

Clever Clerking after Covid

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#NGAconf

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Talking points

An invaluable role

Embracing virtual governance?

Risk management

Wellbeing for governance professionals

NGA supporting governance professionals

Governance professionals supporting themselves

NGA's Outstanding Governance Awards 2023

NGA's Outstanding Governance Awards recognise the excellent practice and achievements of governing boards and governance professionals across the country.

- Outstanding governance in a single school
- Outstanding governance in a multi academy trust
- Outstanding governance in a federation
- Outstanding clerk to a governing board
- Outstanding lead governance professional

www.nga.org.uk/awards



What chairs say

Having a good clerk makes the job of being chair manageable. Without a good clerk the job is just not possible to cope with.

A good clerk knows how to capture good governance and quality challenge in the minutes which can demonstrate effective governance.

My clerk keeps us on the straight and narrow, always giving accurate and sensible advice.

The impact of our clerk cannot be understated. Her diligence, organisation, knowledge and doggedness ensured that we were ready for a 'make or break' inspection. The quality of her documentation looked professional and gave us a lot of confidence at a very difficult time. We would be lost without her.

A good clerk transformed my role as chair. I had been doing a lot of the admin such as compiling skills audits and training records, and chasing meeting papers and actions. I also spent much more time making sure that agendas were appropriate and that minutes were correct. The clerk also helped the headteacher to be more efficient by helping with the compilation of meeting reports and contacting members of staff for information. She improved communication with the governing body and increased everyone's effectiveness.

My clerk always gets the draft minutes back to me within the week, so I can check them whilst it's all still fresh in my mind.

Angie Marchant of Colham Manor Primary School in Hillingdon – 2017 winner of the NGA Outstanding Clerk Award

“She supports her governing body with information, advice on matters of law and good practice examples that enable governors to challenge the school leadership in the right areas. Without imposing her own views, she facilitates training and self-reflection in the governing body to improve its practice. She looks to inspire governors and mentors other clerks in the area.”

An “instrumental factor in turning Colham around from a position of weakness and uncertainty to one of strength and confidence”

Virtual governance



Model virtual meeting protocol

How to use this model document

Governing boards should have approved their arrangements for participating and voting in virtual meetings using the provision within maintained school governance [procedures regulations](#), academy articles of association and academy committee terms of reference.

A simple protocol or set of ground rules (agreed by the board and documented by the clerk/governance professional) should be in place to cover virtual meeting practices. This protocol could acknowledge existing policies relating to data protection, appropriate use of ICT and maintaining confidentiality etc. You can adapt the following model protocol to suit your own context and circumstances.

Managing risk: a guide for governing boards

[Home](#) > [Knowledge Centre](#) > [Vision, ethos & strategy](#) > [Managing risk](#)

Effective risk management helps ensure strategic priorities and improvement plans for schools and trusts are maintained or met. Academy trustees must secure effective risk management through the maintenance of a risk register; however, this is good practice for all schools.

The Governance Handbook for academy trusts and maintained schools says:

"Robust decision making also takes account of risk. Effective boards have a framework for identifying and managing risk and explicitly set and manage their risk appetite and tolerance."

[Download guide to managing risk \(PDF\)](#)

[Improving staff wellbeing](#)

[How chairs of governing boards spend and manage their time \(2016\)](#)

[Pupil premium: a guide for governing boards](#)

[Central leadership structures in MATs](#)

[Academy trusts: the role of members](#)

Managing wellbeing



Improving staff wellbeing A guide for governing boards in schools and trusts

A healthy working environment contributes towards attracting and retaining staff who are the school's most important resource. This guide is intended to help governing boards implement strategies that create a positive culture and healthy working environment for all staff.

The Department for Education (DfE) Workload Reduction Toolkit includes [materials to help governing boards](#) which can be used alongside this guide.

1. Monitoring staff wellbeing

A background network diagram with a central hub of eight nodes connected by thick lines to several peripheral nodes. Some peripheral nodes are also connected to each other, forming a web-like structure. The nodes are represented by circles of varying sizes and some have dashed outlines.

