

EVALUATION OF THE
LLOYDS BANKING GROUP (LBG)
FLAGSHIP SCHOOL GOVERNANCE
STANDINGOUT PROGRAMME:
FINAL REPORT

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STANDINGOUT

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Acronyms

CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CPD	Career Professional Development
DfE	Department for Education
FG	Full governors
LA	Local Authority
LBG	Lloyds Banking Group
MATs	Multi-Academy Trusts
NEDs	Non-Executive Directors
NGA	National Governors Associations
Ofsted	The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
SBM	School Business Manager
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SGOSS	School Governors' One-Stop Shop

Glossary

Academy Ambassadors	A non-profit organisation set up to bring inspirational educationalists together with talented business leaders to build better MAT Boards, specialising in placing NEDs.
e-govs	Governors that work remotely and attend meetings virtually using conferencing technology such as Webex.
Governors Network	An in-house LBG support group for all employees involved in school governance, not necessarily via the SO programme.
HIVE	An internal LBG notice board.
The Key	A private company providing high quality, reliable information and online solutions to the education and wider public sector; specifically to school leaders and school governors, established in 2007.
SGOSS	An independent charity dedicated to recruiting volunteers to serve on school governing bodies across England.
StandingOut	The name of the LBG school governance volunteering programme which aims to improve school performance through good governance.
Webex	A system that enables online meetings with anyone who has an Internet connection. It provides audio and visuals.
Webinars	A seminar conducted over the internet.

Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of an evaluation carried out into the Lloyds Banking Group's (LBG) StandingOut pilot programme. The 18-month evaluation, which ran from September 2016 until the end of January 2018, was conducted by the Carnegie School of Education at Leeds Beckett University and focused on the Yorkshire and Humber region.

The programme, which aims to improve school performance through good governance, is part of LBG's wider '*Helping Britain Prosper*' initiative and sits under its education and employability strategy. It recruits (with the help of organisations such as SGOSS¹ and Academy Ambassadors) and supports LBG colleagues who wish to volunteer as either a school governor or a Non-Executive Director (NED) to a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT).

LBG designed the programme around the following two broad assumptions:

- That better governance and stronger financial management and business practices in schools can lead to better educational outcomes; and
- That professional people – e.g. LBG colleagues – can offer much-needed skills to strengthen school Governing Bodies (especially given the government's drive for academisation), more so than the traditional parent or community governors.

LBG set out the following four research questions to be addressed during the evaluation:

1. How does the StandingOut programme contribute to improved school performance and educational outcomes?
2. What evidence is there that the interventions increase the confidence, knowledge and skills of school Governing Bodies and leadership teams?
3. What evidence is there that the interventions strengthen school governance and business practices?
4. How do these interventions contribute to colleagues' career professional development?

School governance: an overview

Over the last ten years, schools in England have faced a number of changes, most notably the Academisation of schools and the withdrawal of local authority support. This has fundamentally altered not only how schools are funded but also how they operate. Arguably, some of the biggest changes and challenges have concerned the role of, and responsibilities placed upon, the Governing Body.

Since 2013, Ofsted has had in place a robust and demanding framework for inspecting the performance of Governing Boards. To meet Ofsted's criteria, school Governing Bodies require individuals with legal knowledge and expertise in finance, management and leadership. Good governance is no longer seen as sufficient, rather the skills of those on Governing Bodies need to be on par with professional organisations; running a school should now be viewed in the same way as running a business.

However, for some schools, especially those in areas of socio-economic disadvantage, recruiting governors with professional skills can be challenging. Yorkshire and Humber is one such region, which also includes Bradford, one of the government's 12 opportunity areas², and is one of the many reasons LBG chose to focus their StandingOut programme pilot in this region.

The StandingOut programme had several strands but the main part of the programme involved placing different types of governors in schools: Full Governors; Non-Executive Directors; and E-governors. E-governors are a new type of governor being trialled. They are intended to work remotely with schools and help resolve the issue of recruiting professional governors in disadvantaged and remote areas of the county.

¹ School Governors' One-Stop Shop: <https://www.sgooss.org.uk/> Renamed 'Governors of Schools' January 2018

² See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/education-secretary-announces-6-new-opportunity-areas>

Project design

The evaluation took a mixed methods approach, gathering both qualitative and quantitative data via interviews, case studies, surveys and workshops. The data was collected between October 2016 and December 2017. In total, 109 (mainly phone) interviews were carried out with a range of stakeholders, including: LBG participant volunteers; School Executives; School Business Managers (or equivalent); participants' line managers; and key stakeholders. The evaluation tracked 18 volunteer LBG participants from the start of their journey on the StandingOut programme to approximately one year into their governance role.

Key findings and recommendations

Key findings

Process:

- Both SO participants and schools found the recruitment process straightforward and on the whole satisfactory.
- After one year in post, most participants have settled in well. In the initial stages of their appointment, participants struggled to understand the processes and terminology of the education sector. However, most participants now feel competent in both of these areas.
- Schools reported that most participants began to make contributions to meetings from the outset.
- Skilled governors appointed from the private/business sector have the potential to act as mentors for those in schools, specifically Headteachers, Chairs and School Business Managers.
- All training received by the participants during the pilot was deemed as useful. The local authority governor induction training was seen as the most beneficial, especially when attended early on in the role.
- The Key was the most beneficial on-going resource available to participants, with many using it on a regular basis.
- Participants valued the support they had received from other LBG colleagues and the support and flexibility of line managers. They particularly appreciated being part of the SO programme and all the benefits that came with it, especially the status of the initiative and the commitment shown to it from within the organisation.
- The main challenge participants encountered was that of time. One year on, this continues to be their biggest obstacle to negotiate.

