

March 2017



The right people around the table

*How to recruit and retain new governors and trustees to
school and academy boards in England*

Inspiring Governance partnership

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“Many boards are already reaping the rewards of recruiting people from business and I call on more schools to make use of the DfE funded services from Academy Ambassadors and from Inspiring Governance, a new service from the Education & Employers Taskforce and the National Governance Association.”

Lord Nash, Under Secretary of State for Schools

What's inside?

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You're reading a National Governance Association (NGA) guide. It will help you to recruit and retain governors and trustees and complement the Inspiring Governance service.

Inspiring Governance is a free online recruitment service, which connects volunteers interested in serving as governors and trustees with schools.

The NGA provides free induction and support for Inspiring Governance volunteers once they're in post as well as help for employers that want to run engaging programmes for their staff serving as governors and trustees.

Inspiring Governance is funded by the Department for Education. It is run by the charity Education and Employers in partnership with the NGA, with help from Academy Ambassadors, the Association of School and College Leaders and the National Association of Head Teachers.

This practical guide will show you how to plan and carry out the recruitment process and will highlight useful resources along the way. If you are looking for a new governor or trustee, get started by signing up to Inspiring Governance: www.inspiringgovernance.org

Getting the right people around the

table... does not begin when your governing board finds itself with a vacancy. It's a cycle that begins with evaluating what you've already got and then making a decision about who you need now and in the future.

Getting the right people around the table is also one of NGA's Eight Elements of Effective Governance:

1. The right people around the table
2. Understanding roles & responsibilities
3. Good chairing
4. Professional clerking
5. Good relationships based on trust
6. Knowing the school – the data, the staff, the parents, the children and the community
7. Commitment to asking challenging questions
8. Confidence to have courageous conversations in the interests of the children and young people.

Building a successful team is... about achieving balance and diversity in skills and experiences and then investing in the development of people. We understand how tricky this can be especially in certain areas of the country, which is why we have put together this guide. We hope you'll find everything you need here to find skilled and committed people to lead your school or trust. If you have any feedback on this guide contact mark.gardner@nga.org.uk

Time spent getting the right

person is... time well spent. Consider the role each member of the governing board should play in the leadership of your school (or group of schools). If you get the right person, it will not only have a positive impact on the rest of the board but also the school and the community at large. Let's get started.

1. Evaluating: skills, composition and current practice

The chair (as leader of the governing board) with the support of the clerk (as constitutional and procedural advisor) is responsible for the capability of the governing board as a whole. This involves evaluating: the range of knowledge and skills on the board, the structures, current practice and whether everyone is being used in the best way. It also means recognising any training needs and whether new governors or trustees are needed now or as part of a succession plan for the future.

If you are governing at academy level within a multi academy trust then this exercise may need to be done as part of a trust-wide exercise.

a) Evaluation: looking at current skills

To find out what skills you already have available to you on the board try using NGA's free [skills audit](#). NGA has also produced a free [skills matrix](#) to help make sense of the responses you get from the audit.

In January 2017 the Department for Education published a new competency framework for governance. This document categorises the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed for effective governance in schools, academies and multi academy trusts. We'll return to this later in the chapter.

The board's clerk can carry out the audit for the board. By using the competency framework, a skills audit and some analysis, you'll get a good picture of the skills your governing board has as well as the skills it is lacking. Now you can identify any gaps that need to be filled.

Example of how to use the NGA skills audit and matrix:

"After explaining the reasons for carrying out the audit at a full governors meeting, the chair set up a panel made up of one governor, the vice chair and our clerk. The clerk sent out the audit form electronically, asking every governor to fill out the form by a deadline. Once she had received the audit forms, the clerk collated the information using the NGA's matrix.

When the panel met up to discuss the findings, it was already clear to us that we lacked someone who could analyse financial information and that our collective knowledge of Special Educational Needs was shaky. At the next resources committee meeting we presented the findings of the audit to the committee of governors, rating our areas of greatest strength and weakness. We also recommended that we recruit a new governor for the September term to specifically address the finance issue, and look to improve the skills of existing governors with specific training in SEN."

- A Primary School Governor

b) Evaluation: the board's composition

Part of the evaluation process is considering whether the composition of the board is still fit for purpose.

Our annual survey of governors and trustees tells us that a quarter of governing boards are comprised of 10 members or fewer. Most school governing boards have between 11-15 members. If your board is larger than 15 members you should consider whether the board might run better with fewer. If some members of the board do not attend often or do not participate actively when they do, think about whether their place on the board is surplus to requirements, that is, if you are functioning without them. Likewise, if you have a number of 'vacancies' on paper but are actually running efficiently without filling them, you should consider formalising a reduction in size.

In maintained schools, governing boards must not be smaller than seven members and must include at least two elected parent governors, the headteacher (unless the headteacher chooses not to take up the position), one elected staff governor, one local authority (LA) governor and as many additional co-opted governors as necessary. The number of co-opted governors that would also qualify to be staff governors is limited to one third of the governing board, when you include the headteacher and staff governor.

An academy trust must have a minimum of 2 elected parent directors. In a MAT this requirement may be fulfilled at academy committee level. The constitution of an academy trust board, and any of its academy committees (often called local governing

bodies), is laid out in its articles of association and scheme of delegation.

The questions to ask as part of the evaluation of the composition are:

- Is the board the right size? Not too big or too small?
- Do you have good debates covering the relevant issues and angles, but not so many voices that the discussion gets unwieldy or regularly inconclusive?
- Do you have enough people to carry out the board's duties?
- Do you have the right committee structure and are the same people on every committee?
- How does the composition of the board, as set out on paper, reflect the way we really work as a group?

Maintained schools have an Instrument of Government which sets out the composition of the governing board.

Once you have decided on a composition that works for you arrange for your clerk to contact your local authority to change the Instrument of Government. If the Articles of Association need to be changed the trust will need to consult its lawyers.