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Governance
Association

Visible
Governance
in schools

The expert organisation for
school governors, trustees
and governance professionals

NGA supporting you as an expert advisor: NGA Knowledge centre resources

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NGA guidance is designed to support you

We cover a broad range of topics, but you can expect each of our resources to cover:

- the specific responsibilities that boards have
 - why it matters
 - who the board works with
 - how the board fulfils its role in practice
-
- informed by our conversations with you
 - relevant to **your** school/trust setting
 - accessible (ready to pick up and use)

For example...

2.1 What to look for in a business case

A good business case should set out and prompt questions on the following:

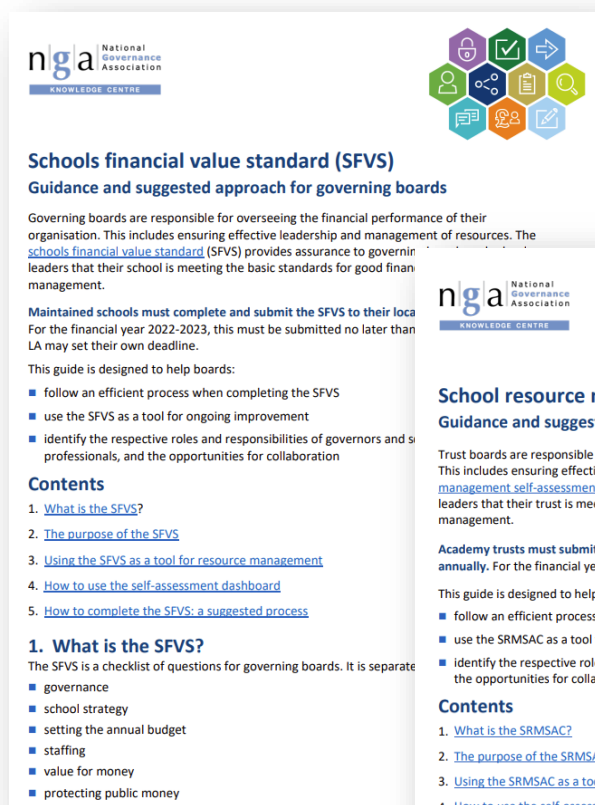
- why procurement is necessary and a priority
- how it supports the organisation's strategic priorities
- alignment with the values of the school or trust
- measuring impact/outcomes and the cost benefit of the procurement
- other procurement options, such as joint purchasing, loaning items or sharing resources

2.2 Scrutinising the business case

The principles of best value, known as the four Cs, provide a useful point of reference.

- **Challenge** whether the school/trust needs the goods or services they want to procure.
- **Compare** with how a similar school/trust procures goods or services.
- **Consult**: what do relevant stakeholders want?
- **Compete**: has the marketplace been explored?

For example...



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KNOWLEDGE CENTRE

Schools financial value standard (SFVS)
Guidance and suggested approach for governing boards

Governing boards are responsible for overseeing the financial performance of their organisation. This includes ensuring effective leadership and management of resources. The [schools financial value standard](#) (SFVS) provides assurance to governing leaders that their school is meeting the basic standards for good financial management.

Maintained schools must complete and submit the SFVS to their local authority (LA) for the financial year 2022-2023, this must be submitted no later than 15 March 2023.

This guide is designed to help boards:

- follow an efficient process when completing the SFVS
- use the SFVS as a tool for ongoing improvement
- identify the respective roles and responsibilities of governors and school professionals, and the opportunities for collaboration