Process e-governors:

- E-governance works best for colleagues who have a degree of flexibility and autonomy over their working patterns.
- Some schools are not equipped, technologically, to support e-governance.
- Overall, it was clear that schools prefer (and are more equipped to take) a more conventional governor who can physically attend meetings at least some of the time - what SGOSS are now calling a flexi-governor.

Outcomes and impact:

- SO participants have made a range of indirect contributions that have improved school performance and educational outcomes.
- There is evidence that SO participants have increased the confidence of school Governing Bodies and leadership teams in their decision-making processes, where these are not already working highly effectively.

- The appointment of SO participants has complemented the pre-existing skills of their Governing Bodies and in so doing they have provided expertise in a range of areas such as HR, finance and risk.
- There is evidence that SO participants have strengthened school governance and business practices; especially the latter.
- During the pilot, many participants have taken on additional specific roles and responsibilities and one has even been elected as Chair of Governors.
- Overall, SO participants were highly valued by their schools, especially for their impartiality, professionalism and commitment. All Chairs and Headteachers felt that the SO governors had either met or exceeded expectations, and that they would recommend appointing a LBG SO governor or NED to others.
- Schools also appreciated having governors that not only came from the private sector but who were also supported in their governance role by their organisation.
- Most participants reported that their involvement with the SO programme had a positive impact on how they carried out their professional role and their career professional development. Their line managers agreed.

Recommendations

- LBG continues to run the StandingOut programme in Yorkshire and Humber and other priority areas. It is clear that their staff volunteering as FGs and NEDs gives Boards and Trusts a wider skill-set that facilitate them having confidence in their decision making processes;
- Continue to offer a wide range of training courses and access to The Key to both newly appointed and established governors. This will ensure governors are kept up to date with emerging education policy and practice in a constantly changing sector.
- Continue to work in close partnership with other organisations, such as SGOSS, Academy Ambassadors and The Key to deliver effective governance placement and ongoing support.
- Continue to promote the StandingOut programme within the organisation and the wider benefit it can bring to both employees and the organisation alike.
- Continue to be an 'agile' employer who allows employees to undertake important volunteering opportunities which have tangible benefits both for the local communities in which the organisation operates and LBG themselves.
- Replicate the success of the Yorkshire and Humber region elsewhere by focusing on what has worked well and by learning the lessons from what has been less effective, whilst taking into account specific regional need and drawing on local knowledge.
- Re-frame e-governors as flexi-governors and offer technical support and initial training on Webex to schools who appoint flexi-governors. In addition, schools should be assessed for their suitability - in terms of technical capabilities and infrastructure - prior to being offered a flexi-governor as an option. This should be undertaken in conjunction with SGOSS (now Governors of Schools).
- Undertake a further impact evaluation in one year's time to establish the sustainability and longer-term benefits of the programme to the schools, the participants and the organisation.

Introduction

The Carnegie School of Education at Leeds Beckett University was commissioned by Lloyds Banking Group (LBG) to evaluate their flagship school governance StandingOut (SO) programme. The evaluation, which focused on the Yorkshire and Humber region, ran from September 2016 until the end of January 2018.

LBG based the evaluation on the theory of change and the following two broad assumptions:

- That better governance and stronger financial management/business practices in schools can lead to better educational outcomes; and
- That professional people – e.g. LBG colleagues – can offer much-needed skills to strengthen school governing bodies (especially given the government’s drive for academisation), more so than the traditional parent or community governors.

LBG set out the following four research questions to be addressed during the evaluation:

1. How does the SO programme contribute to improved school performance and educational outcomes?
2. What evidence is there that the interventions increase the confidence, knowledge and skills of school governing bodies and leadership teams?
3. What evidence is there that the interventions strengthen school governance and business practices?
4. How do these interventions contribute to colleagues’ career professional development (CPD)?

Report layout

This report is divided into four sections. The first sets out the context of the SO programme. The second looks at the project design. The third presents the findings of the evaluation and is divided into two sections: *process*; and *outcomes and impact*. The fourth section draws together the key messages from the evaluation and makes recommendations for taking the SO programme forward.

Education Policy Context

The national education picture: the growing importance of school governance

Over the past six years, education in England has experienced a fundamental shift in how the school system operates; a change that began with the first academisation programme in 2001 under the New Labour administration. State control and support for schools was loosened considerably under the Coalition government’s 2010 academisation and free school programme and looks set to loosen still further in light of government plans to encourage the development and expansion of Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) as proposed in the government’s latest White Paper ‘*Education Excellence Everywhere*’ (DfE, 2016). Here the government outlines their vision for Education in England, where the growing independence and autonomy of schools is seen to require not just ‘good governance’ but the increasing professionalisation of Governing Boards to ensure they meet professional standards, offer technical expertise and secure performance evaluation as mechanisms for improving public service delivery (Wilkins, 2015: 182).

However, according to this year’s annual NGA (National Governance Association) and TES survey, the majority of current school governors do have a professional background. They estimate in England that four out of five school governors ‘...are, or used to be, managers, directors, senior officials or professionals, and this applies to elected parents as much as any others’ (Holland, 2017: 3).

