



School Governors



Governors Newsletter – April 2024!

Useful Information for Barnsley School Governors

Click on the **green coloured links** to open the relevant documents.



I hope that you have all had an enjoyable and relaxing Easter break and that you are feeling suitably refreshed and ready for the upcoming term.

This month celebrates the first anniversary of the rollout of GovernorHub, which I hope you are now familiar with and enjoying the full benefits of. If this is not the case, please refer to the “GovernorHub – Demonstration offer to Governing Bodies” article below (page 2). This provides information on how we can support you and your Governing Body further, via a complimentary demonstration of the system. This demonstration will give you an insight into what GovernorHub has to offer and how it can support you in your role.

As well as my role within BMBC, I also work closely with regional governance professional colleagues as a member of the Yorkshire and Humberside Governance Support Group (YHGSG). The group are very pleased and proud to be putting on a regional conference in June 2024, available to Governors across the Yorkshire, East Riding, North and East Lincolnshire and Derby City regions. Places for the conference are extremely limited and details of how to book a place are provided within the first article of this newsletter (page 2).

The Department for Education (DfE) has published 2 new governance guides, to replace the Governance Handbook. For the first time separate guidance has been produced for maintained schools and academies. Links to this information are included within this newsletter (page 3) and PDF copies of the guidance have been made available for you to download in the ‘resources’ section of GovernorHub.

As a team we are always looking at ways in which we can improve our service and are keen to hear your views on this. If there is anything you would like to raise please drop me a line at the following email address: peterbell@barnsley.gov.uk

As ever, I'd like to thank you for your continued support and for the positive impact your work has on the education and life chances of Barnsley children and young people.

Peter Bell: School Governance and Alliance Board Service Manager

Yorkshire and Humber Governance Support Group - Regional Governance Conference: Thursday, 20 June 2024 (9:00am to 3:00pm)



The Yorkshire & Humber Governance Support Group (YHGSG), which BMBC is a proud member of, will be holding a combined Governance Conference on Thursday, 20 June 2024. YHGSG is part of the National Co-ordinators of Governance (NCoGs) group and, as a region, encompasses all areas across Yorkshire, East Riding, North and East

Lincolnshire and Derby City.

The Conference is being held in the Education Exchange, Knottingley.

Delegates may attend this Conference free of charge and will have the opportunity to listen to keynote speakers Alison Cope, Anti-Violence Campaigner, and Saeed Atcha and Mehran Mokri, Youth Leads UK. You will also have the opportunity to attend two of the following workshops:

- Sustainability and the Environment
- Ethical Leadership
- Inclusion/SEND
- Safeguarding
- The Future of Governance
- Behaviour and Attendance.

Lunch and refreshments are included. Workshops will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

For further information and details of how to book on the conference, please click on the following link. **Places are limited so we would encourage you to book early:** [book here](#)

GovernorHub – Demonstration offer to Governing Bodies

It is a year since we introduced GovernorHub as our software system to support you with your work. We continue to be very proud of this system and what it has done to enhance the quality of service we provide to you.

We very much hope that you are now familiar with GovernorHub and are getting full use of it. For those of you who aren't, or would welcome some additional support and training on the system, we



are pleased to offer a complimentary visit to one of your Governing Body meetings so that we can give you a full demonstration of GovernorHub and its capabilities, as well as answer any questions you might have about the system. If this is something you and your Governing Body would like to take advantage of, please contact us via the following email address and we will arrange a school visit: admin-governorsservices@barnsley.gov.uk

Expansion of Childcare Funding from 1 April 2024

The first phase of the biggest ever expansion of childcare starts giving working parents of two-year-olds access to 15 hours a week.

Thousands of parents of two-year-olds across the country are getting help with their childcare costs as the first phase of the biggest ever expansion in childcare starts.

In this first stage, working parents of two-year-olds are now able to access 15 hours a week of government-funded childcare from 1 April.