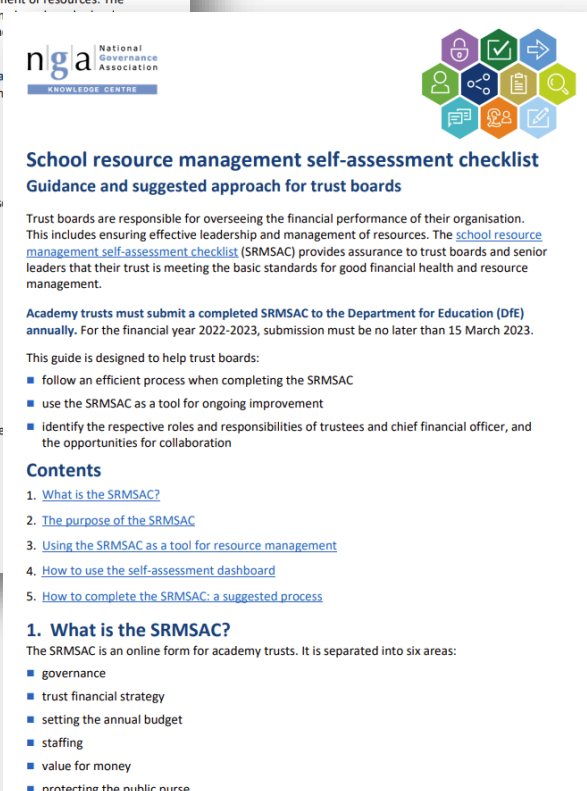
Contents

1. [What is the SFVS?](#)
2. [The purpose of the SFVS](#)
3. [Using the SFVS as a tool for resource management](#)
4. [How to use the self-assessment dashboard](#)
5. [How to complete the SFVS: a suggested process](#)

1. What is the SFVS?

The SFVS is a checklist of questions for governing boards. It is separated into six areas:

- governance
- school strategy
- setting the annual budget
- staffing
- value for money
- protecting public money



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KNOWLEDGE CENTRE

School resource management self-assessment checklist
Guidance and suggested approach for trust boards

Trust boards are responsible for overseeing the financial performance of their organisation. This includes ensuring effective leadership and management of resources. The [school resource management self-assessment checklist](#) (SRMSAC) provides assurance to trust boards and senior leaders that their trust is meeting the basic standards for good financial health and resource management.

Academy trusts must submit a completed SRMSAC to the Department for Education (DfE) annually. For the financial year 2022-2023, submission must be no later than 15 March 2023.

This guide is designed to help trust boards:

- follow an efficient process when completing the SRMSAC
- use the SRMSAC as a tool for ongoing improvement
- identify the respective roles and responsibilities of trustees and chief financial officer, and the opportunities for collaboration

Contents

1. [What is the SRMSAC?](#)
2. [The purpose of the SRMSAC](#)
3. [Using the SRMSAC as a tool for resource management](#)
4. [How to use the self-assessment dashboard](#)
5. [How to complete the SRMSAC: a suggested process](#)

1. What is the SRMSAC?

The SRMSAC is an online form for academy trusts. It is separated into six areas:

- governance
- trust financial strategy
- setting the annual budget
- staffing
- value for money
- protecting the public purse

5. How to complete the SRMSAC

5.1 Understanding roles and responsibilities

The trust board should ensure there is shared understanding of the roles and expectations of trustees and the chief financial officer (CFO) throughout the completion process.

The role of trustees

The trust board as a whole is responsible for providing financial oversight. The SRMSAC form requires the full trust board to view and approve the information submitted. We recommend that boards delegate detailed oversight of the SRMSAC to a committee or small group of trustees (a working group). The board should work with their CFO and make best use of the advice and support they are able to provide throughout the process.

The role of chief financial officer

School business professionals make a significant contribution towards effective leadership and financial governance. In academy trusts, this is usually the CFO (also known as finance director, business manager or equivalent). The CFO would be expected to undertake the preparatory

Increasing board effectiveness – self evaluation questions



- Board culture and practice
- Board structure
- Discharging core functions
- Compliance
- Evaluation and impact

*“**Succession is planned**, the recruitment process is designed to ensure new board members are recruited to fill skills gaps and ensure diversity of knowledge, experience, perspectives and approaches.”*

*“There is a **quality induction programme** in place for new board members and a culture of ongoing governance training and development.”*

Visit: nga.org.uk/self-evaluation-questions

New and updated resources



GDPR compliance: monitoring checklist for governing boards

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) legislation determines how personal data is processed and kept safe. Schools and trusts process large amounts of data and therefore must comply with the requirements of GDPR.

