

**board
room**
apprentice

Boardroom Apprentice 2017 to 2021

The Story So Far



Integrity | Responsibility | Honesty | Commitment | Passion | Motivation

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2017
29 Apprentices
& 24 Host Boards

2018
31 Apprentices
& 31 Host Boards

2019
49 Apprentices
& 49 Host Boards

2020
54 Apprentices
& 53 Host Boards

2021
60 Apprentices
& 59 Host Boards



Boardroom Apprentice has **grown** year on year from its launch in 2017.

It is a 12-month unique board learning, development and placement programme which enables a **diversity** of new people to **come forward, learn, give their time and share their skills** with third and public-sector boards.

It aims to **unlock** a wider diversity of skills and knowledge to enable a diverse range of individuals to play their part within boardroom settings and **move the Board Member role from aspiration to reality.**

918 Applicants have applied to Boardroom Apprentice over the last five years to be empowered to enter the board room.

In open questions on motivation and hopes for applying to the Boardroom Apprentice Programme **46.3%** of **160** pre-surveyed **2019, 2020 and 2021** Apprentices cited developing their **confidence** as key to entering the board room, particularly the confidence to use their voice, implement their skills, and apply to board positions. Prior to attending the learning days, confidence was low, with only **14.2%** of Apprentices feeling confident.

“I want to gain the skills to be able to confidently apply for public and voluntary sector board appointments despite feeling I am not 'worthy' ”.

“I believe I have strong technical and people skills but lack the confidence to convey this effectively”.

“I want to have the confidence in my ability and contribution”

Boardroom Apprentice supports people who want to enter the boardroom but lack the **confidence to participate.**



918 Applicants have applied to Boardroom Apprentice over the last five years to be empowered to enter the board room.

In open questions on motivation and hopes for applying to the Boardroom Apprentice Programme **99.4%** of **160** pre-surveyed **2019, 2020 and 2021** Apprentices cited developing their **skills, knowledge and experience** as key to entering the board room. On average, only **19.5%** of Apprentices felt they had good or excellent understanding of the skills and knowledge needed to be a board member.

“I hope gain some experience on sitting on a board and learn more about governance and how boards operate, their purpose and function and the legalities of being on a board”.

“I hope to gain the knowledge required to enable me to make a valuable contribution to a board in the Future”.

Boardroom Apprentice supports people who want to enter the boardroom but they feel they lack the **skills, knowledge and experience** to participate.



“I want to close my theory - practice gap with regards to the role and function of Boards”.

918 Applicants have applied to Boardroom Apprentice over the last five years to be empowered to enter the board room.

In open questions on motivation and hopes for applying to the Boardroom Apprentice Programme **21.9%** of **160** pre-surveyed **2019, 2020 and 2021** Apprentices cited overcoming a lack of **motivation** as key to entering the board room, and highlighted the importance of this programme in motivating them into the boardroom. These Apprentices wanted to step outside their comfort zone, to challenge and stretch themselves, and this programme provided the opportunity many were looking for but didn't know existed.

“Life is passing me by and I don't feel that I have made the difference I should have or have the potential to make”.

“To challenge myself with something new and out of my comfort zone”

Boardroom Apprentice is about harnessing the **motivation to serve and supporting people to learn how they can give back in this way.**



“The enthusiasm of everyone involved in the programme in previous years from apprentices and boards was infectious and I wanted to be a part of it”.

918 Applicants have applied to Boardroom Apprentice over the last five years to be empowered to enter the board room.

In open questions on motivation and hopes for applying to the Boardroom Apprentice Programme **50%** of **160** pre-surveyed **2019, 2020 and 2021** Apprentices cited wanting to make a **positive impact** as key to entering the board room. Whilst all Apprentices were looking to gain Board positions in the future and positively benefit their host board, **50%** specifically articulated their desire to make a positive impact on their community or support a charity or cause close to them.

“I hope that after this exciting year I will be able to use the skills and experience I have gained to benefit other organisations.

“I want to give something back and be involved in the boardroom decision making process”.

“I want to contribute rather than sit on the side-lines commenting on how decisions are made”.

