

GOVERNOR ROLE DESCRIPTION (INCLUDING AUDIT COMMITTEE)

INTRODUCTION

Newcastle and Stafford Colleges Group is a General Further Education college group that comprises two main campuses centred around Newcastle-under-Lyme College and Stafford College.

The Further and Higher Education Act 1992 requires that there should be a governing body for any college in the further education sector. The governing body is also known as the Corporation.

Governing bodies vary in size and in the balance between the various types of members – or ‘governors’ - they have. The categories of governors that go to make up the governing body are external governors, co-opted governors, staff governors, student governors and the Principal and CEO.

The NSCG Corporation currently comprises 18 governors – numbering 13 external governors (being those who are, or have been engaged or employed in business, industry or any profession or in any other field of employment relevant to the activities of the institution), 2 staff governors, 2 student governors and the Principal and CEO - and the desire is to augment the number of external governors.

NSCG COMMITTEES

Governing bodies are required to have the following committees:

- a Search Committee to advise on the appointment of members of the Corporation; and
- an Audit Committee to advise on matters relating to audit arrangements and systems of internal control.

At NSCG, the Corporation also has:

- a Finance and General Purposes Committee;
- an Education and Standards Committee; and
- a Remuneration Committee - to advise on the payment of senior staff.

Members are usually asked to serve on at least one of these Committees and, in this case, the requirement is for a new governor to sit on the Audit Committee.

AUDIT COMMITTEE

The principal remit of the Audit Committee is to assess and provide the Corporation with an opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the College Corporation's assurance arrangements, framework of governance, risk management and control processes for the effective and efficient use of resources, solvency of the institution and the safeguarding of its assets.

Additionally, this Committee's activities include:

- advice to the Corporation on the appointment, reappointment, dismissal, and remuneration of the external auditor, reporting accountant, internal auditor, and other assurance providers (if applicable);
- The production of an annual report for the Corporation summarising the Committee's activities relating to the financial year under review; and
- Oversight of the College's policies on fraud, irregularity, impropriety and whistleblowing.

In this event, we welcome senior leaders who have experience in overseeing and the development of internal and external audit, compliance, and risk management but just as important is expertise in governance, culture, and management behaviour. This broader expertise ensures internal audit consider non-financial risks that may threaten the College from a strategic or operational perspective.

Further information is outlined below in relation to the wider aspects of being a College Governor.

ROLE OF A GOVERNOR

The role of a governor is to be a critical friend of the College, offering appropriate scrutiny and challenge, whilst also offering insightful thoughts and ideas for future opportunities. Governors add value to the board through increased diversity of thought and add value, based on each individual's experience, to the organisation's Strategic Plan.

More specifically, the governor's role is to contribute to the work of the governing body, to enable it to be effective in carrying out its core functions, namely:

- setting the strategic direction and ethos and monitor College performance by setting targets and agreeing key performance indicators;
- holding the senior leadership to account to reach the objectives set; and
- ensuring financial probity and accountability for its stewardship of public funds to deliver a quality service and for the performance of its legal and statutory duties.

DUTIES

These are specified in the Instrument and Articles of Government. Governors are responsible for: –

- Determination of educational character and ethos;
- Articulation of vision, values and strategic direction and approval of the quality strategy of the institution;
- Oversight and monitoring of college activities and the effective and efficient use of resources;
- Financial probity and the safeguarding of assets;
- Approving annual estimates of income and expenditure; the ongoing financial plan; and the Strategic Plan;
- Appointment, grading, suspension, dismissal, appraisal and determination of pay and conditions of the Principal and CEO, designated Senior Post Holders and the Clerk;
- Setting framework for pay and conditions of service of all other staff;
- Agreeing retention and achievement targets, monitoring academic achievement and raising standards; and
- Ensuring the correct policies and procedures necessary to fulfil all legal obligations.

ELIGIBILITY

- Governors are required to make an annual declaration of eligibility and of interests. This is held by the Clerk and is made available to members of the public.
- A person is not eligible to be a Governor of an FE college if he or she has been declared bankrupt within the last three years or served a sentence for a conviction within the last five years, or been removed from office as a member of an FE Board within the last ten years.
- Governors should not normally have a teaching role or be a student at the College unless they are appointed as staff or student members.
- Although not a statutory requirement, Governors are required to agree to Disclosure and Barring service (DBS) criminal record checks on appointment and on re-appointment.
- Governors are required to participate in the annual appraisal programme.

GOVERNOR PERSON SPECIFICATION

Governors should be able to demonstrate: -

- Commitment to lifelong learning and the role of the College as a major provider of education and training;
- Willingness to promote the College within the community it serves;
- Ability to make reasoned decisions and to act honestly, diligently and in good faith;
- Commitment to attend board meetings, committee meetings and other governor events and training sessions;
- Strategic and financial awareness;
- Critical listening and appraisal skills;
- Ability to ask probing questions; and
- Ability to work within a framework of collective decision-making in the best interests of the board and College.

An appointment as a Governor of NSCG is a public appointment. All governors are required to abide by the Corporation's Code of Conduct, which is based on the Seven Principles of Public Life (the 'Nolan' Principles): selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.