The rollout of support is part of the government's plan to help families – freeing thousands of couples from having to choose between having a family and a career, as over 150,000 children are on track to secure government-funded places from this week.

By September 2025 the full rollout will be completed, with working parents able to access 30 hours from the end of maternity leave to when their child starts school, saving parents an average of £6900 per year.

The Department for Education (DfE) has replaced the Governance Handbook

The DfE has published 2 new governance guides, to replace the Governance Handbook. There are no new requirements, so your board doesn't need to do anything other than to be aware that there is now a specific source of information for different types of school. You can find the guides here:

[Maintained schools governance guide - Guidance](#)

[Academy trust governance guide - Guidance](#)



BMBC Governor Services will continue to use the information in the guides to identify the statutory functions of governing boards and will ensure that these are included on our model agendas.

Further information about the new guidance can be accessed here: [new governance guidance explained](#)

Ofsted – Big Listen Survey (closing date 31 May 2024)

Overview

The Big Listen is an opportunity for Ofsted to hear from the professionals it works with, like teachers and other educators, carers, employers and social workers, and the people it works for: parents, carers, children and learners.

The consultation asks about:

- how Ofsted report inspection findings
- how Ofsted carry out inspections
- how Ofsted can have a positive impact on the sectors it inspects
- what Ofsted need to do to be a world-class inspectorate and regulator, trusted by parents, children and the sectors it works with

Ofsted want to hear views on the priorities for Ofsted that are important to people.

The questions highlight the areas that Ofsted want to hear from people about and will inform its thinking going forward. Ofsted want views on its future direction of work.



The Big Listen is more than just a consultation.

Ofsted have also commissioned research through focus groups with parents and education/care professionals, and will be holding a programme of events to speak directly to the different providers it inspects and regulates.

Ofsted will analyse responses and set out its plans later this year.

Supporting documentation

The Big Listen page and other supporting material is available on the [Ofsted website](#). Please refer to it when completing the survey.

Closing date

The closing date for this consultation is 31 May 2024 at 11:59pm.

National Governance Association (NGA): “From Classrooms to Communities” – a manifesto for schools and trusts

Informed by its [annual governance survey](#) and experiences supporting governing boards, the NGA manifesto for 2024 outlines the key challenges faced by schools and academy trusts and presents a set of bold proposals aimed at addressing these issues.



A quarter of a million trustees and governors give their time, care and expertise to make crucial decisions that help to address these issues.

1. Future proofing
2. Families
3. Funding
4. Leadership and accountability

The manifesto can be accessed here: [NGA manifesto 2024 | National Governance Association](#)

DfE funding of the “Inspiring Governance” School Governor Recruitment Service to cease

The Government has pulled the plug on a governor recruitment scheme – despite record-high vacancies. Funding will cease on 30 September 2024

The National Governance Association (NGA) said ditching the last remaining government-funded governance scheme means boards are now “left entirely to their own devices, with past support for governance recruitment, development, and training now all removed”.

Inspiring Governance has helped recruit 8,000 school governors and trustees since it launched with Department for Education funding back in 2016.

**inspiring
governance**

Emma Balchin, NGA co-chief executive, said: “The decision to abandon funding for school governance is deeply concerning and sets a troubling precedent for the future.”

In October 2023, the government also scrapped the national leaders of governance programme, which had been supporting struggling schools to improve their governance for ten years.

“Governance is pivotal in upholding standards and driving improvement within our education system,” added Balchin.

“Without adequate financial support to support sustainable recruitment of volunteers, governors, and trustees’ ability to fulfil their responsibilities effectively is jeopardised.”



The NGA has written to the education secretary, Gillian Keegan, urging her department to “reassess its positions and acknowledge the irreplaceable role of governance in the education sector”. The

letter can be accessed here: [letter to education secretary Gillian Keegan](#)

England has 230,000 governance volunteers. The NGA has asked the government to fund a recruitment campaign to boost numbers.