Since the 1988 Education Reform Act assigned responsibility for a school’s strategic planning to its Governing Board (James et al., 2013), the importance and prominence of school governance has grown considerably. A Governing Board is no longer positioned simply as a ‘critical friend’ supporting the school and, in some cases, merely rubber-stamping the Headteacher’s decisions. Currently, all school Governing Boards in England, regardless of their form or funder (i.e. Academies, soft or hard

Federations, MATs, Free, Faith, Grammar, Special or Community schools to name but a few) are responsible for the following three core functions (DfE, 2015: 7):

1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
2. Holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and
3. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

In 2013, Ofsted significantly raised the ‘inspection bar’ in terms of Governing Boards (James et al., 2013). Ofsted now has in place a robust and demanding framework for inspecting the performance of Governing Boards in which governors themselves play a key role. The latest Ofsted inspection handbook (2016: 24) highlights throughout the importance of a high performing Governing Board, stressing: *‘the contribution of governors to the school’s performance is evaluated as part of the judgement on the effectiveness of leadership and management.’* A poor Governing Board will therefore be detrimental to the school’s overall grading. Indeed, a school cannot be awarded ‘outstanding’ if its Governing Board falls short on any of the many criteria against which it is assessed (see pages 37-39 and 41 in the Ofsted handbook for a breakdown of exactly what is expected).

To meet these criteria, school Governing Boards require individuals with particular skills which include: knowledge of the legal sector in a number of different areas; the ability to manage processes; the experience and knowledge of running a business; and, perhaps most crucially, finance and leadership. Running a school, as Lord Nash pointed out in 2013, is now akin to running a business (Wilkins, 2015: 188). The recent White Paper states:

High quality governance is vital as we devolve more power from local and national government to schools. Governing Boards need to be skills-based and focused on the strategic functions of setting a vision and holding school leaders to account for the educational and financial performance of their schools. (DfE, 2016)

The two areas of leadership and finance are the main focus of LBG involvement with school governance and therefore of this evaluation.

The local context

In June 2014, the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, launched the ‘Northern Powerhouse’ agenda. He believed that the North was significantly underperforming economically and that by promoting investment and offering devolution to its major cities it would serve to rebalance the UK economy as a whole (Clifton et al., 2016: 7). Initially the focus was centred on transport and connectivity but more recently this has shifted to incorporate education, training and skills. A recent report from the Institute for Public Policy Research North (IPPR, North) entitled *Northern Schools, Putting Education at the Heart of the Northern Powerhouse* (Clifton et al., 2016), outlines both the North’s strengths and weaknesses. It concludes that if it is to succeed in reaching, and sustaining, its economic potential, it must place addressing educational disadvantage ‘at the heart’ of any transformational objectives.

Economic growth and prosperity depends on having a skilled workforce. Currently, according to Clifton et al., (2016), the workforce in the North of England is, on the whole, lower qualified than the national average. Furthermore, according to Ofsted (2015), 75% of all failing secondary schools are in the North and the Midlands. Whilst one way to improve skills is to provide additional training to those already in the workplace, arguably a more effective way is to raise the education levels of the local population. It is well documented (see Schuller et al., 2004) that this also has the potential to bring wider social benefits such as increased civil engagement.

More recently in October 2016, the government launched a new initiative ‘Opportunity Areas’ to help further address some of these issues. Initially it covered just six areas in England but in January 2017 the initiative was extended to 12 areas and currently includes Bradford and the North Yorkshire Coast. LBG is recognised as a ‘cornerstone³’ employer in Bradford, Blackpool and Oldham. Working

³ <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/opportunity-areas-social-mobility-careers-enterprise-company>

with the Careers and Enterprise Company, they are one of approximately 40 businesses engaging with secondary schools and colleges to inspire and prepare young people for work under the initiative. The primary purpose of Opportunity Areas is to focus local and national resources on the common goal of increasing social mobility. Once again, the education system is seen as one of the key ways in which the government hopes to achieve this. According to the gov.uk⁴ press release in January 2017, Opportunity Areas will create local partnerships with early years providers, schools, colleges, universities, businesses, charities and local authorities (LAs). In Opportunity Areas, the Department for Education (DfE) will: target early years; help build teaching and leadership capacity in schools; increase access to university; strengthen technical pathways for young people; and work with employers. To illustrate the importance of education in social mobility, £72 million of funding has been set aside to support the initiative. An additional £3.5 million (£1.5 million from the DfE and £2 million from the Education Endowment Foundation) has also been allocated to support the creation of a research school for each opportunity area.

However, despite these efforts, it would appear that the North/South divide continues to persist. A recent article in the Guardian (1st February 2018)⁵ reported that 16 years olds from the North receiving free school meals were down an average grade score of 6.5% on their London peers and 1.3% down across England as a whole. In GCSE terms, this translates to 9 Bs for a London pupil but just 6 Bs and 3 Cs for a pupil in the North.

When operating effectively, school governance sits at the centre of raising educational standards by helping schools to perform to the best of their ability. However, it is widely accepted that the challenges facing school Governing Boards appear to be greater in areas of socio-economic disadvantage (James et al., 2011: 415) such as Yorkshire and Humber. Therefore, improved educational standards for all pupils can only occur when Governing Boards have individual members with the appropriate skills, knowledge and experience to help drive schools forward, challenge Headteachers and senior management teams and ensure the Board can meet its moral and legal obligations to the school.

