

Emma Hutton talks about her experience as an SLCC Board Member

Joining the board of the Scottish Legal Complaints Commission has been a rewarding and fascinating experience for me.

When I applied to become a lay member of the board, my main motivations were around ensuring consumers had a strong voice around the table, and that the Commission was delivering its services in line with equality and human rights standards.

While I have retained that focus throughout my time on the board, I have also learned a huge amount about other operational and governance challenges involved in complaints handling.

One challenge has been around ensuring efficient performance while driving up quality, and maintaining an appropriate role for the board in that process. Another has been around overseeing appropriate strategic engagement with the variety of external stakeholders that we are accountable to – consumers of legal services, the legal profession itself, the Scottish Government and Parliament who are responsible for the statutory framework within which we operate.

On a more personal level, it has been extremely valuable for me to gain practical experience of being “on the other side” of the board table. Although I had experience of board memberships within third sector organisations prior to my appointment, this is my first public sector board appointment. As I also work in a public body as a senior executive, it’s been really helpful for me to better understand the challenges and pressures experienced by the people I’m accountable to in my day job.

As someone who comes from a non-legal, non-operational background, it’s sometimes been hard work to keep up with the detail of the issues we are asked to consider, and to feel able to make a meaningful contribution. Equally, I know that I have also been able to bring a different perspective to discussions, which I think has been useful.

Finally, it’s been a real pleasure to work with and get to know the staff team at the SLCC, who are all consummate professionals and also a very friendly and welcoming team of people. I will miss everyone when I come to the end of my term.

I hope that new board members will bring fresh thinking and new perspectives to the organisation, particularly as the world adapts to life post-Covid.

Emma Hutton
SLCC Board Member (lay member)