“I feel that I need to be doing something to help others and give something back to our society”.

Boardroom Apprentice supports people who want to enter the boardroom as they aspire to **give their time and share their skills with third and public-sector boards and make a positive impact.**



92% Attendance Rate

163 Apprentices have completed their Boardroom journey. From **77** post-surveyed Apprentices in the **2019 and 2020** classes:

97.3% rated the capacity of the Programme to raise confidence as Excellent (**77.6%**) or Good (**19.7%**).

98.1% rated the Trainer's style and manner as Excellent (**78.7%**) or Good (**19.4%**).

100% rated the delivery of the Programme as Excellent (**73.6%**) or Good (**26.3%**).

98.7% rated the relevance of the programme to a board room setting as Excellent (**70.1%**) or Good (**28.6%**).

96.7% of Apprentices considered the learning days* Excellent (**65.2%**) or Good (**31.4%**).

93.5% of Apprentices felt the Learning and Development Programme had exceeded (**68.8%**) or met (**24.7%**) their hopes and expectations.

Boardroom Apprentice delivers a comprehensive learning and development programme as one of their three core pillars to equip participants with the tools, knowledge and understanding they need to enter the boardroom.



163 Apprentices have completed their Boardroom journey. From the surveyed **2019, 2020 & 2021** Apprentices:

From Pre-Programme to Post-Programme Apprentices' good or excellent understanding of:

- Commitment required to be a board member **increased** from **28.8%** to **96%**.
- Personal responsibilities of being a Boardroom Apprentice **increased** from **28.8%** to **96%**.
- Legal responsibilities and duties of a Board Member **increased** from **11.3%** to **92%**.
- Different communication styles / techniques and how these apply in a board room context **increased** from **13.1%** to **94%**.

Boardroom Apprentice delivers a comprehensive learning and development programme as one of their three core pillars to **equip** participants with the **tools, knowledge and understanding** they need to enter the boardroom.

“This programme is the perfect roadmap to becoming a Board member. It provides you with the knowledge and skills that will give you the confidence to apply for that Boardroom position”.

Before and after the 2020 learning days
Confidence **increased** from **14.2%** to **75.0%**.
Nervousness **decreased** from **58.4%** to **10.0%**.

163 Apprentices have completed their Boardroom journey. From the surveyed **2019, 2020 & 2021** Apprentices:

Apprentices strongly agreed:

- they had valuable skills to bring to a board which **increased** from **3.8%** to **62.3%**.
- they had confidence in building new relationships and interacting with host board which **increased** from **10.6%** to **61.0%**.
- their confidence to ask questions at meetings and challenge when necessary **increased** from **3.8%** to **41.6%**.
- they could analyse and present complex information and engage in constructive Q&A which **increased** from **7.5%** to **42.9%**.

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**From Pre-Programme to Post-Programme
Apprentices' good or excellent understanding of:**

- Internal and external environments, dynamics and relationships in which the Apprentice, as a Board Member, will operate, **increased** from **6.9%** to **88.3%**.
- Interpretation of financial information (annual accounts, management accounts, budgets etc.) **increased** from **23.8%** to **63.6%**.
- Board Members responsibilities for an organisations finance **increased** from **12.5%** to **89.6%**.
- Analysis of complex information and formulation of questions **increased** from **18.1%** to **87.0%**.

163 Apprentices have completed their Boardroom journey. From the surveyed **2019 & 2020** Apprentices:

By the end of the programme, Apprentices had:

- **50.0%** excellent and **45.0%** good understanding of the wider context of Boards within the Public and Third sectors.
- **41.6%** excellent and **46.8%** good understanding of the environment they are walking into as a Boardroom Apprentice.
- **76.6%** excellent and **19.5%** good understanding on the expectations and commitments required as a Boardroom Apprentice.

**Boardroom
Apprentice and
Governance**

Boardroom Apprentice delivers a comprehensive learning and development programme as one of their three core pillars to equip participants with the tools, knowledge and understanding they need to enter the boardroom.