Managing compliance is an operational activity carried out by school leaders and staff. However, governing boards have strategic oversight and are legally responsible for ensuring their school or trust is GDPR compliant.

The following checklist outlines key elements of data protection practice that governing boards in all types of school and trust should ensure are in place and working well. We recommend that governing boards (or the committee with delegated responsibility) refer to this checklist when reviewing GDPR compliance on a routine (for example termly) basis.

Boards should ensure that:	Details	Relevant resources	Notes
Relevant policies are in place and compliant.	Policies should meet the requirements of legislation and adhere to GDPR principles. This includes the data protection and biometric data policies (both of which are statutory) and other policies that reference the safety and security of data (such as complaints and safeguarding).	ICO guidance on the principles of general data protection NGA policy review schedule	
The school/trust has appointed a DPO .	DPO duties include overseeing policies, coordinating	ICO guidance on the role of	
The board is kept informed via regular reports from the DPO .	Reports should cover how personal data is kept safe, specific risks and issues and how the school/trust is responding to them.		
Staff at all levels in the school/trust have received appropriate training .	Training should cover complying with relevant policies, procedures and documents, what to do if there are concerns and how to report a data breach.	The DfE data protection toolkit (page 9) sets out an effective approach to staff training	
Data protection practice is regularly reviewed .	The DfE recommends an annual review through an internal or external audit. Schools/trusts can make a request for the ICO to conduct an audit.	The DfE data protection toolkit (annex 8.1) includes an example ICO audit report	
Contracts with third parties are	Written contracts should be in place for any third	The ICO provides guidance	



Subject access requests: frequently asked questions

For governance professionals

These FAQs are intended to help governance professionals respond to subject access requests (SARs) that relate to governance in their school or trust. The questions covered reflect those commonly received by our [GOLDline advice service](#).

For detailed guidance, refer to the [Information Commissioner's Office \(ICO\) guide](#).

What is an SAR?

- An SAR is a request made by or on behalf of an individual for copies of personal information held by a public authority (such as a school or trust). Individuals are entitled to ask for such information under the UK GDPR.
- There is no specific format for SARs; they may be written (including via email and social media).

Freedom of information requests: frequently asked questions

For governance professionals

These FAQs are intended to help governance professionals respond to freedom of information (FOI) requests that relate to governance in their school or trust. The questions covered reflect those commonly received by our [GOLDline advice service](#).

For detailed guidance, refer to the [Information Commissioner's Office \(ICO\) guide](#).

What is an FOI request?

- Anyone has a right to request information from a public authority (such as a school or trust).
- For a request to be valid under the Freedom of Information Act, it has to be made in writing. This could be via email, paper or a social media platform such as Twitter. However, a postal request is also valid.

Visit: nga.org.uk/complying-with-GDPR

New and updated resources



Annual general meetings

A guide for governance professionals in academy trusts

This guide sets out key considerations for governance professionals organising academy trust annual general meetings (AGMs). As noted throughout, you will need to comply with your trust articles of association. You may also wish to refer to our [guidance on the role of members](#).

A [template AGM agenda](#) is included as an appendix to this guide.

What is the purpose of an AGM?

Academy trust AGMs are:

- a key opportunity for members to hear from the trust board and CEO about progress made during the last year and plans for the future
- a mechanism for members to ensure transparency, accountability, and sufficient scrutiny of the trust's governance

During the AGM, members formally receive the audited accounts and annual report, appoint the auditor, and should receive a report on the quality of governance. Members may also agree the appointment or re-appointment of trustees, as required.

Do we need to hold an AGM?

- NGA recommends that all academy trusts hold an AGM so that members can carry out the role and ensure accountability.
- Some articles of association, including the most recent Department for Education (DfE) model articles, make AGMs a requirement.

When should the AGM be held?

- Most trusts hold their AGM between **November and February** to align with financial reporting dates.
- Articles of association usually require no more than **fifteen months between AGMs**, allowing for the date to vary slightly each year if needed.
- Trustees determine the time and place of the AGM – it may be attached to a trust board meeting or another event such as an annual conference.
- Additional general meetings can take place throughout the year in order to carry out any members' business that cannot wait until the scheduled AGM.
- Your articles of association will set out the process for calling and holding general meetings.