See appendix 4
for detail about
the types of
governor and
trustee

c) Evaluation: current practice

When recruiting for new governors/trustees it's a good chance for the board to think about its current governance practice. How effective is it? What do existing governors or trustees think about the way the board works? What are its strengths and weaknesses? What opportunities and threats are on the horizon? This is known as a SWOT analysis. It will also help the board to identify the sort of help it may need in addition to new board members.

[Click here for more ideas about training and development](#)

Many governing/trustee boards use the [20 Key Questions for Governing Boards](#) or [21 Key Questions for Multi Academy Trust Boards](#) to review the work of the board. Both these documents are published by the All Party Parliamentary Group for Education Governance and Leadership and can be found at www.nga.org.uk

NGA has teamed up with Evalu8 to provide an [online version of the 20 questions](#); the results are set out in a clear colour coded format which makes it really easy to identify potential areas for development.

Does every member of the board play their part? It is good practice for the chair or the vice chair of the board to meet with each trustee or governor once a year to discuss how the board is working, their contribution and how it may be improved and look ahead to the future with an eye on succession.



TIP! Review the practice of the board annually as part of an external review or self-review of governance. For more info visit www.nga.org.uk/training

d) Evaluation: who do we need: skills, experience and knowledge

All governors and trustees should have relevant skills and experiences to contribute to the work of the governing board, which collectively needs to have a range of backgrounds and competences appropriate to its responsibilities.

The three core functions for governing boards are:

1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
2. Holding the executive leader to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils; and the performance management of staff; and
3. Overseeing the financial performance of the school(s) and making sure money is well spent.

As well as having the time to carry out the three core functions, governors and trustees must be prepared to adopt the seven principles of public life ([the Nolan principles](#)). In addition, some essential skills and attributes of good governors and trustees are:

Committed

Devoting the required time and energy to the role and being ambitious to achieve the best possible outcomes for young people. Prepared to give time, skills and knowledge to developing themselves and others in order to create highly effective governance.

Confident

Of an independent mind, able to lead and contribute to courageous conversations, to

express their opinion and to play an active role on the board.

Curious

Possessing an enquiring mind and an analytical approach and understanding the value of meaningful questioning.

Challenging

Providing appropriate challenge to the status quo, not taking information or data at face value and always seeking to improve things.

Collaborative

Prepared to listen to and work in partnership with others and understanding the importance of building strong working relationships within the board and with executive leaders, staff, parents and carers, pupils/students, the local community and employers.

Critical

Understanding the value of critical friendship which enables challenge and support. Self-reflective, pursuing learning and development opportunities to improve their own and whole board effectiveness.

Creative

Able to challenge conventional wisdom and be open-minded about new approaches to problem-solving; recognising the value of innovation and creative thinking to organisational development and success.

There is a wide [range of competencies](#) that can also be useful on a governing board, including knowledge of: the techniques and strategies used to measure teaching quality, pupil progress and attainment, financial management and accountancy, organisational change management, legal, human resources, property/estates management, procurement and contracting services, project management, equal opportunities, special needs, quality assurance and service improvement, risk management, health and safety, marketing and public relations, IT and creativity.

In January 2017 the Department for Education published a [Competency Framework for Governance](#), which is designed to help governing boards assess what knowledge, skills and behaviour are needed to govern the school, or group of schools, effectively. It is meant to help with things like board performance reviews, identifying training needs, succession planning and induction. It may also help you prepare interview questions. It is not a checklist though and NGA advises boards not to simply hand this document over to applicants. Much better to use friendlier more accessible documents, such as [our role description](#).

Many governors/trustees will have more than one of these skills. On the other hand, if there is a shortage in one area across the whole team this may need to be rectified either by training or by recruiting someone to the board with the necessary skills, or both.



TIP! [Click here for our model role descriptions for governors and trustees](#) which is useful for explaining what school governance is and what it is not.

e) Evaluation: Balance and diversity

The 2016 National Governance Association and TES survey found that governing boards in England do not tend to reflect the ethnicity and diversity of the population at large.

Is your board as diverse as it should be in terms of age, ethnicity, gender and social background?

Diverse and inclusive boards can bring fresh perspectives to the way a school is governed. They can access a wider pool of talent and skill, set an example about inclusion 'from the top down' and demonstrate a commitment to their own diversity policy. It also brings knowledge and sometimes a different perspective that can ensure the board does not succumb to 'group think'.

Top tips to get more participation from under-represented groups

1. Use appropriate language and imagery on adverts. For example, a stock photograph of an all-white, male group might send the wrong message when trying to attract those from black and minority ethnic backgrounds.
2. Remember, people want experiences that are interesting, challenging, worthwhile, relevant to the rest of their lives and concerns, and make a difference to others.
3. Highlight the skills that young professionals can contribute but also gain.
4. Emphasise that all out of pocket expenses will be reimbursed.

5. Try recruiting through specialist centres and contacting organisations run by (or for) people with disabilities. For example, special schools, local university disabled students' coordinators or committees.
6. Work with established community groups and volunteer networks such as [Volunteering England](#).

It's important for governors and trustees to understand that they are not on the board to represent anyone or a particular group but to use their own judgement to act in the best interests of the pupils at the school.



Currently a pilot in London and Birmingham, the Young Governors' Network is for governors and trustees aged under 40. The network has been set up so that younger governors can find support and resources, share any problems they are facing, and improve their own practice. To find out more visit www.nga.org.uk/ygn

Inspiring Governance is beginning another pilot project in the Midlands to increase the number of volunteers from black and minority ethnic communities. If you would find out more, please contact richard.ellam@educationandemployers.org

f) Evaluation: exit interviews

Exit interviews are a good chance for the governor or trustee who is leaving to reflect on their own work and the work of the board.

Most importantly an exit interview is designed to enable the transfer of knowledge and experience from the departing governor to the rest of the board. Make sure you thank him/her them for their efforts and take the time to reflect on their answers in order to improve things in future.