- **8.2%** excellent and **60.2%** good understanding of the legal structure of board in public bodies, charitable companies, and charitable trusts.
- **19.4%** excellent and **64.3%** good understanding of the legal duties and responsibilities of a Board member.
- **11.2%** excellent and **59.2%** good understanding of boardroom procedures and policies.
- **16.3%** excellent and **65.3%** good understanding of conflicts of interest and the management of them.

163 Apprentices have completed their Boardroom journey. From the surveyed **2019 & 2020** Apprentices:

By the end of the programme, Apprentices had

- **29.8%** excellent and **58.3%** good understanding of personal communication style and how to apply this knowledge successfully in a range of situations.
- **33.3%** excellent and **52.4%** good understanding of how to build rapport and engage successfully with people at all levels.
- **23.8%** excellent and **54.8%** good understanding of motivation, where it comes from and how to apply it to achieve successful outcomes in life and work.

Communication and Questioning

Boardroom Apprentice delivers a comprehensive learning and development programme as one of their three core pillars to **equip** participants with the **tools, knowledge and understanding** they need to enter the boardroom.

- **27.4%** excellent and **56.0%** good understanding of recognising and appropriately using different questioning techniques.
- **20.7%** excellent and **57.5%** good understanding of how to critically analyse complex documents.
- **17.2%** excellent and **62.1%** good understanding of assessing the importance to be attributed to statements made within documents.

163 Apprentices have completed their Boardroom journey. From the surveyed **2019 & 2020** Apprentices:

By the end of the programme, Apprentices had

- **33.7%** excellent and **47.7%** good understanding of board members' responsibilities for the Organisation's finances.
- **25.6%** excellent and **47.7%** good understanding of basic financial terminology and how to interpret financial statements.
- **25.6%** excellent and **50.0%** good understanding of what key financial information to expect in reports to the Board and what to do with this.

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- **38.0%** excellent and **52.0%** good understanding of the Principles of partnership working.
- **34.0%** excellent and **56.0%** good understanding of the "who" in partnerships.
- **32.0%** excellent and **60.0%** good understanding of the "how" in partnerships.

**Numbers and
Partnerships**

163 Apprentices have completed their Boardroom journey. From the **40** surveyed **2020** Apprentices who participated in a “It’s all about what’s next!” learning day:

By the end of the programme

- **67.5%** strongly agreed and **32.5%** agreed they know how they could transfer their skills, knowledge and experience to an application for a board role.
- **67.5%** strongly agreed and **32.5%** agreed they could translate their Boardroom Apprentice experience to an application for a board role.
- **64.1%** strongly agreed and **33.3%** agreed they feel confident in making an application for a board room role.

Boardroom Apprentice delivers a comprehensive learning and development programme as one of their three core pillars to **equip** participants with the **tools, knowledge and understanding** they need to enter the boardroom.



163 Apprentices have completed the programme to date.

79 Apprentices from the first 3 cohorts responded to a follow up survey 12 months after programme completion on what they did next.

Graduates recorded increased confidence, realisation and appreciation of existing skills, increased knowledge and understanding of key governance issues, benefits of on the ground practical experience of sitting on a board and opportunities to network.

97.5% of surveyed Apprentices felt the Boardroom Apprentice Programme equipped them to apply for board positions.

Boardroom Apprentice moves the Board Member role from **aspiration to reality** as graduates use the skills, knowledge and confidence they developed in the programme to move **into the board room** and further their careers.



From the **79** Apprentices in who responded to the follow up survey:

- **22.8%** remained with their host boards
- **60.3%** have applied for a board position and
- Overall, **50.6%** were appointed to a board position within 12 months of completing Boardroom Apprentice .

100% of surveyed Apprentices believed the Boardroom Apprentice Programme helped them to perform effectively in their new board position.

Graduates referenced increased confidence, more knowledge and understanding and increased “readiness” to play their part as vital received help to perform effectively in their new board position.

Boardroom Apprentice moves the Board Member role from **aspiration to reality** as graduates use the skills, knowledge and confidence they developed in the programme to move **into the board room** and further their careers.



94.9% of **79** follow up surveyed Apprentices believed they had been able to transfer learning and experience gained from the programme into professional practice.

