



GST Newsletter

Issue 8 – June 2024

Introduction

Welcome to the final newsletter of the 2023-24 academic year. The Governor Support Team (GST), would like to take this opportunity to thank all governors and trustees for your continued support and commitment to the education of children and young people in Westmorland and Furness. This year seems to have gone far too quickly, but we hope governors can take a well-earned summer break, when it arrives.

If governors would like to refer back to any information in previous newsletters, please go to the **GST website**.

News/updates

As well as the Department for Education (DfE) **School Governance** update, below are further items which may be of interest:

Education Secretary speech at Education World Forum 2024

Education Secretary Gillian Keegan's address at the Education World Forum in London, many of the areas raised in the speech are touched on in this half terms newsletter.



Safeguarding

Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2024

DfE have released the document 'Keeping children safe in education 2024'. Please note this is for information only pending publication, and will not come into force until September 2024.

Strengthening school security and preparedness

DfE has published guidance on **protective security and preparedness for education settings**. The aim of the guidance is to support schools and trusts to enhance safety and security on school premises.

As the responsibility of safeguarding pupils, staff and school premises lies with governors and trustees, board members play a crucial role in ensuring that effective security measures and emergency response plans are in place.

Read the **guidance** to see how you can take proactive steps to assess and strengthen security protocols within your schools and trusts. Below are some links to other resources which may be of interest:

- **Emergency planning and response for education, childcare, and children's social care settings (DfE)**
- **School and college security (DfE)**
- **School and college security - templates and checklists (DfE).**

Cyber security standards for schools and colleges

Cyber incidents and attacks have significant operational and financial impacts on schools and colleges. They could be made by a person, group, or organisation outside or inside the school or college and can lead to:

- Safeguarding issues due to sensitive personal data being compromised
- Impact on student outcomes
- A significant data breach
- Significant and lasting disruption, including the risk of repeated future cyber incidents and attacks, including school or college closure
- Financial loss
- Reputational damage.

The National Cyber Security Centre has produced 8 questions for the **governing body and trustees to ask school leaders**, to help improve a school's understanding of its cyber security risks.

Data protection in schools

The policies and processes schools and multi-academy trusts (MATs) need to protect personal data and respond effectively to a personal data breach. Has been recently updated in relation to subject access requests (SARs).

Further education corporations and sixth-form college corporations: governance guide

DfE has recently amended the guidance to reflect updated Prevent Guidance. Suggested National Governance Association Learning Link e-learning (NGA LL) Modules:

- Essential safeguarding for governors and trustees
- Safer recruitment
- Compliance: assuring your organisation, keeping it safe, secure and solvent.

Wellbeing

Supporting the wellbeing of leaders of state-funded schools

A **letter** highlighting the critical role governors and trustees play in influencing overall culture and cultivating a supportive environment in schools and trusts has been published by the DfE.

The letter collates existing responsibilities of employers and others in supporting the wellbeing of leaders in state-funded schools. It does not introduce any new obligations, but instead signposts sources of support and describes new steps that the DfE and Ofsted have committed to, in relation to school inspection.

The Education Staff Wellbeing Charter (The Charter)

The Charter notes that governing boards (regardless of whether it is also the employer), have a critical role to play in influencing the overall culture of the organisation – including ensuring that this produces a supportive environment for staff. As set out in the governance guides for **academy trusts** and **maintained schools**, governing boards are encouraged to consider staff workload and wellbeing, including that of the school leadership team. In particular, boards will need to give consideration to ensuring the school or trust fosters a supportive working environment where workload is managed, wellbeing is prioritised, and action is taken to support all staff.

Boards may also wish to consider designating a governor or trustee as a wellbeing champion to provide strategic support to the school leadership team as appropriate. Effective boards take steps to familiarise themselves with the resources available, such as those signposted by DfE, and proactively support staff wellbeing and retention.