What should be on the agenda?

AGM agendas should include:

- receipt of the audited annual accounts and annual report
- a report on quality of governance (from the trust board)
- future plans for the trust (see our [template agenda](#))

Can AGMs be virtual?

- If you are using the most recent model articles of association, you **can** hold your AGM virtually (via a meeting platform such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom).
- If you follow older articles, you **cannot** hold your AGM fully virtually.
- All trusts **can hold hybrid AGMs** (a physical location with some attendees joining virtually). You may wish to establish a protocol to ensure the smooth running of a hybrid AGM – our legal partners Browne Jacobson have [detailed guidance](#) on this topic.

Who can attend?

- All members are entitled to attend the AGM, and in NGA's view, all members should be expected to attend.
- The CEO and CFO (or equivalent) should attend.
- Trustees (who are not members) can attend and speak, for example to demonstrate how the trust board is fulfilling their governance functions.
- Local governors and other stakeholders (principally parents) can also be invited.

Who should chair the AGM?

- At the start of the meeting, members choose one member to act as chair.
- NGA strongly advise that any member who is also a trustee should not be elected as chair, given that the role of members is to scrutinise the trust's governance.

What is the quorum for AGMs?

- Your articles of association will define quorum for your AGM and other general meetings.
- The most recent articles define quorum as a **majority of members being present** (in person or by proxy).
- Older articles define quorum as **two members or their proxy**.

Members can appoint a proxy to act on their behalf (in accordance with the process set out in your articles of association). The use of proxies may help you to meet quorum. A hybrid meeting format may also be beneficial.

How does voting work at AGMs?

Any matters agreed at the AGM are considered to be a 'resolution'. Members can vote on resolutions during the meeting by a show of hands or a formal poll (using a paper voting card or electronic voting system, for example). The requirements for requesting a poll are set out in articles of association.



Annual general meetings

Template agenda for academy trusts

AGM agendas should include:

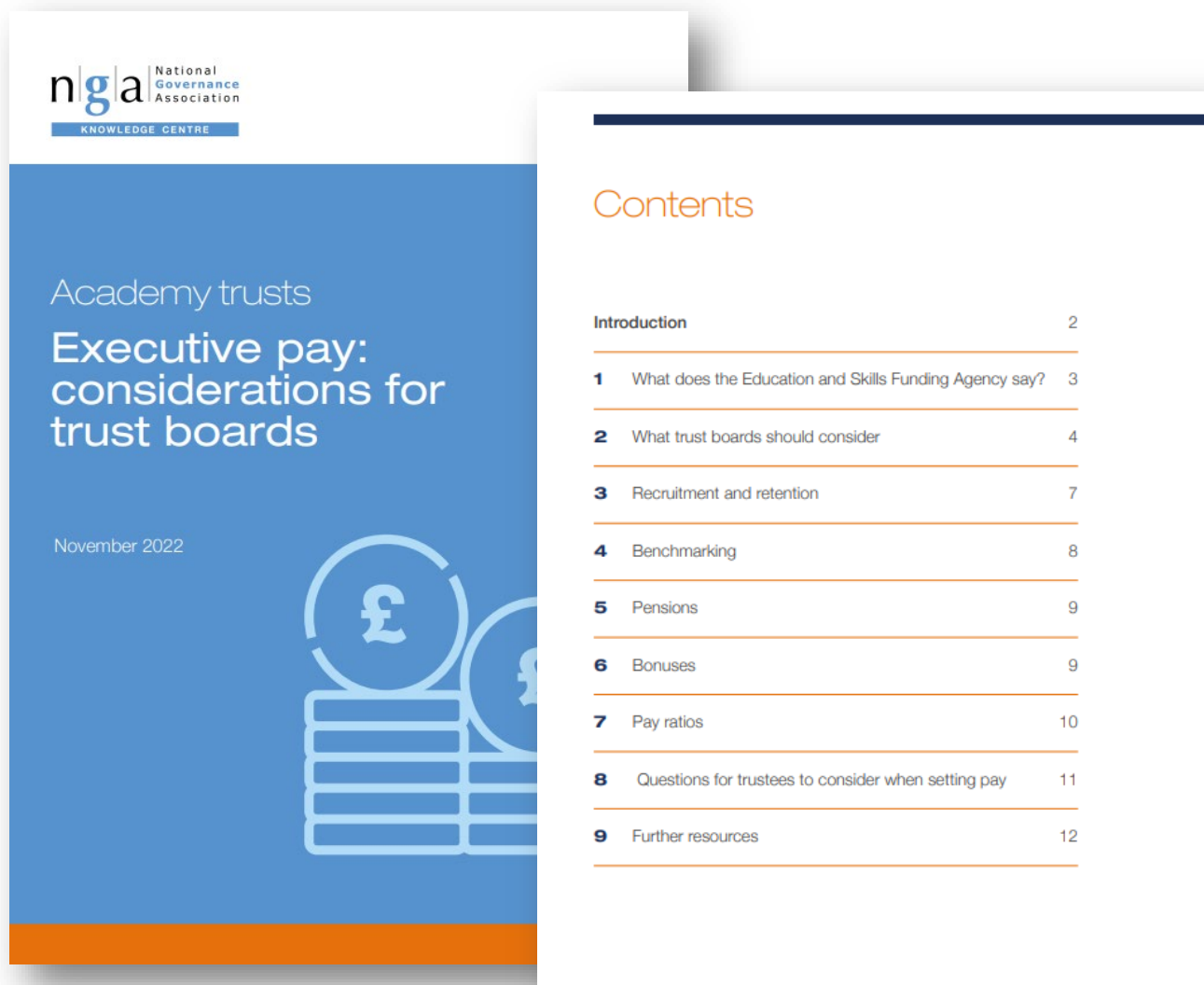
- receipt of the audited annual accounts and annual report
- a report on quality of governance (from the trust board)
- future plans for the trust

Use the template below to develop your own agenda. Refer to our [AGM guidance](#) for further advice.

	Agenda item	Action	Presented by
1	Welcome and confirmation of the chair, quorum and voting process	To confirm	Governance professional
2	Minutes of the previous AGM	To agree	Governance professional
3	Audited annual accounts to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the annual report on performance over the last year in terms of meeting the charitable objective of the trust• the vision, financial and educational performance of the trust	To receive	Chair of trustees
4	Report on quality of governance	To discuss	Chair of trustees
5	Major plans/outlook for the year ahead including plans for growth	Presentation	CEO and chair of trustees
6	Q&A: to include those from parents and other stakeholders	To discuss	
7	Appointment/re-appointment of auditors	To agree	Meeting chair
8	Where required:		
	Members – resignations and appointments	To note/pass	Meeting chair
	Trustee – appointments and removals	To note/pass	
	Resolution to change the articles of association	To pass	
	Any other members' resolutions	To pass	

Visit: nga.org.uk/AGMs

Executive pay: considerations for trust boards



Pay in Education

External support can be obtained from education reward specialists Pay in Education, (PiE) either through a subscription to their online salary benchmarking platform or through bespoke consultancy support. They offer trusts an independent view and the expertise to ensure responsible benchmarking for all MAT executive roles. NGA members can access the service at a discount. Further information is available at www.payineducation.co.uk or email subscriptions@payineducation.co.uk.

