



# Guidance for Head Teachers and Chairs of Governors on the National Training Programme for New Governors

## Head Teachers and Chairs of Governors

Date of Issue: 08/03

Ref: DfES/0736/2001

### Summary:

This guidance suggests how heads and chairs can support new governors. It compliments training materials developed for the National Training Programme for New Governors, which were issued to LEA Co-ordinators of Governor Services and Diocesan Trainers, at the end of August.

### Action required:

None.

### Further information:

Trevor Gordon  
DFES  
School Government Team 1  
Vincent House  
2 Woodland Road  
Darlington  
DL3 7PJ

email [trevor.gordon@dfes.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:trevor.gordon@dfes.gsi.gov.uk).

**DfES communications with LEAs will be placed on the website at [www.teachernet.gov.uk](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk) for reference.**

**DfES communications with governors will be placed on the website at [www.governor.net.co.uk](http://www.governor.net.co.uk) for reference.**

**These sites are regularly updated and have a list of contents.**

department for

**education and skills**

creating opportunity, releasing potential, achieving excellence

**Excellence  
in schools**

## **GUIDANCE FOR HEAD TEACHERS AND CHAIRS OF GOVERNORS ON THE NATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR NEW GOVERNORS**

### **Summary**

In November 1999 Estelle Morris announced that the then DfEE was launching a National Strategy for Governor Support and Training. The first priority was to develop, in 2001, a National Training Programme for New Governors. The Programme has been well received and is delivered in part or in its entirety in many LEAs. It has been updated annually.

Part A of this guidance suggests how new governors can be supported by their own schools on appointment, and has been written drawing on good practice from LEAs all over the country.

Part B explains how the 3 modules of the new National Programme fit together and what they each cover. It outlines the way in which the three key roles of governors are addressed and suggests ways in which the skills and knowledge covered in the National Training Programme for New Governors could be consolidated by applying them to your school. It also anticipates some of the questions you may be asked, and highlights the key reference documents.

**The National Standards for Head Teachers** set out the skills and attributes that heads are expected to apply when working with the governing body on the five key areas of headship:

- Strategic direction and development
- Teaching and learning
- Leading and managing staff
- Efficient and effective deployment of staff and resources
- Accountability

**In turn governing bodies are expected to play three key roles:**

- To bring a strategic view
- To be a critical friend to the school
- To ensure accountability

Recent research suggested that just over half of new governors had attended induction training. To make the Programme accessible to all new governors, it is in multi-media format.

**The Programme is made up of four elements:**

- A Toolkit for Trainers (DfES 0506/2001)
- VHS video scenarios (DfES 0507/2001)
- A Workbook for independent study (DfES 0516/2001)
- CD-Rom, which includes video clips (DfES 0508/2001)

The updated NGC Trigger Pack for New Governors is an associated document which we would recommend to new governors.

This multi-media approach provides trainers with a range of resources to deliver the key messages. It also supports independent study by individuals and whole governing bodies. If your school buys governor training from your LEA access to the Programme will come within normal charging arrangements. Those wishing to study independently are able to access the materials through their Governor Development Service of their LEA or direct from the DfES School Government Team 1 (by emailing: [Trevor.Gordon@dfes.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Trevor.Gordon@dfes.gsi.gov.uk) or by writing to him at School Government Team 1, DfES, Vincent House, 2 Woodland Road, Darlington, DL3 7PJ). The Programme is also available on [www.governor-net.co.uk](http://www.governor-net.co.uk), in the training section.

Where there are a significant number of new governors, for example following the requirement for nursery schools to establish governing bodies, an induction course for the whole governing body might be the best option. The Governor Development Officer for your LEA may be able to organise this for you.

Whatever the policy and practice of the LEA it is vital that new governors also receive appropriate support from their schools. Consequently this guidance is in two parts covering school based support as well as an overview of the new Programme. The National Training Programme for New Governors Workbook (Ref DfES 0516/2001) has been found to be a useful resource to support school-based induction.

We hope you and your new governors will find the Programme useful. Any comments on the Programme should be addressed to Trevor Gordon, by email or by writing to him at the above address.

## **PART A: SCHOOL BASED SUPPORT FOR NEW GOVERNORS**

The chair **(C)** has an important role to play in introducing the new governor to the governing body and will want to consider who should take responsibility for each of the activities suggested below. In some schools new governors are mentored by the previous most recent newcomer. In other schools a Link Governor takes responsibility.

The head teacher **(H)** has a crucial role to play in helping new governors to understand the unique context in which they will be working.

The following suggestions are drawn from Guidance on Good Governance and practical examples of good practice from around the country:

- Allocate an experienced governor to mentor each new governor. **(C)**
- Identify the key documentation that would enable a new governor to gain an understanding of the school and the role of governors. **(H)**

**Documentation should include the most recent copy of The Guide to the Law for School Governors and could also include the following items:**

1. The school's prospectus
2. List of staff and their responsibilities
3. Plan of the school
4. List of governors and the committees to which they belong
5. Committee structure and terms of reference
6. Minutes of two most recent governors' meetings
7. Dates of future meetings, events and location details
8. The school improvement plan or action plan
9. The most recent annual report to parents
10. A recent newsletter to parents
11. The Ofsted report
12. Summary of PANDA
13. Recent reports written by the head for governors
14. 'Roles of governing bodies and head teachers'  
(Ref DfEE 0168/2000)
15. The school's complaints policy

**You'll want to consider carefully what documentation you will provide, and at what stage, so that new governors aren't deluged.**

