

## Governor Services 2016/17

### 1. Introduction

The Governor Services Team assists governors and leaders to fulfil their legal responsibilities, to effectively lead and manage their schools/academies and develop their skills and knowledge to support school improvement.

The Governor Services Team provides comprehensive support packages for Clerking, Training and Development for governing boards of both schools and academies in Bolton.

Governing boards can choose to buy into any of the support packages offered. Details of the services available and the charges for these services are contained within this service level agreement.

### 2. Governing Board Clerking and Support

The Governor Services, Clerking and Support Service is recognised by many governing boards as a professional, high quality provision which is responsive to the changing needs of schools/academies. Through the clerking service, the team will:

- Provide Governor Support Officers experienced in minute writing and meeting procedures who produce an accurate account of meetings that record clear resolutions and detail challenge and support.
- Ensure that governing boards comply with governance and academy law and procedure in undertaking their statutory duties.
- Assist the governing board in agenda planning, preparation and the distribution of relevant documentation to ensure they fulfil their statutory duties.
- Provide procedural advice on difficult issues such as confidentiality and pecuniary interest.
- Provide a service to meet the individual requirements of governing boards subject to the capacity of the team.
- Assist governing boards in establishing and reviewing their committee arrangements and delegation structures in order to comply with legal requirements.
- Ensure governing boards comply with regulations that prevent any governor or head teacher/principal from clerking full governing board meetings.
- Be available at all times throughout the working day to provide prompt response to telephone calls and emails in order to access a wide range of knowledge and experience, and information and advice on current issues and good practice.
- Provide up-to-date independent and impartial advice on matters affecting governing boards (impartiality is difficult to maintain if the role is undertaken by school/academy employees)
- Assist with the sharing of good practice and problem solving.
- Help maintain links between schools/academies and the Local Authority with its wide network of services.
- Ensure pre-appointment clearance procedures are completed for new and re-appointed governors.
- Provide a termly briefing session for Chairs of Governors to equip them with the knowledge, information and advice needed to effectively undertake their role.

## 2.1 Service Level Agreement Options

The Governor Services Team offer two options of service for governing board clerking and support as follows:

**Option 1** - Clerking of three full governing board/local governing board meetings per year plus full support, advice and guidance and attendance for Chair of Governors at termly Chairs' Briefing.

**Option 2** - As above plus clerking of other additional meetings

### **Option 1**      **Clerking of three full governing board/local governing board meetings per year plus full support, advice and guidance**

Option 1 is a service for those governing boards requiring three termly meetings clerked per year with full support and independent advice for governors and school/academy leaders. The Governor Services Team will:

- With the governing board, establish mutually convenient dates for the academic year.
- Agree by telephone or e-mail draft agendas with chairs and head teachers/principals before issuing the final agreed agenda to governors.
- Notify governors in writing in advance of meetings which are to take place.
- Send agendas and any available supporting papers to governors at least seven clear days before the date of the meeting. (14 clear days for academies)
- Provide a Governance Support Officer who has undertaken the National Training Programme for Clerks to Governors-
  - to advise on meeting procedures and to take accurate minutes of the meeting;
  - to ensure the governing board fulfils its legal obligations in respect of governance law and procedure.
- Prepare draft minutes of the meeting and provide them to the Chair and Head Teacher within 20 school days of the meeting, agree them with the chair of governors and make a copy available in the school/academy with copies to be distributed to all governors with the agenda for the next meeting.
- Keep governing boards up to date with any relevant changes to education legislation and law and provide information from other teams within the Authority from time to time that affects school/academy governance.
- Take follow up action as appropriate and refer matters for action to other relevant teams of the Authority, and ensure a report back to the next meeting or before the next meeting if required.
- Assist the governing board in establishing and reviewing a committee structure which ensures compliance with legal requirements in respect of financial and staffing delegation structures.
- Maintain a record of governor attendances at meetings, monitor application of regulations on non-attendance and, where appropriate, write to non-attending governors.
- Give to the appropriate appointing boards two month's notice of any expiry of terms of office of governors.
- Write to new governors, notifying them of their appointment where appropriate and provide a copy of the instrument of government and any other general induction material as necessary.
- Maintain a database of governing board records which includes details on membership, terms of office, dates of meetings, attendance and information on specific roles and responsibilities of individual governors. (Data stored securely in compliance with the Data Protection Act)
- Ensure that pre-appointment clearance procedures are completed for new and re-appointed governors.
- Provide full support, advice and guidance for all members of the governing board on governance law and procedure.

