thinkers with sound judgement
- Team players with collaborative leadership and interpersonal skills
- A strong commitment to educational inclusion
- People who can bring insight, build trust, and offer challenge
- Willingness to invest time, energy and expertise in the role

We are particularly keen to hear from applicants who bring experience in one or more of the following areas:

- Digital learning platforms or education technology
- Marketing, branding, and communications strategy
- Commercial development in charitable or social enterprises

ASDAN recognises the importance of Board diversity and in seeking to attract the best talent and expertise is committed to increasing diversity across its Board and wider committee structure. We warmly welcome candidates from diverse backgrounds, especially individuals from under-represented communities. We are also keen to hear from those with lived experience of educational inequality or social exclusion.

What we offer

We provide a comprehensive induction programme, ongoing training, and mentorship to support your development as a Trustee. We value the personal growth and visibility of our Trustees, and encourage all Board members to take part in our community and organisational life.

How to Apply

To apply, please send your CV (including two references) and a covering letter or short video message explaining:

- What you would bring to ASDAN
- Why you are interested in joining our Board

Applications should be submitted by email to: trustees@asdan.org.uk

If you would like an informal chat before submitting your application, please contact **Emma Wakeman** at trustees@asdan.org.uk

- Closing date: Monday 30 June
- Shortlisted candidates will be invited to attend an informal panel interview at our Bristol office in late July.