Visit: nga.org.uk/executive-pay

NGA supporting governance professionals

Best practice guidance and resources



Essential information, best practice guidance, model policies and more

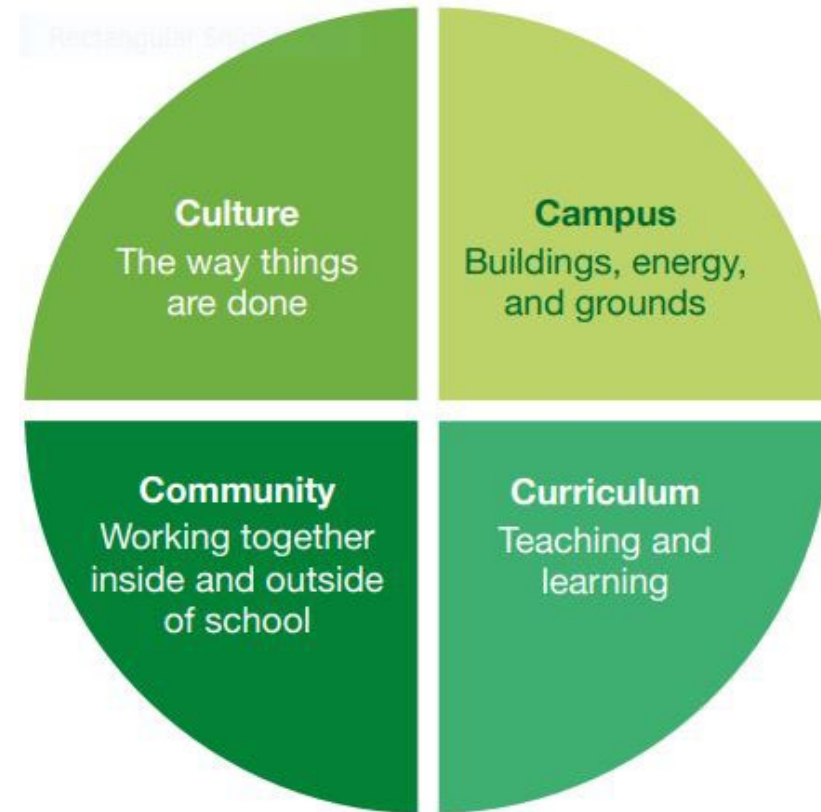
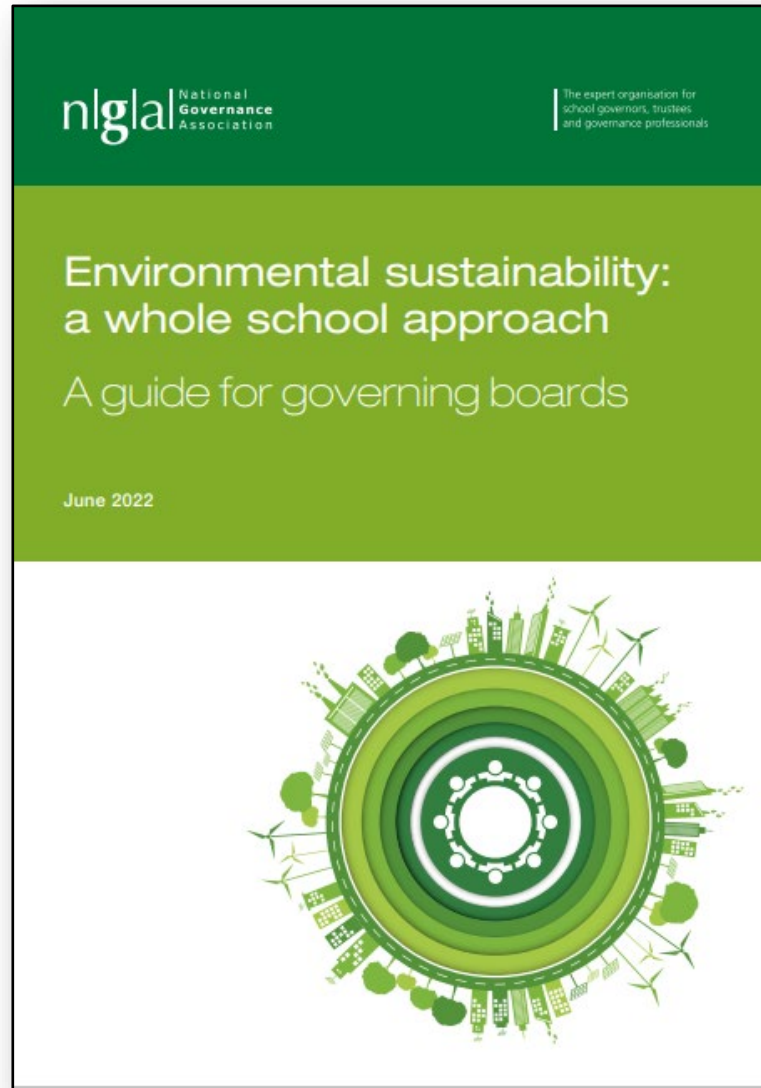
Popular resources for governance professionals include:

- [Annual governance planner](#)
- [Policy review schedule](#)
- [Agenda setting](#): exemplar and guiding principles
- [Taking minutes](#): exemplar and guiding principles
- [Electing governors and trustees](#): guidance and model documents
- [Inducting new governors and trustees](#)



You can also [access bespoke advice](#) online or on the phone if your board has GOLD membership.

Put Environmental Sustainability & the 4C's on your agenda:



www.nga.org.uk/GreenerGovernance

[NGA webinars - National Governance Association](#)

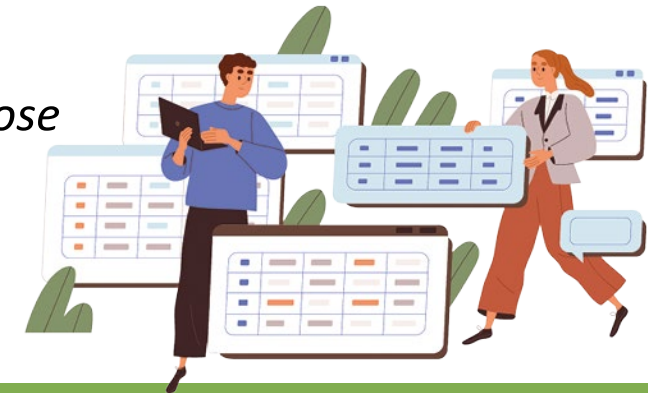
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI): Beyond Compliance

NGA has partnered with ASCL to develop a series of e-learning modules that focus on creating an inclusive culture through practice, and going beyond compliance.

The second module in the series focuses on:

- What EDI is and why it's important
- The different types of bias and the impact on behaviour
- How and when brain function leads to bias and
- How bias manifests in day to day life

This module is available to all Learning Link subscribers now and freely available to those who sign up for a [free trial of Learning Link](https://www.nga.org.uk/learninglink).





RECENT: Governance training for trust and school leaders

Practical sessions for MAT, SAT, academy and maintained leaders

- Designed for CEOs, headteachers and other executive school and trust leaders
- Explore how you can work effectively with your governing board and achieve good governance and strong outcomes for pupils
- Led by expert facilitators with first-hand experience of trust and school leadership and governance

[Secure your place for June and September 2023](#)

[Governance for MAT executive leaders: working with your trust board](#)

[Governance for academy leaders within MATs: working with your local academy committee](#)

[Governance for SAT leaders: developing your trust board](#)

[Governance for maintained school leaders: working with your governing body](#)

Development for School & Trust Governance Professionals: An accredited programme designed for clerks/ governance professional with at least three months' experience and currently working in any school or trust setting. The cost of the programme is £480 per participant. *NGA Leading Governance Development for Clerks - National Governance Association*

Development for Chairs: Designed for governors and trustees both aspiring to become a chair and currently working as a chair, with separate cohorts for trusts and maintained schools. The programme will support you to develop your leadership skills and runs over approximately three terms. The cost of this virtual programme is £270 per participant. *NGA Leading Governance Development for Chairs - National Governance Association*

Development for MAT Trustees: A programme of workshops for multi academy trustees gives an understanding of the expectations of trustees and a practical grounding into how good governance works effectively in MATs. Undertake the whole programme or select from 8 two-hour workshops. Cost is £495 for NGA members (£750 non-member)
Led by experienced facilitators with expertise in trust governance
NGA Leading Governance development for MAT trustees - National Governance Association

Annual Governance Survey 2023

Closes 9 am on Tuesday 30 May

Your Views Matter

Have Your Say



Thank you!

Any questions?

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