- Invite each new governor to the school to meet with you and the chair for a tour and a briefing on the school and the work of the governing body. This is important even if the new governor is already familiar with the school – for example as a parent. Being a governor brings different responsibilities. **(H)**
- Offer the initial package of information and explain that the mentor will take him/her through the documentation if that would be helpful. **(C)**
- Outline the areas of work covered by the governing body and its committees and encourage the new governor to take his/her time to consider where he or

she might like to focus. Some chairs suggest that new governors sit in on committee meetings before making up their minds.(C)

- Encourage him/her to discuss with the mentor the options for structured induction training. The workbook for independent study could be helpful to the mentor when exploring the most appropriate mode of training. Whichever option is chosen, describe the support that will be provided by members of the governing body. (C)
- Plan how to introduce the new governor to his/her colleagues at the next meeting of the governing body. Will you send out a note in advance to advise everyone of the appointment? Has the agenda allowed time for each governor to introduce himself/herself? Will there be an opportunity before, during or after the meeting for informal interaction? (C)
- If you have a system of linking governors to curriculum areas, year groups or classes, explain how it works. Encourage the new governor to think about where her/his interests lie. (C)
- Arrange to photograph the new governor to add to the Governors' photo board. (C)

## **Part B: OVERVIEW OF NATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR NEW GOVERNORS**

### **Core content of the national model for training new governors**

There are three modules each focusing on one of the key roles of governors. In practice the three roles are interwoven, however there are some functions that can be identified for each.

### **The intended learning outcomes are that governors will have increased their understanding of:**

- The characteristics of effective schools
- The key roles and responsibilities of governing bodies in improving schools
- The different and complementary roles of governors and head teachers (distinction between governance and management)
- How to be effective on their own governing bodies
- The importance of sound working relationships with all staff, parents, LEAs, Diocesan Boards and local communities
- How to access further support and training

### **We hope the Programme will develop the following skills and attributes:**

- Enthusiasm
- Self confidence
- Commitment
- Analysis and evaluation of information
- Communication with stakeholders
- Committee and time management
- Teamworking
- Problem solving
- Ability to manage own learning

**Documentation in the attached diagrams refers to the list of items on page 3.**

## Module 1: The Strategic Role of Governors

Issues covered.	Questions that might arise.	Reference documents
Types of governor and categories of school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who else is on the governing body? Who do they represent?</li> <li>Has each governor got the Guide to the Law?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guide to the Law</li> <li>Item 4</li> </ul>
Seven Principles of Public Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do they influence the practice of this governing body?</li> <li>Does the governing body have a Code of Conduct?</li> </ul>	
Corporate responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How are decisions made in this governing body?</li> </ul>	
The role of the head	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is there a scheme of delegation? How are respective responsibilities of the head and governors defined?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Item 14</li> </ul>
Purpose of governing bodies –to help to provide the best possible education for their pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is that purpose clear in the way this governing body operates? Do discussions and minutes of meetings reflect a focus on pupil achievement?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Item 6</li> </ul>
Working strategically. Corporate planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the vision for the school? Is there a mission statement? What are our values?</li> <li>What's in our school improvement plan?</li> <li>How was it put together?</li> <li>To what extent does it drive the work of the governing body?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Item 8</li> </ul>
Powers and duties of governing bodies – Standards, targets, curriculum, reporting, policies, finance, staffing, inspection follow up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the targets for the school? What is the process for agreeing them? What are the targets for the LEA?</li> <li>What's the budget for the school? Are there any specific issues/challenges?</li> <li>Where will I find policies?</li> </ul>	
Effective schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does this school measure up to the characteristics of effective schools – professional leadership and management, concentration on teaching and learning, monitoring and evaluating progress, being a learning organisation?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Item 11</li> </ul>

## Module 2. The Critical Friend

Issues covered.	Questions that might arise	Reference documents
Effective working relationship with the head and staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do governors recognise and celebrate effort and success?</li> <li>• Have we achieved an appropriate balance of support and challenge?</li> </ul>	
Monitoring and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What systems have been agreed by the head and governors to monitor the progress of the school improvement plan?</li> <li>• What evidence does the governing body consider when evaluating progress towards agreed targets?</li> <li>• What's in our PANDA?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Item 8</li> <li>• Item 12</li> </ul>
Attainment and achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In what other ways do we judge achievement? i.e. is there a wider focus than attainment in national tests?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Item 6</li> <li>• Item 13</li> </ul>
Time management and delegation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do we make best use of every governor's time?</li> <li>• What committees have been established by the governing body? What do they do? How are governors placed on committees? Can any governor attend any committee?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Item 4</li> <li>• Item 5</li> </ul>
Training and development of governors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What training has the governing body/individual governors undertaken in the last year?</li> </ul>	
Knowing the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a protocol for governors' visits to the school?</li> </ul>	
Effective meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do we know if meetings of the governing body are effective?</li> <li>• How can I get an item on the agenda?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Item 6</li> <li>• Item 7</li> </ul>



### Module 3. Ensuring Accountability

Issues covered.	Questions that might arise	Reference documents
Head teacher's report to governors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is there a written report to each full governing body meeting?</li><li>• How is the content and format agreed?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Item 13</li></ul>
The annual report and the prospectus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What role do governors play in producing these documents and evaluating their impact?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Item 1</li><li>• Item 9</li></ul>
The annual parents meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How many parents attend?</li></ul>	
Complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What's the policy for dealing with parental complaints/concerns?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Item 15</li></ul>
LEAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What links do we have with the LEA?</li></ul>	
Inspection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• When were we last inspected?</li><li>• How did we do?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Item 11</li></ul>