

# How to: find and use key sources for governance

Keeping up to date with changes in the law and practice

## Purpose of this document

Rather than just wait until the moment when you need to know what the correct up to date source is it's better to establish a system that will notify you of changes in law and practice. Here are some suggestions to help you and your board keep abreast of the current position.

## Keeping yourself up to date

### DfE regular email service

- In the first instance it is important to subscribe to the DfE's regular email update services. These will inform you when something new is published on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk). You can tailor your alerts to the information you are interested in.

### Local authority

- If your school subscribes to a local authority package, then it is usually worth attending the briefing meetings for clerks and other governance professionals.

### National Governance Association

- NGA is the national membership organization for clerks and other governance professionals, governors, and trustees, and will keep you informed, both of changes which have happened and of changes being consulted on, as well as good practice guidance. There are other organisations which provide advice and guidance too.

### Academies: Companies House and the Charity Commission

- If you are clerking in an academy it is also a good idea to sign up for alerts from the [Charity Commission](#) and [Companies House](#).

### CGI

- The [Chartered Governance Institute UK and Ireland \(cgi.org.uk\)](http://cgi.org.uk) also has a wealth of information for clerks.

## Keeping your boards up to date

### Expectations of those governing to keep their knowledge

Governing board members are expected to keep themselves up to date with all aspects of general governance.

Those with more specific roles like safeguarding link governors, finance committee chairs, etc. should also take steps to keep updated as to changes in regulation, statutory, and non-statutory guidance, and the chair in particular is expected to maintain an up to date knowledge of general governance as well.

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If any of this is not happening then it should be highlighted when the board is evaluated, although do bear in mind that governors and trustees are volunteers and governance covers a very broad range of areas, so it can be difficult for even the most diligent to keep up to date.

## Supporting the development of a professional development culture

There are various ways in which a governing board can help itself maintain currency of knowledge from undertaking online training to attending local and national school and trustee governance conferences.

It can help to make professional development and updating part of normal governance business. Here are some suggestions the clerk could make to the chair:

- Make updates from the clerk a regular item on the board agenda.
- When there is something of significance to report, the clerk could produce a paper for a board meeting.
- Between meetings updates could be done via email, or by uploading a paper onto your governor or trustee intranet.
- Make governor professional development a regular agenda item, with circulation of future events and opportunities. Encourage participation at the NGA's regional and national events.
- Purchase and promote to the governing board a governance e-learning package, like NGA's Learning Link, which enables governors and trustees to update and refresh their knowledge on demand.
- Maintain a record of training (which includes face-to-face training as well as e-learning) and publish this to the governing board for review alongside an annual skills and knowledge audit.
- If a governance updating and information service like NGA's weekly Newsletter and Governing Matters magazine has been purchased, then make sure that this is made available to and used by governors and trustees