They also give the interviewer (normally the chair) an opportunity to provide feedback to the individual about their contribution and iron out any issues raised by their departure.



Inspiring Governance

Search quickly and easily for governors and trustees in your area using Inspiring Governance: www.inspiringgovernance.org
Filter candidates by location, skills and experience.

Below are some example questions. If some of these were covered in a recent performance review there's no need to go over old ground, but you might want to ask whether they have anything that needs to be added to what's been said.

Expectations and experience

If leaving before end of office) what caused you to think about stepping down?

Were your responsibilities characterised correctly during the interview process and induction?

Did you have clear goals and know what was expected of you as a governor?

How did the role match your initial expectations?

Training and development

What improvement could be made to the way that you were inducted?

What training and development did you find most helpful and enjoyable?

Relationships and ways of working

Did you always feel welcome and encouraged to share your thoughts, concerns and questions with me or anyone on the board?

What could you say about communication to and between governors/trustees, and how these could be improved?

Leadership of the board

Did you receive adequate feedback about your performance during your term of office?

What could we do to improve the management of the board?

Impact and making a difference

*Did you clearly understand and feel a part of the accomplishment of the schools vision and goals?
What did you dislike most about being a governor?*

What would you change about the role?

Do you feel that you had the support necessary to be a governor? If not, what was missing?

What extra responsibility would you have welcomed that you were not given?

2. Recruiting: attracting good candidates

Once you have evaluated the skills on your governing board you'll have a good idea of the 'gap' in knowledge, skills or experience that you need to plug.

Anyone who is over 18 can be a school governor or trustee, unless they are disqualified ([you can find the disqualification criteria here](#)). They don't need to be a parent.

a) Attracting good candidates: setting up a panel

When the governing board has decided to recruit they'll also need to decide who will take the lead. This will depend on how many governors or trustees are needed. If you have more than one new governor or trustee to find, you may decide to set up a task and finish group to plan and supervise the process on behalf of the board. The clerk should carry out the administrative work.

If the board does not have the power to appoint, its role is to liaise with the appointing body and decide how the board can help. For example, it may be that the board recommends candidates for appointment. The appointing body should welcome such cooperation from the board.

For those vacancies which can be filled by the board, the panel will coordinate the process from beginning until end; making their recommendation to the board. The clerk should be the single point of contact for candidates looking to find out more information.

A note on appointments

Finding governors and trustees to join the board is one thing. Appointing them is another. Different schools have different methods of appointing so you need to know who has the final say at your school or group of schools. Here's a rough guide:

Type of school	Power to appoint governors or trustees rests with:
Foundation Voluntary Aided Voluntary Controlled	Governing body and/or founding body
Community	Governing body
Academy, Multi Academy Trust and Free School	Members or trustee board, founding body or sponsor

The panel can be made up of 3 or 4 governors or trustees, including the chair or vice chair. Its remit will depend on the scale of the recruitment but most will include:

- Agreeing the role description where one has not already been approved
- Deciding where and how to advertise
- Informing applicants about what's involved, including key responsibilities, time commitment and the requirement to undertake an enhanced DBS check
- Keeping the chair informed of progress (if they are not part of the group)
- Taking up references
- Shortlisting and presenting their recommendations to the board

- Compiling the induction pack (see page 16)

The formal decision on the appointment of new governors or trustees cannot be delegated.

Once a shortlist has been decided each candidate should be interviewed to discuss the role, responsibilities, time commitment and requirement for a DBS check. We outline this process [here](#).

The school's reception will need to be informed that a board recruitment process has started. Leave the clerk's details at the desk for any enquiries to be redirected. The success of the recruitment process will depend on this process being as smooth as possible.



Inspiring Governance!

You can use Inspiring Governance to find a new chair. Just tick the option when you register a vacancy at:
www.inspiringgovernance.org

a) How do we find good candidates:
national volunteer banks

There are national charities working to place volunteers in schools as governors and trustees.



Inspiring Governance is a new service that connects skilled volunteers interested in serving as governors/trustees with schools and colleges that need them.

Inspiring Governance is run by the charity Education and Employers in partnership with the National Governance Association. It works with Academy Ambassadors, the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL), the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) and others. Inspiring Governance is funded by the Department for Education and is **completely free** for all users.

How it works

Volunteers sign-up online and join a national database. Governing boards can search this database easily to find a local volunteer with the skills or experience their board needs. Inspiring Governance uses smart online technology, which already engages over 6,000 schools and 30,000 volunteers across the country. Hands-on support will be provided where necessary.

As part of the Inspiring Governance service, the National Governance Association is providing free support and expert guidance for volunteers who become governors/trustees via a new dedicated helpline, as well as induction materials and online guidance. NGA is also providing governing boards with free advice and support on the recruitment of chairs.

To access the bank go to www.inspiringgovernance.org and sign up to start recruiting.



Academy Ambassadors is a non-profit organisation that recruits high-calibre business people and leading employers as trustees to multi-academy trusts. They provide a recruitment advisory and search service and their national database includes a range of candidates that can support growing and medium-large trusts, in particular finding trustees with financial, change management, risk and HR/legal skills. **The service is free.** www.academyambassadors.org

How it works

Multi-academy trusts register with Academy Ambassadors to access the services of an advisor who will help the trust compile a role description to advertise the specific roles required to enhance the board. The trust is provided with a list of sifted candidates and the trust leads the recruitment process. Those appointed through Academy Ambassadors receive an induction pack, 'On Board' induction meeting and access to an annual conference. Note that the service is not available to single LA schools or GBs within MATs, but only to main MAT boards.

Do-it

Do-it volunteering database is a national database of volunteering opportunities generally but includes school governance. Create a volunteering opportunity for a school governor online at <https://do-it.org/>

b) How do we find good candidates: parent and staff governor elections

For elected staff and parent categories of governor, the recruitment process is different to the co-opting or associate category as there will need to be an election. Your school should have a procedure for how this is to be run, including who will oversee the process (normally the headteacher) and who will act as the returning officer (normally the clerk).