Yet the NGA's 2017 annual survey (which received over 5,000 responses) found 57% of schools nationally have at least one vacancy and are struggling to attract new recruits to Governing Bodies and Boards of Trustees. Whilst this is a decrease from last year's survey findings (NGA, 2016), which put the figure at 61%, the number of overall governors required has also gone down in recent years from an estimated 300,000 to 250,000, as schools run smaller Governing Boards. According to the NGA, in 2016⁶ the governor vacancy figure for Yorkshire was 56%; amongst the highest in the country. There is, therefore, a gap to be filled. In an effort to address this shortfall, the Inspiring Governance Service was launched in November 2016 - a free online matching service connecting those interested in serving as governors and trustees with schools and colleges. The service is run by the charity Education and Employers and funded by the DfE. However, there is clearly more that needs to be done and the private sector also has its part to play.

LBG school governance activity and the StandingOut programme

The LBG SO programme, which forms the main focus of this evaluation, was set up as part of the challenge to improve school performance in areas of disadvantage under the Northern Schools Powerhouse strategy. It also forms part of the LBG '*Helping Britain Prosper Plan*' (2016), originally launched in 2014. LBG colleagues were mainly recruited to the programme through either School Governors' One-Stop Shop (SGOSS⁷) or Academy Ambassadors.

In January 2015, LBG established a National Governors' Network that sought to provide staff who were already school governors with the tools they needed to support their schools effectively. With an ever-growing membership (currently around 400), amongst other support the Network offers dial-in webinars during working hours that address particular topics relevant to school governance. On average, 100 members of staff participate in each webinar. At the start of the SO evaluation,

⁴ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/education-secretary-announces-6-new-opportunity-areas>

⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2018/feb/01/disadvantaged-pupils-achieve-lower-grades-in-north-than-in-london>

⁶ There is no figure available for the level of vacancy by region in the 2017 report.

⁷ Renamed January 2018 as 'Governors of Schools'.

approximately 80 members of the Network were in the Yorkshire and Humber region - a higher proportion than anywhere else in the country.

In addition, as part of the SO programme, LBG offered schools in the region the opportunity to attend a free two-hour financial workshop run by Judicium Education entitled '*Structured for Success - Training - Long Term Financial Viability for your School or MAT*'. The workshops aimed to support schools or MATs in securing their long-term financial viability.

The main part of the SO programme comprised of three different types of school governors:

- Full governors (FGs) who were appointed by a school Governing Board through SGOSS;
- E-governors (e-govs) who were intended to work with schools (mostly) remotely; and
- Non-Executive Directors (NEDs) who were attached to a MAT to assist with Academy leadership.

In total 18 LBG colleagues (henceforth referred to as 'participants') on the SO programme agreed to take part in the evaluation: 9 FGs; 5 e-govs; and 4 NEDs. This represented 23% of all SO volunteers at the start of the evaluation.

Project design

The evaluation of the SO programme took a mixed methods approach, gathering both qualitative and quantitative data via interviews, case studies, surveys and workshops. The data was collected between October 2016 and December 2017 from a range of interested parties including: participants; School Executives; School Business Managers (SBM) or equivalent; participants' line managers; key stakeholders; and regional network members.

The evaluation tracked participants from the start of their journey on the SO programme to approximately one year after being appointed as a school governor or NED. The 18 participants were interviewed by phone at up to four⁸ key points during the evaluation. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes and the interviews were approximately four months apart from each other. The interviews aimed to capture the participants' experience of school governance at different stages and covered issues such as: the recruitment and induction process; training and support offered; and how well they settled into their role as a new governor or NED.

In total, there were 109 interviews broken down as follows:

Participants	Headteachers (or equivalent)	Chair of Governors	SBMs (or equivalent)	Line Managers	Stakeholders*	Total
69	13	14	5	4	4	109

**Three of the stakeholders were from SGOSS - one of which was specifically responsible for recruiting e-govs - and two for recruiting the full governors. The remaining stakeholder was from Academy Ambassadors and they were responsible for placing the NEDs.*

In addition to the interviews outlined above, the four financial workshops were also evaluated. Quantitative data was collected through two regional Network surveys which were distributed to members in October 2016 and August 2017. The first survey had a response rate of 42% whilst the second had a response rate of 28%⁹, with 30 and 31 respondents respectively. Whilst the first survey did not include SO participants who were taking part in the evaluation (as they were very new to their post and in some cases still in the process of being recruited), the second survey did, accounting for just under half (15) of all respondents.

The evaluation team also hoped to collect supplementary information on participants' school governance activity through reflective logs. However, few participants submitted the completed logs

⁸ Three interviewees were interviewed just three times - two had joined the evaluation late and one withdrew from the SO programme early.

⁹ Regional Network membership: first survey n=72 (October 2016); second survey n=111 (August 2017).

prior to interview. Therefore, the logs were not a viable data collection tool in these circumstances and as such are not included in this evaluation.

Evaluation process and challenges

- For consistency, each participant was allocated a member of the evaluation team who carried out all four of the participants' interviews during the year and their related case study interviews.
- Although interviewees were offered the option of being interviewed by Skype, all chose to be interviewed by phone.
- Despite interviews being by phone, tracking participants over time using a designated member of the evaluation team enabled a rapport to be developed between the interviewer and the interviewee. This resulted in richer data and both participants and their respective stakeholders (Headteachers, Chairs etc.) being more open than they might otherwise have been.
- Several participants commented on how helpful it had been to talk to someone at regular intervals and how useful the interview questions had been.
- Some participants (nearly two-thirds) appreciated the reflective log for their own use at the start of their governance journey – but not as a data collection tool.
- Not uncommon with this type of evaluation, the challenges included:
 - Accessing Headteachers and Chairs;
 - The time it took to arrange interviews with around 50% rescheduled, often at the last minute.