Surveyed Apprentices recorded increased confidence, realisation and appreciation of existing skills, increased knowledge and understanding of key governance issues, benefits of on the ground practical experience of sitting on a board and opportunities to network.

68.4% of surveyed Apprentices have experienced career progression since completing the programme.

77.8% of these individuals believed the Boardroom Apprentice Programme contributed to this career progression.

Boardroom Apprentice moves the Board Member role from **aspiration to reality** as graduates use the skills, knowledge and confidence they developed in the programme to move **into the board room** and further their careers.



39.7% of the **79** follow up surveyed Apprentices have not applied for a board position since completing the programme.

96.6% of these individuals anticipated they would apply for a board position in the future.

Some surveyed Apprentices had put their future in the board room on hold as they were simply waiting for the right opportunity i.e. a board position that interested them in an area they were passionate about.

Some surveyed Apprentices had put their future in the board room on hold due to personal or professional changes; such as health reasons, return to further education, increased responsibility in own job, and time commitments required.

Boardroom Apprentice moves the Board Member role from aspiration to reality as graduates use the skills, knowledge and confidence they developed in the programme to move **into the board room** and further their careers.



223 Apprentices have started or completed their Boardroom journey.

Gender

77.6% of Apprentices were female and **22.4%** were male.

Marital Status

62.8% Apprentices were married or in a civil partnership and **37.2%** were single.

Geography

70.4% of applicants lived outside of the Belfast City Council area. Results show a wide geographical spread across NI.

Community Background

54.5% were from the Roman Catholic Community
35.5% were from the Protestant Community
10.0% were from neither denomination.

Boardroom Apprentice has provided an **open, inclusive and accessible** programme.

The diversity of Apprentices closely follows the demographic spread of applicants; with a **strong focus on targeting all ages (over 16), all backgrounds and all abilities**, and positively impacting on gaps in the boardroom in **female representation** and those **under the age of 50**.

“At its heart is equal opportunity. No matter what gender, age, culture or race, if you possess drive and commitment, it’s within your grasp”.

223 Apprentices have started or completed their Boardroom journey.

Racial Group

4.5% identified as being from a minority ethnic group.

Sexual Orientation

94.2% identified as straight
1.3% identified as gay/ lesbian
and **2.2%** identified as bisexual.

Age

14.8% were under 30
38.6% were aged 30-39
31.8% were aged 40-49
12.1% were aged 50-59
2.2% were over 60.

Disability

3.1% considered themselves to have a disability.

Dependants/ Caring Responsibilities

54% had dependants/ caring responsibilities.

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“This programme puts into practice what other people simply talk about: no point talking about diversity on boards without a plan on how to make it happen and this programme bridges that gap”.

“I couldn’t do it justice in one sentence, but biggest benefit for me is the new level of confidence I have in myself”.

“The Boardroom Apprentice has helped me see that I have the skills relevant for board participation and that I would be able to make a difference”

"Boardroom Apprentice has taught me that everyone can bring something to the table, regardless of your age or experience. I would encourage anyone who thinks they're too young to sit on a board to apply anyway!

“Boardroom Apprentice demystified the whole process for me and actually gave me more confidence in participating on a Board”.

“I’ve become comfortable with being uncomfortable, I have gained a lot of confidence professionally and personally as a result of Boardroom Apprentice”.

Boardroom Apprentice has empowered the Apprentices’ self-belief and recognition of their own skills, lived experience and how these are easily transferred into the Boardroom. The very practical nature of the programme exposes them to how to apply these skills when it comes to the boards key roles of strategy, accountability and culture.

Underscoring all of this is the increased confidence.

“I felt empowered to contribute to local organisations which matter to me and my family.”

“Boardroom Apprentice has been an incredible and unique experience. I have gained knowledge, confidence, new skills and new connections with fantastic people. It’s a sanctuary for professional and personal development”.

“I now feel like I am worthy to have a seat at the table of a board”.

“The experience and learning was a core part of what helped me to progress in my career.”

“I have learnt what good governance looks like and what strong leadership at Board level can do to support an organisation and its people. On a personal level, it has taught me further about where my strengths and weaknesses lie and what I need to work on going forward”.

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