Alongside The Charter, DfE have published resources to support the mental health and wellbeing of staff. These include:

- Guidance on **promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges**, how to develop a whole school or college approach to mental health and wellbeing
- **Education Support's resources** to help organisations with mental health and wellbeing including a **free 24 hour helpline for education staff**
- **Mentally Healthy Schools** which is a directory of resources for schools
- Anna Freud's guidance on **supporting staff wellbeing in schools**
- **Mental Health at Work** resources for schools
- The **Improve workload and wellbeing for school staff** service (replacing the existing workload reduction toolkit) is comprised of practical resources to help school leaders to promote staff wellbeing and support workload reduction in their school. The resources are free to access and have been created by school leaders, for school leaders.
- **Early headship coaching offer**

Other resources to help, promote, contribute and monitor mental health and wellbeing:

- NGA have collaborated with **Place2Be** to produce a **guide** for boards on their role in supporting and monitoring pupil mental health and wellbeing
- **Flexible working in schools**, updated non-statutory guidance for employers and staff who want to make arrangements for flexible working
- NGA LL bitesize **e-learning module** (Management of workload and wellbeing; the governance role) explores the sorts of issues that many schools and trusts are facing and suggests practical approaches to get workload and wellbeing management under control



OFSTED

Leading on from wellbeing to Ofsted but they are linked, board members may want to read NGA's Deputy Chief Executive, Sam Henson's **blog, recognising the critical importance of headteachers' wellbeing** and the boards role in offering support ahead of, during and after Ofsted inspection.

Sir Martyn Oliver's speech at the NAHT conference

Sir Martyn Oliver spoke about the Big Listen (closed on 31 May 2024), the changes Ofsted is making and taking the time to collaboratively build a better education system for all.

Inspecting schools: guide for maintained and academy schools

This guide gives a summary of what schools should expect and what they need to do as part of an Ofsted inspection.

Inspecting further education and skills: guide for providers

This guide gives a summary of what providers should expect and what they need to do as part of an Ofsted inspection.

The 'Inspecting schools: guide for maintained and academy schools' and the '**Leaflet for schools**' PDF have been updated throughout to align with changes made to the school inspection handbook in April 2024. Changes include clarifications about welfare support available to schools, and opportunities to provide information on and/or discuss potential equalities duties, including reasonable adjustments for individuals. Clarifications have also been made in regards to Ofsted's policy for **pausing inspections**, and updated arrangements for handling **concerns and complaints** in line with Ofsted's new complaints policy.

Single phrase Ofsted judgements to remain says Government

The government will not be shifting from single phrase judgements for Ofsted inspections. This is according to **their response to an Education Select Committee report** on Ofsted published in January. The DfE state that while they will continue to listen to views and look at alternative systems, their priority is to find ways to improve the current Ofsted system. This includes considering the presentation of findings and grades, and opportunities to highlight some of the detail sitting under the summary grade.

Ofsted displays school sub-judgements on reports website

From 10 May 2024, Ofsted will display each of the sub-judgements awarded to an individual school – alongside its overall effectiveness grade – at the top of its inspection report web page.

'Deep dives' removed from ungraded inspections

At the National Association of Headteacher's (NAHT) Annual conference (May 2024), Ofsted's Chief Inspector, Sir Martyn Oliver, announced changes to ungraded inspections as from September 2024.

The changes are designed to reduce the burden on school leaders and allow more time and flexibility for inspectors to get to know the school, including its context and priorities.

Suggested NGA LL Modules:

- Ofsted and the new inspection framework
- Ofsted inspections: step by step.

Behaviour and Attendance

Minister for Schools, Damian Hinds, has **written to governors and trustees** to thank them for their continued support in improving school attendance. The letter goes on to outline the new DfE data tools available to schools that aim to support a more detailed view of absences and can allow leaders to channel their efforts. This includes new absence banding reports within the **monitor your school attendance tool**, as well as a public interactive tool to provide national and local breakdowns of the 2022-23 attendance data.

The letter highlights the important role that governors and trustees play in overseeing the strategic response to attendance, including the scrutiny of key performance and financial data.

DfE releases audit and action planning tools to improve behaviour in schools

The DfE has released **audit and action planning tools** to help schools assess their behaviour culture. Resources include an audit tool to facilitate the assessment of behaviour culture across the school; staff and pupil surveys; and an action planning tool which can be used to help develop a step-by-step plan for your school. The action planning tool should help schools implement and monitor the actions taken.

In addition to this, the DfE has compiled a **collection of resources** to help schools and trusts to develop, implement and maintain a behaviour policy that promotes a whole-school behaviour culture.

Suggested NGA LL Modules:

- Monitoring and evaluation
- Monitoring performance data and targets
- Minimising exclusions.

Relationships Education, Sex Education and Health Education (RSHE)

The DfE is seeking views from parents, school staff and governors/trustees on new **draft RSHE statutory guidance** with an eight week consultation (ending 11 July 2024). The **draft RSHE guidance** was produced following a review of the RSHE curriculum conducted by independent experts.

If you would like to respond to the consultation visit the **DfE's website**.

