

## **Bracknell Forest Guidance – Recruitment of Governors**

Following reconstitution of governing bodies (GBs) of **maintained schools** in the Borough, the size of many governing bodies in Bracknell Forest was reduced. Nevertheless there are still vacancies due to turnover.

It is no longer a case of just filling vacancies. The government has made it crystal clear on many occasions that governing bodies must ensure that they have the right skills around the table to do the job effectively. The challenge is to find people with the right skills and the time to use them, who are prepared to perform the role on a volunteer basis.

Most GBs know what skills they are looking for and they should be proactive in filling their vacancies. In all cases Clerks need to be aware of what vacancies will be arising and plan for taking the appropriate action.

### **Parent and Staff governor vacancies**

These positions are filled by election. Elections CAN take place a short time (e.g. within a school term) in advance of the current term of office coming to an end. In this case the new term of office will not commence until the day after the previous term ends. (NOT the date of the election). BFC provide parent and staff governor election guidance.

### **Staff governors**

If no nominations for a vacancy are received then the place **remains a vacancy**, and nominations sought again after a reasonable period of time has elapsed. Staff governors are not appointed by the GB and an election process must take place. If the HeadTeacher chooses not to take up their ex-officio position, the post remains vacant.

### **Parent governors**

If no nominations are received, the GB is permitted to appoint as a parent governor a person with appropriate skills (without an election) in the following order of priority:

- A parent of a registered pupil of the school (sometimes parents are put off nominating themselves as they don't like the idea of having to go through an election)
- A parent of a former registered pupil of the school (this could be useful if the current parent governor would like to continue in the role but is no longer eligible due to their child leaving the school)
- A parent of a child under or of compulsory school age (this could include parents of children who may be due to enter the school, or even parents of children who attend another school)

### **Foundation governor vacancies**

The Clerk needs to be aware of vacancies coming up, and make sure they inform the Chair and the governor concerned. Usually the Parochial Church Council work with the Diocese to fill vacancies but this can be a lengthy process. Early action can help. Some Foundation governor places are ex-officio and therefore do not have a term of office.

### **Local authority governor vacancies**

Maintained schools are only permitted to have one LA governor. The LA Nominations process approve suitable individuals who they either nominate to schools or more likely approve nominations received from the school. The appointment is actually made by the GB at a full GB meeting. Clerks need to be aware of terms of office coming to an end well in advance and ascertain whether the current incumbent is willing to re-stand for nomination. If this is the case then the Clerk must ensure that the individual completes the required nomination form in full before the due date.

### **Co-opted Governors**

Co-opted governors are currently the largest category of governor and also make up the largest number of vacancies. Co-opted governors are appointed by the GB and are people who **in the opinion of the GB** have the skills required to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school. There is no requirement for these individuals to be connected with the school, to live or work in the Borough, and they can include parents and staff **if they possess the skills**.

## Filling the places

- **LA referral:** Individuals who approach the LA are referred on to appropriate schools. Sometimes the individuals have a preference for specific schools / areas or type of school. We normally only refer people to one school at a time. It is therefore **essential** that the Chair / GB consider the individual and inform Governor Services as soon as possible if they wish to take this further in which case they should contact the individual direct. If Governor Services does not hear from the GB on their proposed action within a reasonable time (2-3 weeks) the referral will be passed to another school.
- **Existing governors' recommendations:** many people are introduced to governance through acquaintances and casual conversation. Even if you do not have any current vacancies promoting governance in social circles and through school events may pay off in the future. If someone is particularly suitable, the GB could choose to appoint them as an Associate Member.
- **Governors for Schools:** an organisation that exists to fill vacancies on school governing boards. Their emphasis is to recruit people from business. Schools can register with through their website: [www.governorsforschools.org.uk](http://www.governorsforschools.org.uk) The service is free. Signing up allows you to create a school profile, add/remove/edit your vacancies, list any specific skills requirements, and gain access to additional resources and guidance to help with staff and parent vacancies.
- **The Inspiring Governance Alliance** is the result of discussions between the Department for Education, the National Governors' Association, NCOGS, CBI and the Education and Employers Taskforce about how to increase the number of governing bodies actively seeking to recruit and develop high calibre governors with relevant skills and experience and increase the number of employers supporting staff to volunteer as governors as well as promoting governance as a key learning and development opportunity for staff. More information can be viewed on the website [www.inspiringgovernance.org](http://www.inspiringgovernance.org)
- **Advertising:** Historically, governing bodies have not used direct advertising very much. However, this can be an effective way of reaching a large number of people.  
To assist Governing Bodies, the Council offers the facility of individual schools placing an advertisement on the Governors' section of the Bracknell Forest website.  
You will need to provide information about the school, the governing body and the skills that you are seeking as a final draft on headed notepaper. If you wish to take advantage of this facility please contact Governor Services. We can provide an example of an advertisement that you may wish to follow. People who respond must be asked to contact the governing body direct and it is for the governing body to decide the interview and selection process.  
**"The right people around the table"** To assist governing bodies with recruitment, the NGA has published a members' guide with this title, on how to recruit new governors and trustees to school boards in England. In parallel the NGA has updated its skills audit tool. Both can be viewed in the members' section of the NGA's website [www.nga.org.uk](http://www.nga.org.uk)

Please also refer to the top tips on recruitment from Clerks' Briefing Papers.