



About National Leaders of Governance support

National Leaders of Governance (NLG) support is funded by the Department for Education (DfE) for eligible trusts and delivered by the National Governance Association (NGA). It provides bespoke and quality assured support to develop governance.

It is part of the DfE's funded trust and school improvement offer. The DfE's aim is for NLG support to strengthen governance oversight and leadership at trust board level. Improving the quality of governance and the strategic decisions made by boards will lift the overall performance of the organisation.

About the National Leaders of Governance

The National Leaders of Governance (NLGs) who provide the support are experienced trustees, governance professionals, governors and consultants. There are over 60 designated NLGs, each having demonstrated the substantial and current governance experience and expertise needed to carry out the role to a high standard through a rigorous externally moderated assessment and induction process.

NGA provides NLGs with ongoing training, materials and support as well as quality assuring their work to ensure they remain at the forefront of governance policy and practice.

NLGs will provide governance expertise and recommendations largely through external reviews of governance. They may also be able to provide any follow up or alternative support identified to have the most positive outcome on governance across a trust.

“ An objective independent external review of the effectiveness of the board can be a more powerful diagnostic tool than a self-evaluation. External reviews are particularly important before the board undertakes any significant change... or in cases where concerns around governance arise. The Department's strong preference is that external reviews of governance are also conducted routinely as part of a wider programme of self-assessment and improvement. ”

Academy Trust Handbook, effective September 2021.

External reviews of governance

Our high-quality, independent and objective reviews are supportive and developmental. They are designed to help realise the full potential of governance in your trust. A review will provide an assessment of strengths and areas for development. An NLG looks at how well the board is performing and seeks to make recommendations to improve the effectiveness of its work.

Within a year of the review taking place, governance should be more effective and there should be evidence of improvement across the organisation.

“ Effective governance absolutely underpins our continuing efforts to raise standards in our schools. Trustees and governors play a crucial role in our education system, serving with dedication and commitment for the benefit of our children and young people. ”

Baroness Barran, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the School System

Benefits of an external review of governance

- Keeps your board up to date with governance best practice
- Helps governance stay live in response to the organisation's needs and external environment
- Prepares your board for your trust's future needs
- Appraises the effectiveness of challenge and support for executive leaders
- Evaluates the skills, diversity and balance of perspectives of the trustees
- Ensures a clear distinction between strategic and operational leadership
- Refines your model and practice of governance across the trust
- Provides an independent view on your practice
- Offers an opportunity to consider the impact your board's decisions make on pupils and outcomes
- Enables you to understand how your board has the potential to effect outstanding governance
- Ensures that the board is compliant in meeting its legal responsibilities
- Demonstrates to trust members that the trust board is effective

How NLG support works



About the National Governance Association



NGA is at the forefront of knowledge and understanding of trust governance. We are the membership organisation for governors, trustees and governance professionals of state schools in England.

Our aim is to improve the educational standards and wellbeing of children and young people by increasing the effectiveness of governing boards and promoting high standards. Governance has been at our core since we were established in 2006.

We are expert leaders in school and trust governance, providing information, advice and guidance, professional development and e-learning. We represent the views of those governing at a national level and work closely with, and lobby, UK government and educational bodies.

NGA has extensive experience of carrying out external reviews of governance reviews in all types of schools and trusts. Our consultants have delivered over 400 external reviews making us the one of the most experienced providers in England.