These packs include:

- Guidance notes on creating a procedure for electing parent governors
- A model election procedure that can be easily adapted for your own school
- A model nomination letter
- A model nomination form
- A model letter to parents for election ballot
- A model ballot paper
- A copy of the qualifications and disqualifications to serve as a school governor.

When you call an election and seek candidates be clear about the skills needed by the governing board, which have been identified by your skills audit. Highlight the time commitment, training requirements, role and responsibilities and code of conduct. It is a

good idea to arrange a meeting with interested candidates to explain the role in more detail. [NGA's role descriptions for governors and trustees can be found here.](#)

c) How do we find good candidates: advertising locally

For some categories of governor/trustee, such as elected parent or staff, the recruitment process will need to be local because the pool of candidates needs to come from the school's community.

School communications

There are a number of simple ways that the school(s) could advertise a vacancy on the governing/trustee board. For example, a letter home, placing adverts around school, in the school newsletter, and through making use of the school website and other communications. Some schools also have social media accounts which would enable you to reach many people directly for free. The parent body is likely to have a wide range of people with relevant skills too – so there is scope for the board to appoint new governors/trustees whom are parents but not necessarily as parent governors/trustees.

Schools with a religious character may also advertise vacancies through the Parish and related voluntary organisations.

Local press

For the remaining categories of governor/trustee the local press can be a useful way to get the word out. Try contacting [local radio stations](#) as they are often willing to report community stories and appeals. Another way to get the word out is by placing an advert in the jobs section of the local paper.

You might also find local shops or supermarkets have notice boards that you can use for a small fee or for free.

Local volunteer centres

Most towns and cities in England have well-established volunteer centres, placing volunteers where they are needed around the community. Volunteer centres are often a good place to start looking for volunteers. Find your local volunteer centre at: [Volunteering England](#).

Headhunting

Sometimes the best way to net the ideal candidate is by drawing up a list of people you think would fit the bill and targeting them yourself. Picking up the phone and asking outright is quick and effective. It is, however, important to be clear that at this point you are just seeking their interest; they will still need to apply and be interviewed formally. The board needs to ensure that it conducts this sort of recruitment transparently. The board must not become a clique or be perceived to be so.

Local employers

Local business people are a rich seam for new governors and trustees because they often have many transferable skills to bring from their professional life. When advertising, try to emphasise that their skills will help the board to govern well. The Nolan principles are important here as is a willingness to work alongside education professionals. Importantly, governors and trustees need a willingness to learn about their role.

Highlight the positive and rewarding contribution that governors and trustees make

to the community and the continuing professional development on offer for those who volunteer. The key reports that make the case to employers are: the City of London and Corporate Citizenship report: [Volunteering: the business case](#) (pdf) and the Confederation of British Industry report: [Leading the way](#) (pdf). More resources, including videos, can be found on the Inspiring Governance website: www.inspiringgovernance.org



TIP! Try contacting the British Chamber of Commerce. Local chambers encourage members to bridge the gap between education and business.

Local authority

All maintained schools must have one local authority governor. Local authority governors may be any person the local authority chooses to nominate for the role, but often the local authority is interested in volunteers that have approached the council to be a school governor, or candidates that the school itself suggests. Academies can still ask the local authority to nominate possible trustees or academy committee members, but in both instances the local authority nominates the candidate and the governing board chooses to appoint them, which means that the governing board decides whether the candidate has the skills necessary to contribute effectively or not.

When approaching the local authority – usually the governor services unit – specify the skills that your board needs in a candidate and the time commitment. You should reject any local authority nominated governor if they don't have the skills or are unable to make the commitment.

Some local authority governors may also work for the local authority but it's important to remember that they do not represent the council when sitting on the board, nor do they represent a political party. Local authority governors still need to be interviewed.



TIP! If you need an LA governor you can always take the initiative. Source the volunteer yourself and ask the LA to nominate them.

Foundation body

Foundation governors/trustees are either appointed to the governing board or they assume the role because they hold a certain position. Foundation governors/trustees are appointed by either the religious or foundation body to preserve the ethos and character of the school, including where the school has a religious character.

The school's Instrument of Government will set out how many foundation governors you should have. In academies, the number of trustees will be set out in the Articles of Association.

The clerk to the governing board of a school with a religious character will inform the founding body that there is a vacancy and ask that they make an appointment to join their board. Such a nominee, once appointed, is tasked with upholding the religious character of the school in addition to their other responsibilities as a governor. It is the responsibility of the person entitled to make the appointment to ensure that their nominee has the skills needed to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school.

If the vacancy is for a foundation governor/trustee appointed by the diocese, parish or other type of foundation, your skills audit will be invaluable in informing them about the type of governor or trustee that you are looking for.



Inspiring Governance!

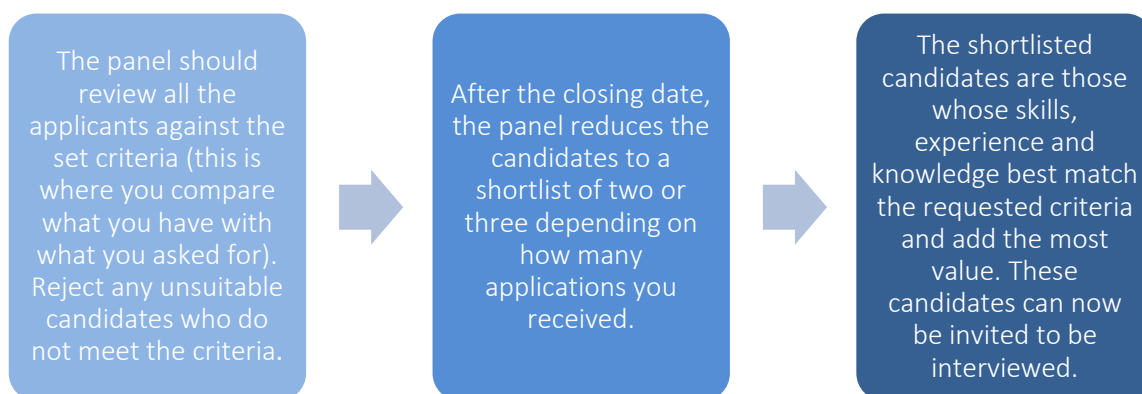
If you find and place your new recruit via the Inspiring Governance service they'll get a copy *Welcome to Governance* or *Welcome to a Multi Academy Trust*, access to an NGA helpline and much more.