Overview of participants

This section presents an overview of the 18 SO participants who took part in the evaluation.

Gender		Length of time with LBG				Participants' age range			
Male	Female	1-3yrs	4-10yrs	11-30yrs	30yrs+	26-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
12	6	2	5	9	2	2	8	7	1

	E-govs (n=5)	NEDs (n=4)	FGs (n=9)
Males	3	4	5
Females	2	0	4

- All but two participants (89%) identified themselves as British White. The remaining two self-defined their ethnicity as British Pakistani and British Indian respectively.
- All NEDs were male.
- Whilst the participants were predominantly British White, they are in fact a slightly more ethnically diverse group than the national picture where just 4% of governors are non-white (Holland, 2017).
- Two participants were aged under 35. This is in line with national figures, which show that young people are underrepresented in school governance (Holland 2017).
- Most participants had been placed in primary schools (nine), three in secondary schools, two in all age schools (2-19) and four on the Boards of MATs (all of the NEDs).
- Five participants were placed in special schools for pupils with varying levels of learning difficulties: two in all age schools; one in a primary school; and two in schools for pupils aged 11-19.

- At the time of the SO programme (autumn 2016), of the 14 schools at which FG and e-governor participants were placed, one was judged 'inadequate', three 'required improvement', six were 'good', and four were 'outstanding' at their last Ofsted inspection.
- Schools within the four MATs had varying Ofsted ratings from 'outstanding' to 'inadequate'.
- None of the participants had any previous experience of being a school governor.

School Phase (n=14)*		School Type ¹⁰				Ofsted rating (n=14)		
Primary	Secondary	All age	Academy	Special needs	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate
9	3	2	7	5	4	6	3	1

*N=14 (the NEDs' schools are not included)

Participants' individual profiles

The following table summarises the profile of participants who took part in the evaluation. To protect their identity, and ensure confidentiality, participants have been allocated a code name.

Gov. type (and ref)	Gender	Age range	Ethnicity	Years at LBG	Role at LBG	School / MAT info	Ofsted rating
NED1	Male	45-54	British White	Over 30	IT Service operations	MAT – 2 schools	N/A
NED2	Male	35-44	British White	7-10	Regional Director	MAT – 4 schools	N/A
NED3	Male	35-44	British White	11-15	Director of Business Planning and Development	MAT – 9 schools	N/A
NED4	Male	45-54	British White	7-10	Head of Operational MI and Analytics	MAT – 4 schools	N/A
e-gov1	Male	45-54	British White	Over 30	Risk Framework Governance Team	Primary Academy	Good
e-gov2	Female	35-44	British White	11-15	IT Services: Finance and Recruitment	Primary Special	Good
e-gov3	Male	35-44	British Pakistan	4-6	Quality Assurance, General Insurance Operations	Primary Academy	Good
e-gov4	Male	35-44	British White	16-20	Audit Manager	Secondary Special	Outstanding
e-gov5	Female	35-44	British White	7-10	Programme / Change Manager	All age special	Good
FG3	Female	26-34	British White	1-3	Manager- Colleague Conduct Management Team	Primary community	Good
FG4	Male	45-54	British White	1-3	Cyber Security	Primary Academy	Requires Improvement
FG6	Male	26-34	British White	4-6	Project Manager Group Services Change	All age Special	Good
FG7	Female	45-54	British White	16-20	Cost Management Senior Analyst	Church of England Primary Academy	Requires Improvement
FG8	Male	35-44	British Indian	11-15	Senior Manager Mortgage Strategy	Junior Academy	Outstanding

¹⁰ There is no n= for school type as one of the special schools is also a MAT allocated to a NED.

Gov. type (and ref)	Gender	Age range	Ethnicity	Years at LBG	Role at LBG	School / MAT info	Ofsted rating
FG10	Female	45-54	British White	16-20	Business Analyst, Systems & Supplier Management	Secondary Academy Grammar – MAT July 2017	Outstanding March 2017
FG11	Male	45-54	British White	20-30	Mortgages Finance	All age – Special school	Requires Improvement
FG12	Male	55-64	British White	20-30	Facilities Operational Engagement Manager	Primary community	Good
FG13	Female	35-44	British White	16-20	Contract and Performance Management Platform Technology	Primary community	Good

Each MAT was in a different situation and therefore each NED faced a different set of challenges and priorities. Not only did NEDs have a different number of schools within their MAT, but some MATs were more established than others.

NED2's MAT only officially came into existence in December 2016, therefore NED2's first term was spent helping to set up the MAT as a company. NED4 also joined a relatively new MAT (April 2015) which meant he spent time helping them with their strategic direction.

Whilst NEDs 1 and 3 were appointed to more established MATs (both in 2013), one of the schools within NED1's MAT had recently been rated as 'inadequate' by Ofsted. This meant NED1's priority was helping the MAT improve the Ofsted rating of the underperforming school.

Findings

This section of the report presents a summary of the findings from the SO programme evaluation. Details of the findings, along with fuller discussions, can be found in the various reports submitted to LBG during the course of the evaluation. The findings section is divided into two parts: *Process*; and *Impact and Outcomes*.

Part one, *Process*, looks at how successful the different elements of the SO programme have been, including: recruitment; induction; training and support; and the challenges faced and how these were addressed.

