



All you need to know about being a pension fund trustee 2006/2007 Edition

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Becoming a trustee of an occupational pension scheme is an increasingly challenging role. In reality, the majority of newly-appointed trustees do not appreciate the scope of the role they take on, and are unprepared for the task. The stated aim of this book is to provide “a practical and sensible guide for trustees who need help to do their jobs more effectively”. The text is accessible and easily readable, with little technical jargon.

The chapter headings and contents page are quirky and the topics covered are not immediately obvious. For example, there are chapters titled “OK, so there are some boring bits”, “Making up the numbers” and “Loose, but important, ends”. However, the index is organised in a conventional manner, and at the beginning of each chapter there is a speed-read summary. This orientates the reader, and the busy reader or the person who just needs to dip into the book for information on a particular topic will also find it useful.

The book includes chapters on trustees, the history of pension schemes, professional advisers and consultants, scheme investment, the Pensions Regulator and clearance. In each chapter there is a practical example to illustrate the points and issues raised in the text, some of which will be familiar. For example, the book includes the story of WH Smith and Permira and the switch from equities into bond investments by the Boots scheme. The author spoke to a number of leading trustees and actuaries when preparing the book and they are quoted in the book itself.

The book raises a number of big picture points, including scheme governance and the history behind the current pensions crisis. Unusually, this book highlights the issue of conflicts of interest between the trustees and the employer, which may in turn lead to conflicts between the trustees themselves. Frequently, the question of conflicts of interest is barely acknowledged or, if noted, its impact is downplayed. Its inclusion here must be welcomed.

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