## **Option 2      Clerking of additional meetings**

For those governing boards entering into an agreement the same as Option 1 but who also require the clerking of additional full governing board, trust and multi-academy trust board, 'working' committee (personnel, finance and premises etc.), statutory committee (pupil discipline, complaints etc.), collaborative working group and interim executive board meetings. The Governor Services Team will:

1. With the governing board, establish mutually convenient dates for the academic year.
2. Agree by telephone or e-mail draft agendas with chairs and head teachers/principals before issuing the final agreed agenda to governors.
3. Notify governors in writing in advance of meetings which are to take place.
4. Send agendas and any available supporting documentation to governors at least seven clear days before the date of the meeting. (14 clear days for academies)
5. Provide a Governance Support Officer who has undertaken the National Training Programme for Clerks to Governors-
  - To advise on meeting procedures and to take accurate minutes of the meeting;
  - To ensure the governing board fulfils its legal obligations in respect of governance law and procedure.
6. Prepare draft minutes of the meeting and provide them to the Chair and Head Teacher within 20 school days of the meeting, agree them with the chair of governors and make a copy available in the school/academy with copies to be distributed to all governors with the agenda for the next meeting.

## **3. Governor Training and Development**

As part of the Governor Services Team's contribution to governing board effectiveness, the service offers access to a wide range of training and development opportunities. Through the service the team will:

- Provide a comprehensive annual programme of training for school and academy governors to assist them in areas of governance and other education related matters.
- Work with individual governing boards to provide bespoke development or programme of development to meet their needs.
- Provide an opportunity for governing boards to access the GEL (Governor E-Learning) Training Package at a subsidised rate.
- Work with clusters of schools/academies with the same identified needs to provide training and development opportunities.
- Provide an online booking service that governors can access 24 hours a day to gain information about training opportunities and to reserve their place on sessions and events.
- Provide experienced trainers and presenters with the relevant subject knowledge to deliver training and development sessions.
- Evaluate training and development to ensure that delivery objectives have been met and to quality assure the provision.
- Maintain a record of all training and development accessed through the Governor Services Team for each member of the governing board to facilitate skills audits and governance reviews.
- Work with other Local Authority services to ensure that governing boards obtain up-to-date information and advice relating to training and development.
- Provide certificates of attendance for each governor undertaking training and development.
- Provide a termly briefing session for Chairs of Governors to equip them with the knowledge, information and advice needed to effectively undertake their role.
- Provide an opportunity for governing boards to undertake an External Review of Governance either following an Ofsted recommendation or to improve the effectiveness of the work of the governing board.

### 3.1 Service Level Agreement Options

The Governor Services Team offers three options of service for governor training and development as follows:

**Service 1 - Governor Training Programme plus GEL (Governor E-learning) Training Package** (Entitlement of all governors to attend centre based training offered through the annual programme and full access to a package of on-line training opportunities.)

**Service 2 - Governor Training Programme Only** (Entitlement of all governors to attend centre based training offered through the annual programme).

**Service 3 -** Access to bespoke development and commissioned governing board/cluster based training.

**Service 1 Governor Training Programme plus GEL (Governor E-learning) Training Package (subsidised for Governing Boards from within the Bolton family)**

For those governing boards entering into an agreement the same as Option 1 but who also require access to the GEL (Governor E-Learning) Training Package.

Governor Services feel that it is important to provide as many opportunities as possible for governors to access good quality training and guidance and whilst we feel that face to face training delivered by a suitably qualified professional provides an effective learning experience, we know that this too can be complimented via e-learning opportunities. With this in mind the Service has worked closely with the Eastern Leadership Centre to provide a subsidised suite of e-learning course specifically aimed at School and Academy Governors.

Access to the suite will provide all governors on the governing board with unlimited access to the e-learning modules. The sessions are continually updated and of a high quality and following an assessment of each session, a certificate is produced for the governor training file.

The e-learning package is intended to complement the existing training whether accessed via the full Service Level Agreement for Training and Development or through the Pay As You Go Service. E-learning should not be seen as a replacement for tutor lead sessions.

By choosing to purchase the E-learning package, the governing board will have its own secure access to the hosting website which will be valid for one year.

Governing boards that access training on a 'pay as you go' basis may supplement this with the GEL (Governor E-Learning) Training Package at a subsidised cost.

**Service 2 Governor Training Programme (Entitlement of all governors to attend centre based training offered through the annual programme)**

Through the annual governor training programme, the Governor Services Team will provide access to a comprehensive programme of centre based training to assist governors in undertaking their roles effectively.

The Governor Services Team will:

1. Provide a comprehensive annual programme of events for school and academy governors to access good quality training which is monitored and evaluated to provide quality assurance.