You can learn more about the composition of governing boards in *Welcome to Governance* and *Welcome to a Multi Academy Trust*, free when you place a volunteer with the Inspiring Governance service or [order a copy](#).

3. Appointing: interviewing and references

Having advertised locally or nationally and/or headhunted, you have some candidates. This section explores the interview process, taking up references and making a co-opted appointment.

Shortlisting for co-opted governors and trustees



Interview

Before recommending a candidate to the full governing board for approval the candidate should be interviewed to make sure that they are suitable to join the board. This also gives the candidate an opportunity to ask questions and make an informed decision about whether governing at your school is for them.

During the interview you should take time to explain the ethos and values of the school or group of schools. You should also outline the strategic priorities. Be sure to highlight the distinction between the roles of the governing board (strategic) and the schools leadership (operational) to ensure that the potential appointee understands their remit. Getting this right is absolutely crucial.

Explain why you have shortlisted them and be up front about the challenges you face as a board.

Now is the time to be absolutely clear about the roles and responsibilities, training requirements, time commitment and requirement for an enhanced DBS check. We estimate that the time commitment is between 10 and 20 days per year – the top end of that is for governors/trustees with added commitments such as chairing committees. Training should be ongoing and begins with induction.

If your school is maintained by the local authority, you might want to point out that if the candidate is employed, under Section 50 of the *Employment Rights Act 1996*, they are entitled to 'reasonable time off' to undertake public duties; this includes school governance. Reasonable time off is not defined in law and individuals need to negotiate with their employer how much time will be allowed. Prospective governors might usefully approach their employer about time off work prior to their appointment to ensure that they can fulfil their role.

[Click here for more information about the benefits to employers who encourage their staff to govern.](#)

It might be prudent during the interview to call attention to your expenses policy.

Governors and trustees may receive out of pocket expenses incurred as a result of fulfilling their role. To know that caring for elderly dependents or children will not be a barrier to joining the board is an important piece of information for those with such responsibilities. NGA supports proper payment of expenses, and recommends that governing boards should have an expenses policy. Payments can cover incidental expenses, such as travel to training events and childcare, but not loss of earnings.

After the interview you should inform the candidate/s of the next steps in the process and the timeframe in which they can expect to hear the outcome. You should aim to make a decision as soon as is practicably possible after the last interview.

Interview questions should be relevant to the role and skills you're looking for. Here are some suggestions:

1. *Why are you looking to be a governor/trustee?*
2. *What attracted you to this school/trust/role?*
3. *What experience, knowledge or skills would you bring to the role?*
4. *Our school is dedicated to improving educational provision for children and young people. In what ways would you hope to be able to support us in meeting our goals?*
5. *What experience (if any) do you have of developing an organisation?*
6. *What opportunities or challenges does the current political and economic environment offer?*
7. *Which professional/voluntary role have you enjoyed the most and why?*
8. *What do you consider to be the greatest achievement to date?*
9. *What do you consider to be your strengths and weakness?*
10. *How would colleagues or peers describe you?*
11. *Can you describe how the role of the governor/trustee is different from that of a manager?*
12. *What is your understanding of conflict of interests?*
13. *If you felt uncomfortable with a decision that has been made by the governing board, how would you raise and discuss the matter?*
14. *Will you be happy to abide by the Nolan principles of public life and code of conduct this governing board operates under?*

References and other checks

Take up references before making the recommendation to the full governing board. Open references should not be accepted but as long as the referee's details are recorded with notes of the call it is fine to accept a reference obtained by phone. If the candidate has governed at another school, make sure to get a reference from that school. Governors and trustees should not serve on more than two governing boards at the same time. This is to prevent individuals having undue influence over a number of schools and was one of the many outcomes from the '[Trojan horse](#)' inquiry.

This [declaration of interests form](#) should be completed by the individual to declare conflicts of interest. All governing boards are required to publish on their websites a register of relevant business and financial interests, including governance roles in other educational institutions.



TIP! Taking up references is really important. It gives you someone else's view on the candidate's character, reputation and trustworthiness.

Conflicts of interest are not limited to financial interests - they also apply to conflicts of loyalty. The guiding rule is to avoid all conflicts of interest if at all possible before they become a problem, thus avoiding having to manage them later. If in doubt, a rule of thumb is to avoid appointing close friends and relations of current governors and trustees. [The Nolan principles](#) are germane to this and any new board member must be willing to abide by them.

Making the appointment

In maintained schools there must be a formal proposal to the full governing board, and the outcome of the decision on whether to appoint the candidate for the co-opted governor category must be recorded in the minutes. In academies, the process will be outlined in the articles of association.



TIP! Think about the different ways a person could get involved in the life of your school or at a different school: www.inspiringthefuture.org

It is best practice not to invite the candidate to a full governing board meeting at which the vote on their appointment will take place. Afterwards you can inform the candidate/s of the outcome. Do remember to inform the unsuccessful as well as the successful candidates.

Depending on the cycle of your meetings you can then arrange for new governors to attend the next appropriate meeting, which may be a committee meeting.

All schools must carry out Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks on governors and trustees. Prospective governors/trustees should know that they will be required to undergo an enhanced DBS check and that their appointment is subject to this.

