

TF: WE'RE OFTEN ASKED ABOUT MAKING THE MOVE FROM EXECUTIVE TO NON-EXECUTIVE WORK, HOW DID YOU SECURE YOUR PORTFOLIO OF WORK?

EM: Personal connections and networks play an important role here. You can't work for a long time without knowing people and building a good network and it is important to nurture and maintain that network. I've always felt a profound sense of duty that if something is really hard and needs doing that you should be willing to walk towards these roles. Someone once told me you can have a mindset that allows you to run towards bullets or a strong preference to run away from them and I've always tried to be willing to walk towards them. Some people think having a portfolio career is in some ways easier but it's not, if you want a portfolio career you shouldn't shy away from the hardest jobs – they need and deserve the best people.

TF: DID YOU FIND THE TRANSITION FROM EXECUTIVE TO NON-EXECUTIVE A CHALLENGE?

EM: I did face some withdrawal symptoms initially but I was fortunate in my role with Bradford Children and Families Trust that it felt very much like being an executive Chair of a start-up. The realisation that there's nothing in your direct gift that you can do or get done in isolation is a brilliant gift as a Chair, instead you are fully focused on bringing in the right people to move things along at pace. I looked forward to new people joining the organisation and populating the executive team to allow me to reposition my role into far more of non-executive chair space.

Another observation about moving into a portfolio career was that the "wrapper" that exists around you when working as an executive in an organisation disappears – I still miss this. As Chair you must realise the limitations and focus of your role because you aren't there as Chief Executive or a Director. You must focus on the right things, create the conditions for the leadership team to succeed, for organisational purpose and ambition to be defined and delivered and you have to recalibrate your role constantly. You are there to make sure good governance and assurance is in place, you are driving improvements and focusing on relationships with key partners.