2. Ensure that training sessions are held at various times throughout the day and early evening to allow governors to attend at their convenience.
3. Provide an online booking service that governors can access 24 hours a day to gain information about training opportunities and to reserve their place on sessions and events.
4. Confirm, in writing, all bookings for training.
4. Provide a pack of materials and hand-outs for each attendee to facilitate their learning.
5. Evaluate all sessions to ensure that objectives have been met and to quality assure the provision.
6. Invite the Link Governor to attend two Link Governor Briefing Sessions each year without additional charge.
7. Apply a reduced non-attendance/cancellation charge in line with the Cancellation Policy
8. Apply a 10% discount for any bespoke development or commissioned training purchased.
9. Ensure that training venues are fit for purpose and provide light refreshments at all events and sessions. (A light lunch will be provided for full day sessions)
10. Provide notification of training alterations:
  - a) We will make every effort to notify in advance any change of trainer/presenter
  - b) Where the planned training becomes inappropriate (e.g. change in legislation)
  - c) In an emergency (e.g. adverse weather conditions) we will attempt to contact delegates to confirm whether the course is running.
  - d) Where there are too few delegates to make the course viable, we will give as much notice as possible that the course has been rescheduled.

**Service 3      Bespoke development and commissioned governing board/cluster based training**

The Governor Services Team will work with the governing board to provide bespoke development or programme of development to meet the needs of individual governing boards and cluster groups.

The Governor Services Team will:

- 1) Identify key areas of development for governing boards and governor cluster groups to strengthen governance and assist strategic working.
- 2) Design a bespoke development session or programme of sessions to agreed specifications.
- 3) Deliver the session(s) at a mutually convenient time, date and venue prescribed by the governing board or cluster group.
- 4) Invite all attendees to the session(s) via email or letter.
- 5) Provide a pack of materials and hand-outs for each attendee to facilitate their learning.
- 6) Evaluate the session to ensure that objectives have been met and to quality assure the provision.

**4. Resources and Practical Issues – What schools and can expect from the service**

**Partnerships**

The Governor Services Team seeks to continually improve the service it can offer to schools and academies by working with or being part of other groups and organisations including:

- The National Governors Association
- The National Co-ordinators of Governor Services
- The School Governors One Stop Shop (SGOSS)
- The Manchester Diocesan Board of Education
- The Diocese of Salford Office for Education
- Other Local Authority teams and services providing services to schools and academies.

## **Charges**

Details of charges for each option are set out in the agreements section of this document.

Both the Clerking and Support and Training and Development services offered through the Bolton Governor Services Team are fully funded via buy back and receive no central funding from the Authority. The Governor Services Team receives a small amount of central funding from the Authority which covers the statutory duties it must legally provide to all maintained schools for governance, regardless of SLA uptake. Further information on statutory services is available on request.

Full payment for Option 1 for the Clerking and Support Service will be requested from schools/academies by September 2015. Full payment for Service 1 for the Training and Development Service will be requested from schools/academies by September 2015.

Payment for any additional meetings, bespoke development or commissioned training under Option 2 of the respective services will be requested from schools/academies at the end of each term.

Governing boards who do not buy into the Training and Development Service may still access any of the training and development offered; however; this will be charged on an individual basis. Other members of school staff wishing to attend sessions as part of the Governor Training Programme, who are not members of the governing board, are welcome to attend at an additional cost.

The GEL E-Learning package has been purchased by Bolton Council through the Eastern Leadership Centre. This enables governing boards within the Bolton family to access the online suite of training at a discounted rate.

Services provided to private providers or out of borough will attract a 5% charge for the Clerking and Support Service and a 10% charge for Training and Development Services.

## **Cancellation Fees**

Charges may still occur for any work undertaken in the preparation of additional meetings or commissioned and bespoke development in the event of the meeting or session being cancelled.

For those schools purchasing the Governor Training Programme under the service level agreement, a reduced cancellation fee of £25.00 per place will be charged to the school for non-attendance or cancellation of any sessions within 5 working days of the session date. (Fee may be waived in exceptional circumstances)

For those schools accessing the Governor Training Programme on a pay as you go basis, the full cost of the session will be made against the school budget for non-attendance and cancellation of any sessions within 5 working days of the session date.

## **Resources and delivery**

The Team is based at the Bolton Science and Technology Centre. Governors and head teachers/principals are welcome to visit but we recommend they first make an appointment. The Team is available by telephone, fax and email. Officers may attend meetings on site at schools/academies by appointment, at times convenient to governors and head teachers/principals.

As part of the Governor Services Team's commitment to work-life balance all Governance Support Officers and Governor Development Officers are available to attend meetings from 9am in the morning until 9pm at night.