Academy trusts are required to inform the Department for Education when certain positions are vacated or appointed to. These include: members, trustees and members of academy committees.

After any appointment the clerk must arrange for the school's website to be updated with certain information including the register of interests. Edubase, the government's central register for education institutions, must also be updated. And don't forget to keep your NGA membership details up to date by emailing: membership@nga.org.uk.

4. Inducting: training and support

It is essential that governing boards are committed to training new governors and trustees. New recruits should be in no doubt about what their powers and responsibilities are and how to carry them out.

The essential guide for new governors of LA maintained schools is called *Welcome to Governance*. The equivalent guide for trustees in a multi academy trust is called *Welcome to a Multi Academy Trust*. If you are a GOLD member of the National Governance Association, every new governor joining your board is entitled to receive a copy of these guides. Your clerk just needs to email NGA at membership@nga.org.uk or call us on 0121 237 3780. If your volunteer is recruited from Inspiring Governance, they will get a free copy once you have reported the appointment.

a) Inducting: Training

Induction training should be tailored to the individual. For example, governors who have served on boards in other walks of life may understand the principles of good governance but will not necessarily understand education jargon, school funding, or the curriculum offer. New governors and trustees should feel able to ask questions about these issues and their experience in other fields should be respected.

Ongoing training for governors and trustees is crucial and the role of the clerk in organising and facilitating that training should be made clear to new recruits. The clerk will hold a record of all training undertaken by members of the governing board and should, along with

the chair, plan training in keeping with the individual's strengths and weaknesses and also account for any committees they sit on.

It is beneficial for new governors to go on external training courses. Many local authorities provide packages of training, but there are national programmes too and you should shop around for the best price and quality package.

For training in data, many providers such as [Fischer Family Trust](#) either host demonstrations online or provide detailed guidance on their websites. Governing boards can also obtain information directly where schools use a specific provider or detailed tracking system to collect their own data in order to monitor pupil attainment and progress.



Inspiring Governance!

If you find your new recruit via Inspiring Governance they'll get a free copy *Welcome to Governance* or *Welcome to a Multi Academy Trust*.

When joining the board the level of information can feel daunting even if the recruit has prior experience of governance. To help make sense of it, every new governor/trustee should be given the following basic information:

- Welcome to Governance or Welcome to a Multi Academy Trust – both

include a glossary of education terminology.

- A copy of the school's Instrument of Government or Articles of Association and scheme of delegation
- The school's current prospectus (if the school has one) or a link to information on the school's website
- Information about the performance standards in the school including login details for FFT Data Dashboard or other data sources
- The school and governing board's most recent self-evaluation or facilitated review
- In academies, a copy of the funding agreement
- The code of conduct ([NGA recommends that all governing boards adopt a code of conduct](#))
- A calendar of meetings for the year, both for the full governing board and its committees
- The current strategy document including key priorities
- The most recent Ofsted inspection report
- Access to the policies adopted by the governing board
- A copy of or link to the Department for Education's Governance Handbook
- A list of the governing board's committees and terms of reference
- A list of the members of the governing board/academy trust body



Starting in the summer term of 2017, NGA Learning Link will offer online training for school governors, trustees and clerks. Learning Link will also feature eight new induction modules for governors and trustees to use for free when they are placed using Inspiring Governance:

Governance: your role, your responsibilities, your organisation

Education: your organisation – making sure children get the education they deserve

Strategy: living your values, reaching your vision, managing the risk

Achievement: understanding the power of data and improving outcomes

Resources: making the most of what you've got

Collaboration: working as a team to improve the organisation

Compliance: assuring your organisation, keeping it safe, secure and solvent

Effectiveness: governance making an impact and changing lives

Learning Link will support users to learn in a way that suits them – remotely, during the day, in the evenings and at the weekend – with 24/7 support. New Inspiring Governance recruits will be sent login details. To find out more visit www.nga.org.uk/learninglink

b) Inducting: Support

Many chairs allocate an experienced board member as a mentor for new governors/trustees. This can be extremely beneficial to new recruits and provides a way for them to ask questions.

Be deliberate about who you choose to be a mentor and make they know what is expected of them. Mentors set an example for how board members should behave. They should be able to ask good questions, have the time to listen and meet with their mentees, provide motivation and encourage reflection. **You may want to share this role around the board, or it may be useful to assign this to the vice chair.**

The clerk to the governing board is also an invaluable source of help and support and their responsibilities should be made clear so that new governors and trustees feel comfortable asking them for information and advice.

Top tips for retaining governors and trustees

1. Take the governance of your school (or group of schools) seriously. Seriously enough to have a role description, person specification and code of conduct to demonstrate who you're looking for and what's expected of them.

2. Look at your track record. Do new trustees come for the first meeting or two and then quietly disappear? This could be an induction issue. Make sure each new governor/trustee is mentored by a more experienced board member, has accessed the Inspiring Governance helpline and has enrolled onto an induction programme.

3. Look at the commitment required. Are meetings sensibly timed with board papers circulated in advance? Are there briefing notes on topical matters written for the governor/trustee audience? Are visits to the school appropriate with a strategic purpose?

4. All governors and trustees should have an annual development conversation with the chair or vice chair of the board. This can help with identifying training needs and succession planning and gives the board member a chance to reflect on their own contribution.

5. For chairs especially, respect and cultivate the knowledge and experience that people bring to the role. Give newer members the opportunity to speak. Reassure them that what may feel like a 'stupid question' is usually an intelligently naïve one, illuminating issues that others may assume are well understood. Encourage them to ask about unfamiliar jargon and never dismiss someone's view because education is somehow 'different'.

Succession planning: ensuring there is leadership of the board

Retaining good governors and trustees is important. But what's also important is having a healthy cycle of new recruits. There's plenty of precedent for this in other sectors as well as in schools.