Part two, *Impact and Outcomes*, presents the overall findings of the evaluation that specifically relate to the four original research questions (as outlined in the introduction section) which LBG wished to explore through the SO programme.

Part one: Process

Motivation for volunteering on the SO programme

There were several, often overlapping, reasons why participants wanted to join the SO programme. Having children and therefore a vested interest in education, was one of the main motivations. The opportunity to give something back to the community in a meaningful way was also a strong motivational factor. Some participants viewed it as a learning opportunity, a chance to use their professional skills in a new sector and even a way of achieving some of their personal development objectives.

From a personal development perspective, there are some interesting things in there... If I look down my personal development plan, one of the things that I have on there is around thinking about how do I effectively challenge and contribute in environments where I don't have a natural subject matter. So this gave me a great opportunity to enter into a completely new environment and very quickly learn how to make an active contribution. (NED3)

Participants felt they had much to offer schools, especially in terms of their professional transferable skills which included: finance; recruitment; legal expertise; strategy; leadership and governance; communications; human resources; fundraising; policy; and risk, stakeholder, change, project and general management. Many of these professional skills are those deemed by Lord Nash in 2013, outlined earlier, as necessary to run a modern school as a business.

Participants hoped to make a difference to their school, to LBG and to themselves personally by taking part in the programme. In terms of their allocated school, participants predominantly hoped to add value and make a positive contribution by generally improving pupil outcomes and the running of their school or MAT.

Participants felt that being part of the SO programme would: raise LBG's profile in local communities; improve people's understanding of what LBG does; and provide an opportunity for the LBG as an organisation to understand better the needs of their customers and to help its communities. Further, their participation would also assist with LBG's '*Helping Britain Prosper strategy*'. Some saw themselves as acting as a kind of 'ambassador' for LBG; some felt that having staff with expertise and experience of other environments would be beneficial to the business.

From a personal perspective, participants mainly wanted to improve and develop their skills and confidence, gain an insight into a different sector and more generally '*make a difference*'. What they hoped to achieve personally and for their school was often interconnected.

In terms of benefit to the school, it's that constructive challenge to help the school move forward with its aims, one of which is of course to become outstanding. But also, I suppose on the softer side, retaining the character of the school whilst at the same time clearly ensuring that the right education is provided to sectors of the pupil population. (FG3)

One of the things they're hoping to achieve, which I would like to support them with, is a little bit of stability within their governing body as they have had a lot of change for the last couple of years and someone who is hopefully going to stick around. (FG9)

...we have to reflect all of our customers' needs and how they want to interact with us and we can only do that by getting close to our customers... schools are generating the next set of customers for us and some of those customers will have some specific needs. (e-gov5)

...a sense that you are actually making a difference and that you're building on skills you've brought through work and just being able to use those in a different environment. So I suppose building on my own skills and using them to be able to make a difference to schools that have a lot of children... (e-gov2)

Recruitment and induction

All participants reported the application process - which was managed by either SGOSS or Academy Ambassadors – had been relatively easy and straightforward. Schools largely agreed and no major difficulties were reported.

Many of the participants' schools reported shifting their focus over recent years when appointing new governors towards a skills-based approach to ensure the professionalisation of their Governing Body in line with government directives as outlined earlier. Most Governing Bodies had carried out annual skills audits and as a result identified the need for a professional governor with a specific skill set – often, but not always, expertise in finance or human resources (HR); skill-sets that LBG staff were well equipped to offer. Schools also valued the opportunity to appoint governors who had no ties to the school; governors that could be objective. However, schools were keen to point out that they still valued their parent and other local governors. What most schools were ultimately aiming for was a balanced Governing Body - for professional appointments to complement the skills and interests of those already in situ.

It was really great to be able to appoint a governor such as FG3 who has the professional background we wanted but actually doesn't have any other ties to the school. I think that idea of bias, but being able to see the school from a more dispassionate view point in terms of decision making and what needs to be done is really, really valuable. (Chair, FG3)

It's always a case of having a good balance and a good mix. With [FG8's] work background as well in a sort of large organisation, he comes along with being used to different ways of managing meetings, different experiences in terms of thinking strategically and that sort of thing ... We've got a child psychologist and we had an architect, and we've got an accountant and then somebody from a large banking background. Not just the banking side, but just the structural and procedural way of going about things. That gets added into the mix. (Chair, FG8)

Schools used SGOSS and Academy Ambassadors to recruit their professional governors and NEDs. At the time that the SO programme came into being, SGOSS were piloting a new type of governor, the e-governor. E-governors recruited to the SO programme represented the third cohort of e-governors placed by SGOSS. The e-governor programme was set up specifically to help schools in areas where they find it difficult to recruit governors - areas that SGOSS refer to as 'cold spots'. These 'cold spots' were often also geographically difficult to access. LBG's focus on the Yorkshire and Humber region aligned with SGOSS' known 'cold spots' and led to ten LBG e-governors being placed in schools across the region as part of the SO programme (five of which took part in the evaluation).

Both Academy Ambassadors and SGOSS reported that, from their perspective, the recruitment process had gone well. Both were very happy with the quality of recruits and the speed of

recruitment. LBG are the biggest corporate recruiter with whom SGOSS work and, as such, last year they set LBG a recruiting target of 75 volunteers to be placed as governors nationally – a target which was achieved. As a direct result of the SO programme, a higher proportion of volunteers were recruited to for the Yorkshire and Humber region than anywhere else in the country; 27 of the 75. This success in recruitment was described by the SGOSS representatives as '*phenomenal*'.

