



We start this issue by thanking governors for engaging and completing many of the **National Governance Association Learning Link modules**. The Governor Support Team (GST) have been listening to and reviewing your responses from the autumn term Survey Monkey and it is clear that governors have valued the opportunity for online training over the past 12 months.

National Governance Association: e-learning for school governors, trustees, chairs and clerks

We are delighted to announce that Cumbria County Council have agreed to fund the National Governance Association Learning Link (NGA LL) package for a further 12 months. All governors and trustees of Cumbrian schools will be provided with unlimited access to the NGA LL from April 2022 to April 2023. By extending the provision of the NGA LL for a further 12 months, schools will really be able to monitor the impact of the training undertaken.

This significant financial investment into governor training, for a second year, shows the commitment of the Learning Improvement Service to supporting governors in our schools. Your dedication and commitment as a governor contributes significantly to schools achieving the best outcomes for children in Cumbria. Thank you.

Training

In preparation for the summer term, the following NGA LL modules were recommended in the previous newsletter (Issue 4):

- The Role of the SEND Governor
- Working Together: Building the team and improving the organisation
- Succession Planning

Legal Services Training

Legal Services are offering the following training:

School Admission Appeal Training - Tuesday 29th March 2022 9.30-13:00 (Microsoft Teams)

1. The Legal Services department at Cumbria County Council are offering a training course on School Admission Appeal. The training is open to all school staff, local authority employees and panel members involved in Appeal Panels.
2. For school's signed up to the Legal Services SLA (Service Level Agreement) the training is free of charge. For those not signed up there is a fee of £50.00 per delegate (plus VAT if applicable).
3. Included in the training will be an overview of the application process leading up to an appeal; what information you should include in the appeal papers; what prejudice is; how to present your case to an appeal panel; the constitution of appeal panels and what the appeal panels look out for. Following this we will cover some legal updates.
4. If you are anticipating school admission appeals for September or wish to refresh your knowledge on appeals you may find this training beneficial.

If you are interested in attending please contact the team at schoolappeals@cumbria.gov.uk.

Governing Board Self-Evaluation

Thinking about the summer term, this is a good time for boards to reflect on the past academic year but also an opportunity to start planning towards the next academic year. This is the time for boards to self-evaluate where they are now and identify the areas to focus on in the next year, to improve the effectiveness of the board.

In the **Governance Handbook** it states the key features of effective governance as:

- **Strategic leadership** that sets and champions vision, ethos and strategy.
- **Accountability** that drives up educational standards and financial performance.
- **People** with the right skills, experience, qualities and capacity.
- **Structures** that reinforce clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
- **Compliance** with statutory and contractual requirements.
- **Evaluation** to monitor and improve the quality and impact of governance.

It is seen as best practice that boards evaluate their effectiveness regularly and in **The Competency Framework For Governance** it states: 'It is essential for the board to reflect on its own effectiveness including the effectiveness of its processes and structures. This will assist in building relationships and improving accountability and will enable the board to ensure that there is a clear distinction between strategic and operational leadership. It will also assist in setting the tone and culture of the board.'

The GST has developed a **Governing Board Health Check**, which can be used to support boards in the process of self-evaluation. The aim of the health check is to help boards review their governance arrangements, check they have appropriate systems in place and identify any areas for improvement.

In addition, boards can access the NGA LL where there are numerous modules to support individual governors improvement journey but thinking about the effectiveness of the board (team), the following may modules be of interest:

- Working together: Building the team and improving the organisation
- Effectiveness: Governance making an impact, changing lives

Safeguarding

Following the Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership (CSCP) Safeguarding week 14 – 18 March 2022, GST draw your attention to key information and resources governing board members may find useful.

The statutory guidance, **Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE)**, which should be read together with **Working together to safeguard children**, places requirements on all boards to ensure their schools have effective safeguarding policies and procedures in place that take into account local risks, any statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State, any Local Authority guidance and locally agreed inter-agency procedures.

KCSIE states that the statutory guidance should be read and followed by governing bodies of maintained schools (including maintained nursery schools) and colleges; and that all governors must have an enhanced Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) check with details registered on the Single Central Record.

Governors responsible for appointing staff in schools should make themselves familiar with Part 3: Safer recruitment section of this guidance.

- Safer Recruitment e-Learning training is available at **CSCP**. After completion of the Safer Recruitment course and short assessment, a personalised certificate of achievement can be downloaded.

There are a number of e-Learning courses available on the **CSCP website**. To access safeguarding e-learning modules, you will need to register an account. The e-learning is provided free of charge to partners of Cumbria County Council, which includes all maintained schools, academies and free schools. We advise for best practice that all governors complete the following (e-Learning):

- **Awareness of Safeguarding and Child Protection Level 1**
- **E-learning training on Prevent**
- **Early Help for Children and Families**

All board members can also access the NGA LL: e-learning for school governors, trustees, chairs and clerks platform and complete the module 'Safeguarding: the governor's role'.

Local Authority Designated Officer, easy read leaflets

The Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO) have produced a series of small, easy to read leaflets, which are downloadable and printable, to share with those involved in managing the allegations process. The aim is to explain to you either as an employer or the person against whom the allegation has been made what will happen during the process.

The leaflets are available on the CSCP website **here** under 'Additional Resources'

Online safety in schools and colleges: Questions from the Governing Board

The UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS) curated this useful document for governing bodies and trustees in 2019. Although reference is made to KCSIE 2019, the questions remain relevant and appropriate today.

Download the document here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/online-safety-in-schools-and-colleges-questions-from-the-governing-board.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Ensuring the ongoing achievement and success of SEND children is a collective responsibility of the Governing Board and the SEND governor is the Governing Board's champion for SEND children.

Hannah Graham (Hannah.Graham@cumbria.gov.uk) is the Learning Improvement Service's Associate SEND Adviser and her role is to provide SEND support to schools across Cumbria. Support to schools is identified through the completion of the Annual Schools Return form and through General Adviser links with schools.

As an Associate Adviser, Hannah also continues to work within school and has been the SENCo at Kingmoor Junior School in Carlisle since 2010. Hannah is passionate about improving outcomes for pupils with SEND and is currently involved in a 'train the trainer' programme led by the Autism Education Trust. As a practicing SENCo, Hannah has first-hand experience of supporting colleagues to meet the needs of pupils with a wide variety of SEND and in developing effective whole school SEND processes. She has benefitted greatly from the support of her own SEND governor and recognises the importance of sharing information about SEND processes with the whole governing board to ensure that outcomes for pupils with SEND are of the highest priority within whole school planning. Over the last year, Hannah has worked alongside her SEND governor to begin to review their school's SEND processes through the SEND Review Process.

The Learning Improvement Service are currently offering a grant to all schools in Cumbria to facilitate a System-Led SEND Review. This incorporates a self-evaluation process, and it would be beneficial for SEND governors to be involved in discussion around this wherever possible.

Governor Support Assistant Resignation

We are very sorry to announce that Kellie Fricker, Governor Support Assistant for Eden and Copeland has resigned from the GST. Kellie sends her very best wishes to all the governors she has worked with over the past few years, and we wish Kellie all the very best in her new venture. In Kellie's absence, our thanks go to Faith Matthews and Jane Lees who are the interim GSAs for Eden and Copeland respectively.

Contact

GST continues to offer advice, support, and guidance, specific to your boards needs and can be contacted as follows:

Jane Lees (Barrow, Copeland and South Lakes) E: jane.lees@cumbria.gov.uk M: 07768 027 244

Faith Matthews (part-time), (Allerdale, Carlisle and Eden) E: faith.matthews@cumbria.gov.uk M: 07384 825 941