Once a successful board mix has been achieved, it should be constantly reviewed and refreshed to ensure that the balance is maintained. Part of this is about creating a culture of trustees moving on: trusteeship is not necessarily permanent, but the needs of the organisation and needs of the board change over time. And there's always people who really do need to move on. - The Good Trustee Guide, the National Council for Voluntary Organisations

The standard term of office for all categories of governor is four years. NGA recommends that governors serve no more than two terms of office at any one school, that's eight years and plenty of time to make a difference. Chairs should be limited to six years in post as chair at the same school, except for exceptional circumstances.



Inspiring Governance!

You can use Inspiring Governance to find a new chair. Just tick the option when you register a vacancy at:
www.inspiringgovernance.org

As well as the need to move on ineffective governors/trustees, that is, those who do not meet the required competencies and behaviours, another reason to uphold the idea of a limited

term of office is that good governors can be spread around the local schools system. Individual boards should avoid becoming too reliant on one person or just a few and relationships on the board should be prevented from becoming too cosy.

With effective succession planning in place, it can be beneficial for strong governors and chairs in particular to move on to another school after a reasonable time (e.g. two terms of office). This can help to share expertise across the system and prevent governing bodies stagnating or individual governors gaining too much power and influence solely through their length of service - The Department for Education's Governance Handbook 2015.

All senior leaders should give serious thought to matters of succession. A chair in their third or fourth year of office should begin to prepare others to take over. We know it can be difficult to find governors with the time to take over the role of the chair. As part of Inspiring Governance, NGA will be running a pilot in certain areas for the recruitment of volunteers willing and able to step up quickly a leadership role on the board. We will be updating this guidance as a result of that work next term. If you would like to find out more in the meantime, email Judith.hicks@nga.org.uk

For details on chairs' succession planning, as well as how to develop your team of governors or trustees, how to work effectively with the headteacher and lead the school towards improvement, see NGA's guide: [The Chair's Handbook](#).

Appendix 1: Co-opting governors - a scoping email to local businesses

Dear,

I'm writing on behalf of the governing board of [], which is just down the road/across town from your business.

We are seeking a volunteer to join our governing/trustee board.

School governors and trustees have three core functions:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils; and the performance management of staff; and
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

In order to carry out these functions our boards needs people with a wide range of competencies and skills. The particular skills we are looking for are [] and []. This opportunity would also offer the volunteer a chance to develop board level continuing professional development and have a real stake in the local community. If you or one of your employees has such skills and the time to volunteer, we would be delighted to set up an interview.

[Here is a link](#) to a City of London report on the benefits to businesses when they support their staff to volunteer. It is extensive so no need to read it all, but page 26 specifically refers to the value of school governance, which might be of interest.

I am also attaching a role description and application form, which should address any questions about time commitment. We realise that governors and trustees are volunteers, many of whom have demanding jobs. The aim is to be flexible and plan meetings well in advance ahead, but we do ask employers for their support because the role may require some flexibility from the employer to provide paid time-off work if and when it is required.

Do get in touch if you have any further questions.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Chair of governors/trustees

[Your contact details](#)

Appendix 2: Application form

This application form should be completed by those applying to become member of a school governing board as a co-opted governor/trustee.

Please fill in the attached form and return it to:.....

Note: all applicants undergo an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check which is paid for by the school.

Title:.....

First name:

Surname:

Address:

Email Address:

Employment status:

Occupation:

Employer name:

Qualifications:

The knowledge, skills or experience the board is particularly looking for in a new co-opted governor/trustee are:

Please set out how your experience matches these areas:

Referees (If you have governed at another school one referee must be from your last school)

First referee:

Tel:

Title:

Second referee:

First name:

Title:

Surname:

First name:

Relationship to you:

Surname:

Email:

Relationship to you:

Email:

Tel:

Appendix 3: Declaration of interests

The declaration of financial (pecuniary) and personal interest form should be completed by individual governors and trustees and reviewed annually. If their circumstances change before the review they should inform the clerk.

Name:

School:

Position:

I confirm that I have read the [Nolan principles of public life](#) and I agree to abide by them

I [Name], declare as a Governor/Trustee of [School/Trust Name] that I hold the following personal and/or pecuniary interest(s):

Business and Pecuniary interests	Please provide details of the interest
Current employment	
Businesses (of which I am a partner or sole proprietor)	
Company directorships – details of all companies of which I am a director	
Charity trusteeships – details of all companies of which I am a trustee	
Membership of professional bodies, membership organisations, public bodies or special interest groups of which I am a member and have a	

position of general control or management	
Gifts or hospitality offered to you by external bodies while acting in your position as a governor/trustee and whether this was declined or accepted in the last 12 months	
Contracts offered by you for the supply of goods and/or services to the trust/school	
Any other conflict	
Personal interests	Please provide details of the interest
Material interests arising from relationships between governors/trustees/or relationships between governors and school staff (including spouses, partners and close relatives) a child at the school	
Any other conflict	

Appendix 4: Types of governor

There are several different categories of school governor, depending on the type of school. Some are elected and some appointed and below we detail these categories.

In maintained schools, the composition of the board is set out in the Instrument of Government. In academies the composition is set out in the Articles of Association.

Elected governors

Parent and Staff governors are appointed to governing boards by a process of election.

In Community and Voluntary Controlled schools the local authority delegates the responsibility for managing the election down to school level - usually to the headteacher, whom must follow the process set out by the local authority.

Voluntary Aided schools can establish their own procedures but must again follow the regulations.

Parent governors are usually parents of children at the school nominated and elected to join the governing board. But if not enough parents stand for election the governing board may appoint a parent governor. When a parent vacancy becomes available, governing boards should make clear the skills they are looking for.

Staff governors are nominated and elected from among the staff working at the school.

Appointed Governors

All governors, except for Staff and Parent governors, are appointed at a full governing board meeting.