Academy Ambassadors hoped to replicate the LBG model of recruitment with other corporations. They particularly appreciated the support and backing the organisation had given those volunteering for the SO programme.

I've made no secret of the fact that when we go out and talk to other corporates we use the LBG programme of how it can be done really well. We've actually got a fair number of people that came through fairly quickly. The fact that they have got support from the LBG means that people, before they even apply, know that their company is backing them in what they are doing.

(Academy Ambassadors interviewee)

From our point of view, it showed that if you take an area and you concentrate on it for a space of time you get the end results. (SGOSS representative)

Most participants reportedly settled into their role well, if slowly. Most felt it has taken time to get to know the school, the staff and the school governing process. However, participants did report that Headteachers, Chairs and other governors were both supportive and encouraging. Many found their first meeting somewhat daunting, difficult to follow and unnecessarily process-driven due to their statutory and administrative nature. Coming from a professional background, participants are used to meetings that are more focused and outcome driven. The terminology associated with the education sector was particularly challenging for all participants in the early stages. However, many of the participants did feel they were able to contribute to meetings from the outset, which both pleased and surprised them.

Headteachers and Chairs alike agreed that participants had settled in well and contributed to meetings from the beginning. They particularly liked the fact that they were pro-active, eager to learn and willing to question what they did not understand, especially in relation to sector-specific terminology.

It was better than I thought, I mean at the first one I thought I'd probably just sit there, just listening because I'm not really an extrovert person really. But I did actually make quite a few comments, suggestions and raise a few things, ask questions, queries about things, so I was quite pleased with that really. (FG7)

If he didn't understand a particular piece of jargon, he certainly asked, what does that mean and what's the implication of that, whereas some other people would just let it wash over them and hope to pick things up; but [FG8] was keen to learn more quickly, which was good. (Chair, FG8)

The CEO was keen to point out that NED1 "over-performed in terms of his uptake of complicated sector specific knowledge". In line with this, from the first meeting onwards, NED1 felt that he was not "sat there quiet in the meetings" and that he could contribute, especially in relation to the running of the meetings and asking "challenging questions". In terms of the running of the meetings, NED1 initially found it hard to digest the "20 to 30 page" documents that were circulated but his suggestion of a summary page was helpful to both himself and the running of the Board. In terms of challenging questions, NED1 and the CEO articulated how NED1 had to readjust to the pace of the meetings as "the business is obviously slower and ...I can't steam ahead as much as I want". (Extract from NED1's case study)

Training and support

Participants on the SO programme had access to a range of training opportunities and support mechanisms to help them carry out their governance role. Some of the training and support was

available through their schools or MATs, for example the local authority governor induction training, and some directly through LBG such as the Governor Network, Webinars and access to The Key¹¹.

There was very little offered by schools in the way of a formal induction for participants once appointed. Induction mostly consisted of a visit to the school and a meeting with the Headteacher and Chair. Much of the participants' initial information about the school came from looking at the school's website. Very few of the participants received an induction pack from the schools. It was more common for them to receive minutes of the last governors meeting. When papers were given to them, there was often no guidance as to which were important, which should be prioritised, or any explanation or context as to what they meant.

Whilst all training was deemed useful, the local authority governor induction training (regardless of which local authority delivered it) was seen by many participants as the most beneficial, providing it was undertaken soon after the participant was appointed.

I found it very useful because the person who ran it was the Chair of governors and he was offering his insight on what we should be focussing on, some of the key elements of being a governor. I found it cut through a lot of the noise and information and helped me to understand what were the most important parts of the role. (FG8)

... it was useful attending the training from the Local Authority because you could obviously meet other governors new to the role or it could be that they were on the teaching staff and just to get a bit more information from them being new to role, and then the online training was very useful as well. (FG13)

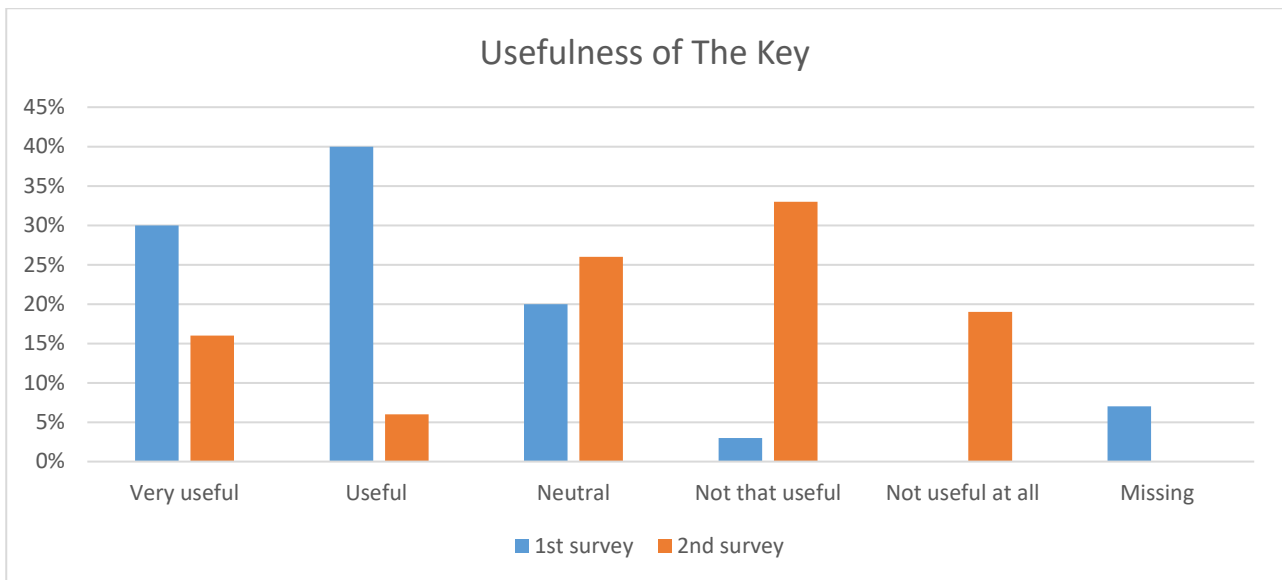
However, not all participants found the local authority training worthwhile, especially those who had already been in role for a significant period of time.