## **Liability insurance**

The Governor Services Team is part of the Local Authority and has comprehensive insurance arrangements that guard against any foreseeable claim by employees, suppliers, customers, third parties and other stakeholders.

## **Professional Codes and Confidentiality**

The Governor Services Team is part of the Education and Learning Service within the Children's and Adult Services Department and as such is bound by the rules and standards set down by the Authority in various policy and guidance documents that may be amended from time to time. These documents can be made available to schools/academies on request.

Any information gathered as a result of work undertaken as part of this agreement will not be shared with any third party without the consent of the school/academy. In this instance the Local Authority is not a third party and staff within the Team are under an obligation to report any causes for concern in respect of a school's governance.

## **Communications - Complaints / Feedback**

**Communications:** Throughout the agreement period, service representatives and clients will agree a communications process to monitor and review ongoing process and to resolve outstanding matters on an informal basis. Ongoing evaluation processes are in place to ensure we monitor high standards of service – and views/suggestions on service delivery/modifications are welcomed.

**Complaints:** In the unlikely event that, following liaison with the service provider, your issues remain unsolved and you are still dissatisfied with the service you have received, your complaint in the first instance should be directed to:-

**The Strategic Finance Team, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Town Hall, Bolton, BL1 1RU**

Email: [servicestoschools@bolton.gov.uk](mailto:servicestoschools@bolton.gov.uk)

Tel: **01204 332046**

Your complaint will be acknowledged on receipt (within 24 hours for email and 5 calendar days for letters) and we will response fully/provide an update (if a full reply is not possible) within 14 calendar days in line with the Authority's Customer Care Standards.

## **5. Resources and Practical issues - What the service can expect from schools/academies**

The Governor Services Team in undertaking duties for its clients, expect the following support in delivering the service:

### **Governing Board Clerking and Support**

**The school/academy will ensure:**

- The supply to the LA **10 working days (20 working days for academies)** in advance of the governors' meeting, the head teacher's/principal's report, committee minutes and any other supporting documentation for distribution to governors with the agenda to enable compliance with the statutory requirement to give notice of meetings at least 7 days (14 days for academies) in advance. (colour copying, large policy documents or similar extraordinary documentation for full governing board meetings will attract an additional surcharge to cover copying/postal costs – Any such charges will be agreed by the Governor Services Team with the school in advance)
- That they conduct election of parent, staff governors in accordance with guidance issued by the Governor Services Team.
- That they notify the Governor Services Team of any changes in membership of the governing board.

- That in terms of academies, the responsible officer will ensure that membership updates in respect of the governing board and Trust are provided to both the Companies House and Education Funding Agency.
- That they accept that the clerking service will cease at 9.00 pm.
- Prompt payment of any charges in respect of the SLA.

**In the interests of efficiency and effective use of time and resources, schools/academies are asked to forward their papers to the Governor Services Team by email.** In the event that a school/academy is unable to supply papers to the Team in sufficient time in advance of meetings, the Team will post the agenda (and any other papers which are available at that stage) to governors to ensure compliance with the statutory requirement for notice of meetings. Any late papers should be posted to governors directly from the school/academy (and to the Governor Services Team).

### **Governor Training and Development**

**The school/academy will ensure:**

- That the Governor Services Team are informed of any cancellation of sessions within five working days of the session date in order to avoid cancellation charges and to enable the place to be offered to others. (Fees may be waived in exceptional circumstances – A written application for the fee to be waived should be sent to the Governor Services Team for consideration.
- That events and sessions are booked at least one week in advance wherever possible.
- That the Governor Services Team are informed of any individual request such as dietary/access requirements at the time of booking to allow for these to be met and avoid disappointment.
- Prompt payment of any charges in respect of the SLA.

## **6. Termination of Service**

Both parties will strive to resolve any problems should they arise regarding the operation of this agreement in an informal way at a very early stage.

If the school wishes to terminate an on-going Service Level Agreement because they are dissatisfied with the service provided, the complaints procedure should be followed, as detailed in Section 4 of this agreement. If the complaint is not resolved to the satisfaction of the school, they may terminate the service level agreement by:

- The governing board passing a resolution to terminate the SLA in mid-year.
- Forwarding a copy of the governing board's decision (including the date on which the meeting took place) to the Authority for the termination to be effected.

NB: A period of six months is required for any terminations of services in respect of any Services to Schools, Service Level Agreements.

## **General Terms, Conditions and Costs**

**Any queries in respect of Service Level Agreement charges can be gained by contacting the Governor Services Team directly on 01204 338603**