Foundation governors are appointed to the governing body by either the religious or foundation body of the school, to preserve and develop the character of the school, including where the school has a religious character – this is in addition to their governing responsibilities.

In academies, governors may be **appointed to the governing board by the academy trust**. The Articles of Association will set this out and detail how many governors are to be appointed in this way.

Co-opted governors are appointed by the governing board because they have the skills required to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school.

Local Authority governors are nominated by the local authority but appointed by the governing board. The local authority can nominate any eligible person as a local authority governor, but it is the governing board to decide whether the nominee meets their eligibility criteria highlighted by a skills audit.

Partnership governors are nominated by the diocese or appropriate religious body in schools with a religious character. In non-faith schools nominations by the parents of registered pupils at the school and such others

in the community that the governing body deems appropriate may be considered.

In academies, **sponsor governors** are nominated by the academy sponsor and appointed by the governing board.

In maintained schools, **associate members** can be invited to sit on a committee of the governing board. They may be given voting rights at committee meetings by the governing board but they are not governors and they are not eligible to vote at full governing board meetings. Associate members can be appointed because of their particular expertise or experience.

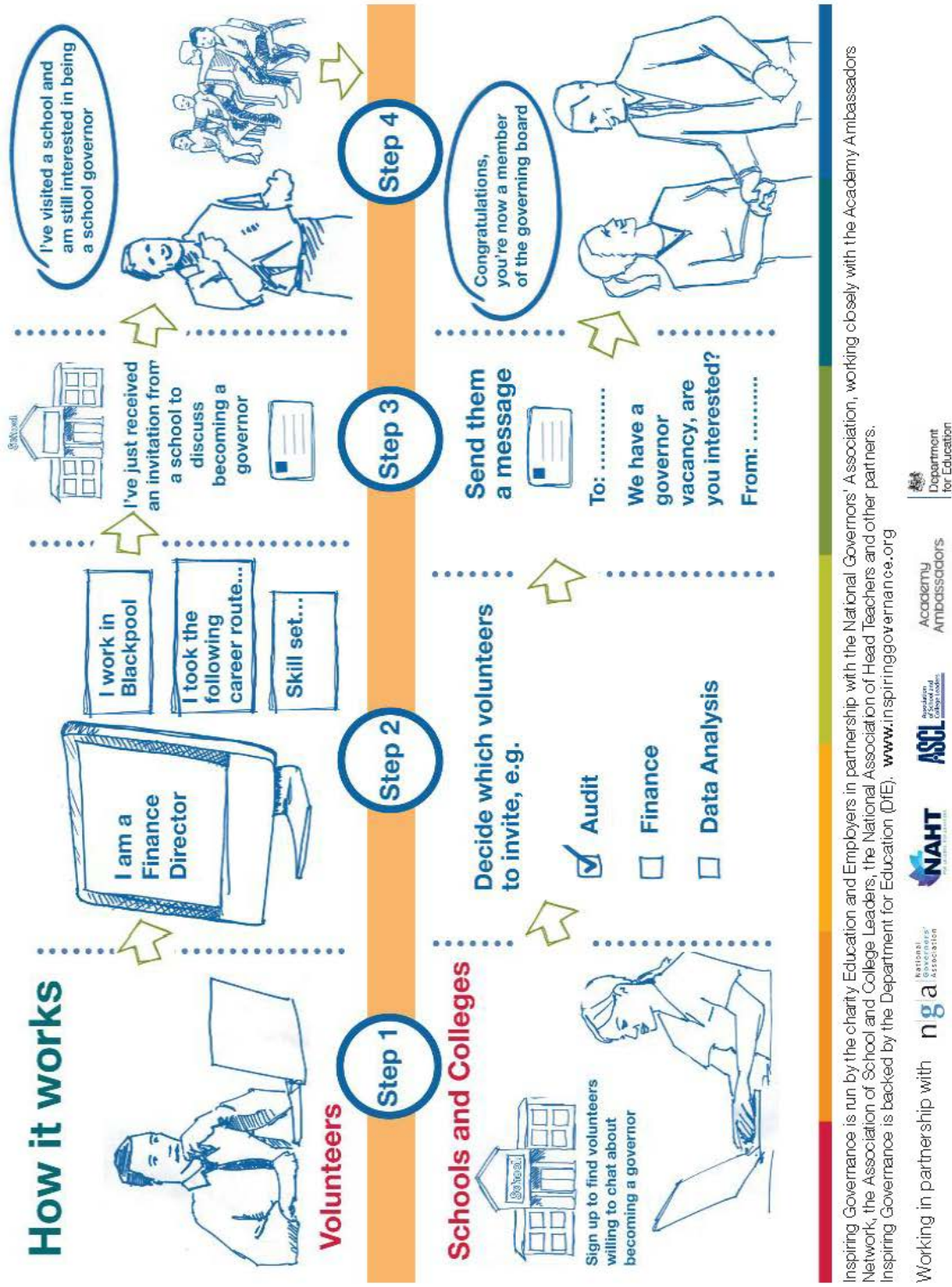
In academies, academy trusts can invite individuals who are not governors to sit on one of the committees as a **committee member**. In the same way as associate members in maintained schools, committee members usually bring certain expertise and can be helpful when a committee is looking at an issue in detail and wishes to consult on it.



Inspiring Governance!

Inspiring Governance is the national recruitment service for school governors and trustees. Register today at www.inspiringgovernance.org to find local volunteers.

Appendix 5: Inspiring Governance - a graphical guide



Inspiring Governance is run by the charity Education and Employers in partnership with the National Governors' Association, working closely with the Academy Ambassadors Network, the Association of School and College Leaders, the National Association of Head Teachers and other partners. Inspiring Governance is backed by the Department for Education (DfE), www.inspiringgovernance.org

Working in partnership with **nga** National Governors' Association, **NAHT** National Association of Head Teachers, **ASCL** Association of School and College Leaders, **Academy Ambassadors**, and the **Department for Education**