School uniforms: guidance for school

School uniforms guidance has been updated by adding guidance on procuring uniform supplies and accompanying template documents.

Gender pay gap remains a challenge for MATs

Updated figures show that the gender pay gap remains high in the largest MATs. This is according to analysis carried out by The Guardian of 100 public bodies with the largest gender pay gaps, finding that 97 were trusts.

In 2023-24, the gender pay gap in the largest 20 MATs was 32.3%, virtually unchanged in the last two years.

Trust boards should be aware of their trust's gender pay gap, and employers with 250 or more employees are required to publish this information in line with the **Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017** and **What academies and further education colleges must or should publish online:**

- Report their gender pay gap information to the government via the **gender pay gap service**
- Publish this information in a prominent place on their website within one year of their 'snapshot date', which, for most public authority employers, will be 31 March.

Statutory guidance on the **gender pay gap information employers must report** is available

Suggested NGA LL Modules:

- Effective financial governance in schools and trusts
- Using Integrated Curriculum and Financial Planning (ICFP).



New guidance: PE and sport in schools

New DfE **guidance** has been published to support schools offer equal sporting opportunities for girls and boys. The guidance explains how schools can meet the:

- Ambitions of the **physical education (PE) national curriculum**
- Aims of the **school sport and activity action plan**
- **Chief Medical Officers' physical activity guidelines**

It also includes a variety of schools' approaches to providing:

- A minimum 2 hours of PE per week
- Equality of access to PE and extra-curricular school sport and competition.

Youth Sport Trust's (YST) CEO, Ali Oliver welcomed the guidance highlighting the positive impact PE and school sport can have on physical, mental and social wellbeing. She added "maximising PE and school sport can help tackle some of the educational challenges we face around attendance, behaviour and attainment".

The NGA has published a **guide** in collaboration with YST to support governing boards understand the importance of PE and sport and how you can support high quality provision.

Greener Governance

A key initiative of DfE's **sustainability and climate change strategy for education** is 'sustainability leadership and climate action plans'.

The strategy states: "By 2025, all education settings will have nominated a sustainability lead and put in place a climate action plan". This includes early years settings, schools, MATs, colleges, and universities. The strategy has been updated with support resources available to nurseries, schools and colleges. Other resources for your interest are:

- NGA webinar, **Greener Governance: setting a whole school approach**
- NGA resources, **Environmental sustainability, a whole school approach**
- NGA Blog, **What can boards do to implement Greener Governance?**
- NGA LL, **Environment sustainability: the governance role**
- DfE has published a **new resource bank** to support schools and trusts in their work on environmental sustainability
- **What are pupils saying? (youtube.com)**
- **Woodland Trust, free trees for schools**

The most disadvantaged schools more likely to see Progress 8 scores fall

Schools with the most disadvantaged cohorts have seen the biggest drop in Progress 8 scores over the past eight years. This is according to **analysis** carried out by FFT Education Datalab which also compared Progress 8 scores by school type and region between 2016 and 2023.

The findings follow the government announcement that there will be no alternative progress measures over the next two academic years. This is due to the next two GCSE cohorts having no key stage 2 SATs results because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Suggested NGA LL Modules:

- Pupil Premium
- The governance of SEND
- Equality, diversity and inclusion programme
- Progress and attainment: using data to improve educational outcomes
- Equality and diversity: a practical guide for governors and trustees

DfE guidance on managing older school buildings

DfE has published **new guidance** to help schools manage their buildings. The guidance provides information relating to the typical construction types used in the school estate and includes details on the specific maintenance items associated with different construction types. It should be used in conjunction with DfE guidance on **good estate management for schools**.

Suggested NGA LL Modules:

- Health and safety

The power of music to change lives: a national plan for music education

The DfE's national plan for music education, sets out the government's vision to enable all children and young people in England to:

- Learn to sing, play an instrument and create music together
- Have the opportunity to progress their musical interests and talents, including professionally.

The update includes a link to a **template** to support schools to publish a summary of their development plan on their website

What school must or should publish online

DfE have reformatted guidance to improve usability. Added a new section on 'Pay gap reporting', updated the 'Test, exam and assessment results' and included information about publishing a music development plan in the 'Curriculum' section. Links for maintained, academies and further education colleges:

- **What maintained schools must or should publish online**
- **What academies and further education colleges must or should publish online.**

Period products in schools and colleges

Guidance for schools and post-16 education organisations in England on providing free period products for pupils and students has been updated to reflect that, in April 2024, the scheme was extended and will continue to operate for the 2024 to 2025 academic year.



Reminders

As we approach the end of another term and academic year, it feels the right time to reflect and to look forward/plan for the future.

DfE Guidance: wraparound guidance for schools

Further to our article in our previous newsletter, we wanted to remind boards of **DfEs national wraparound childcare programme** that starts to come into place in September 2024. The national wraparound childcare programme provides grant funding to local authorities in England to help make sure that there is sufficient childcare such as breakfast and after-school clubs in their area.

Schools can apply for funding to set up new provision or to expand existing provision either by increasing the number of places available and/or extending the operating hours to 6pm in the evening. The funding is designed to 'pump prime' any new places to enable the provision to run initially with fewer numbers while it gets established. The funding is available for 2 years.

The **wraparound guidance for schools/trusts** includes the responsibilities of the board in relation to considering whether to establish wraparound childcare on school sites. It also emphasises that if wraparound childcare is set up using the powers afforded to the board, the board holds responsibility for the provision, even where decision-making is delegated to others. Boards are encouraged to read the **wraparound guidance for schools**.

Included in the guidance there is a checklist to help as part of your conversations in determining your role in wraparound childcare:

1. Gather information to understand the needs of parents and children
2. Consider different delivery models for delivering wraparound
3. Understand existing provision in your area
4. Understand if you are able to use school space for wraparound
5. Work with local authority wraparound lead and others in the sector, to identify how you can support parents to access wraparound
6. Decide whether or not to deliver wraparound
7. Communicate your decision and how you will support parents to access wraparound to parents, carers, and the local authority.

In addition, we would advise as part of the boards monitoring and strategic role in looking forward as part of continuing sustainable wraparound provision (if you have it in place), you also consider putting into place:

- Communicating to parent/carers that a review of provision will take place ie in 2 years' time
- Monitoring costs and income streams regularly.

The DfE has also published '**Responding to requests for wraparound childcare**' guidance for schools ahead of the launch of the wraparound childcare programme. The guidance is designed to support schools and trusts to understand how to respond to requests from parents, carers and providers, in relation to the national wraparound childcare programme.

If the board has not yet had any discussions around the introduction/expansion of the wraparound care programme, then please ensure it is included in the next board agenda.

The wraparound lead for Westmorland and Furness is Laura Kendal. Laura can support any discussions around setting up new provision or extending and can also advise on how to access the funding that is available. Any enquiries can be sent to wraparound@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

NGA LL

A reminder that Westmorland and Furness Council continue to fund free access to the NGA LL platform. Please do take advantage of this fantastic resource to help build and enhance your boards existing skills and knowledge.

You will need to register to access the platform, if you have not yet registered, instructions of how to do this and a guide to the platform can be found in this **flyer**.

There are a number of modules available, a full list of the current modules can be downloaded from **here**.

For the period of September 2023 to April 2024, the top 5 most popular modules have been:

1. Essential safeguarding in schools and trusts
2. Governance: your role, your responsibilities, your organisation
3. Effective financial governance in schools and trusts
4. Ofsted inspections: step-by-step
5. Governance visits to schools

Does your board retain a governing board training record? Does your board have a lead designated for training?

It is important that a record is retained, as boards are likely to be asked what training they have undertaken as part of an Ofsted inspection.

Individual governors can plan their development journey and the NGA provide guides to help plan e-learning over the governance year. There are separate plans for:

- **Maintained school governor**
- **MAT Trustee**
- **Local Academy Committee Member.**

Succession Planning

Following on from GST Newsletter 7, around succession planning for the leadership of your board, in the Maintained and Academy Trust Governance Guides, it clearly lists one feature of effective governance as:

- “Use active succession planning to ensure the governing body and the school has the leadership and people it needs to remain effective”.

As we start to look forward to the Autumn term, many boards will be looking at electing a chair/vice chair. This is the ideal opportunity for boards, that do not have active succession planning in place, to discuss/review succession planning to secure future leadership of the board.

Suggested NGA LL Modules:

- Succession Planning.

Preparation for academic year 2024 to 2025

Hopefully this half term governance professionals/clerks have prepared a draft meeting schedule for the next academic year. You can also prepare the draft agenda for the first meeting of the academic year, this should help/contribute to you being able to relax and take advantage of the summer break.

We will be talking more about getting prepared for the Autumn term in our Governance Professional/clerk cluster meeting later this month, see details under Development/Training.

Development/Training

Governance Professional/Clerk Cluster Session

The date of the next virtual meeting is 24 June 2024, 6pm to 7.30pm, joining details:

- **Click here to join the meeting**
- Meeting ID: 359 350 724 534 Passcode: RWGR4b

We will be focusing on:

- Spring Term review
- Summer Term reminders
- Looking ahead to Autumn Term
- Opportunity to ask questions around any aspect of the role of Governance Professional/Clerk

Dates for 2024/2025 Governance Professional/Clerk Cluster sessions are:

- Tuesday, 5 November 2024, 4pm to 5.30pm
- Wednesday, 26 February 2025, 5pm to 6.30pm
- Thursday, 5 June 2025, 6pm to 7.30pm

New NGA LL module: Handling complaints in schools and trusts

NGA LL have released a new module **Handling complaints in schools and trusts**. Using scenario activities and questions, this module provides a comprehensive overview of complaints management, from how you as a board can set your school or trust's culture in order to minimise complaints, to the process of investigating complaints as and when they arise. The module is designed to complement the existing module **How to: run an effective complaints review panel**, which uses a step-by-step approach to demonstrate how each member of the panel can complete their role effectively if a complaint reaches that stage.

NGA webinar: Complex complaints involving safeguarding

NGA delivered a joint webinar with partner, Browne Jacobson on how to handle complex parental complaints involving safeguarding. Starting with an overview of the Governor's role in the school's complaints process and leading on to the cross-over between the complaints process and the use of safeguarding information held by the school.

It looked at:

- How to gather information
- Assess the situation
- Maintain open communication
- How to document all actions taken so that you have the skills and confidence to deal with these issues as they arise in your schools.

You can view the webinar **here**.

Poverty Proofing Workshop – face-to-face

The Learning Improvement Service (LIS) has been working with headteachers in Westmorland and Furness, to support schools in the ambition of having the principles in the ‘**Turning the Page on Poverty**’ document, embedded throughout the system by September 2024.

LIS are holding a face-to-face workshop to provide practical advice to support schools in ensuring a genuinely inclusive environment for all pupils, especially those from families facing financial hardship.

The session will be suitable for headteachers, senior staff or governors from schools covering all age phases. **Governors - please consult with your headteachers in the first instance, to decide who will be best placed to attend and share feedback, as places are very limited (60).** Please let us know the name and role of those who you are booking a place for as this will help us plan for the day.

To book your place, please email admin@morlandarea.cumbria.sch.uk (adding ‘Poverty Proofing Workshop’ in the subject line), including the name and role of those who you are booking a place for as soon as possible, as limited places available. The session is free to attend for schools in Westmorland and Furness and will be held from **1:00pm to 4:30pm on Tuesday 9th July at the Junction 36 Meeting Rooms (NW Auctions -M6/A65 junction)** - (coffee / tea available on arrival).

The Governors Podcast

Open, honest and transparent discussions about governance in Education (specifically in the UK and International British Schools). This podcast is hosted by governance practitioners, for new, experienced or prospective volunteers as school governors and trustees to learn and develop. They share and provide insight into the realities of sitting around the governing board table and leaning into strategic leadership. Their previous podcasts are available to listen and cover a wide range of topics.

You may also want to listen to Olivia D Hinds (creator and host of The Governors Podcast) podcast with the Schools and Academies Show, where they discuss **Governor Recruitment and The State of School Governance**.

Senior leadership national professional qualification

A course to help teachers and school leaders develop leadership knowledge and expertise to improve outcomes for teachers and pupils in their school, eligibility and details of the course due to start in autumn 2024.

Executive leadership national professional qualification

A course to help school leaders develop the expertise needed to be an outstanding leader, leading improvements across a group of schools or MATs, eligibility and details of the course due to start in autumn 2024.

Senior mental health lead training

Apply for a grant to train a senior mental health lead to develop your school or college’s approach to mental health and wellbeing.



School to school support

Further to previous 'School to School Support' articles, the GST wish to remind any governors/trustees who feel they may be in a position to provide governance support to other boards on a voluntary basis, to contact the GST for an informal conversation.

We would like to extend this invite to include clerks (governance professionals).

Please contact Jane Lees, Governor Support Assistant or drop an email to **GST.mailbox.WAF@cumbria.gov.uk** to discuss further or if you would just like a little bit more detail.

GST Contact Details

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

Jane Lees

Governor Support Assistant

E: jane.lees@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk or GST.mailbox.WAF@cumbria.gov.uk

T: 01228 226925 M: 07768 027 244