I think the least useful was the local authority run session which was supposed to be preparing you for being a governor. The reason I didn't find it particularly useful was because, firstly it was at too lower level, secondly it wasn't at all practically focused and thirdly and this is no fault of the local authority but by the time I did it, I'd been in the role five months. (FG3)

The Key

Most participants (and survey respondents) reported using The Key regularly - at least once a week. Most participants and first survey respondents (70%) rated The Key as either useful or very useful. However, less than one-quarter (23%) of second survey respondents rated The Key as either useful or very useful, but interestingly the vast majority of these respondents (97%) said they would recommend The Key to others.

¹¹ The Key for School Governors – commonly referred to as The Key - is the national information service that has been providing school governors with guidance and resources since 2011. More information can be found at: <https://schoolgovernors.thekeysupport.com/>



In general, the more participants used The Key, the higher they rated its usefulness. Participants found it professional, accessible, quick and easy to use. However, some did find the amount of information available on The Key somewhat overwhelming at times.

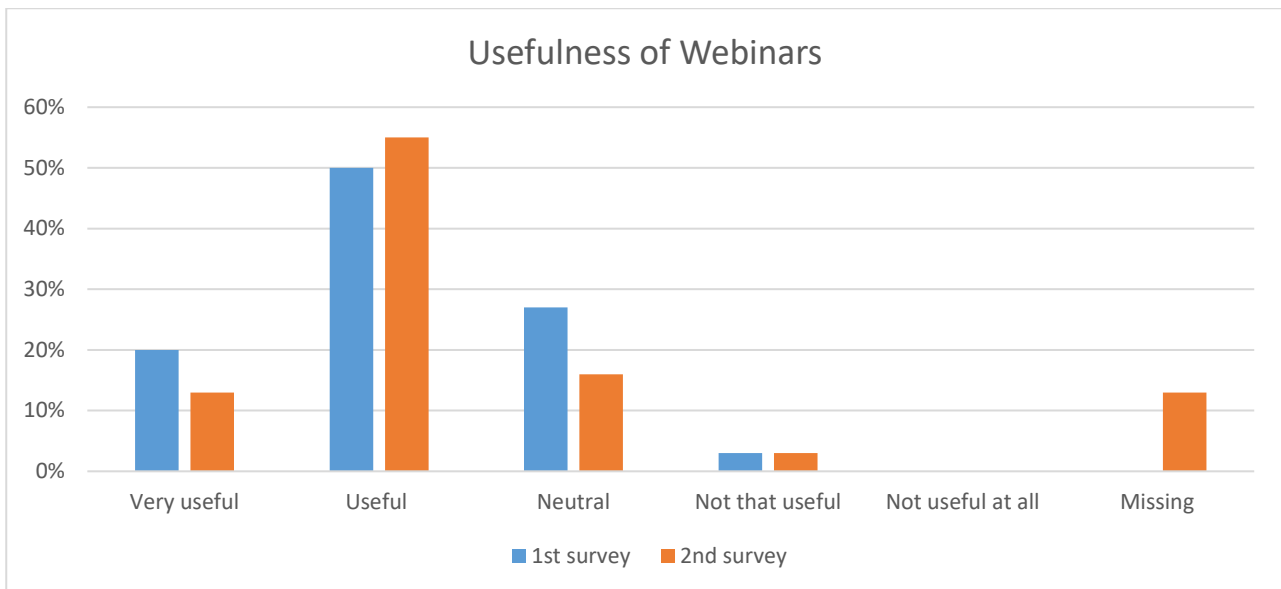
...when you go onto The Key they give you various things that are going on, you can then link into the links from The Key and that gives you the bigger picture...you can drill down... Nobody can remember everything so if you are not sure go back into The Key and it gives you the explanation and it gives you the insight of what this piece is about and it also then helps you when you go to the Governing Body meeting and you can say you have looked at The Key. (FG12)

The Key is brilliant, I mean I just type it into The Key and it comes up with a whole wealth of information. (NED3)

Clearly, there is a lot of information in there. I think if you are looking for something specific it's very useful but there is just a lot there... you wouldn't know where to start if you were just looking in general, but if you're looking for something specific and if you want help with something specific, I think it's really good. (e-gov2)

Webinars

Participants, and both sets of network survey respondents, were divided over the usefulness of the Webinars offered by LBG on school governance. Over half of all participants, as well as most survey respondents (70% from the first survey and 68% from the second), rated the Webinars as either useful or very useful. However, a third of participants (and nearly one-quarter of the second survey respondents) were unable to rate the Webinars as they had not attended any of the sessions.



The main reasons for not attending Webinars, given by both participants and all survey respondents, were: a lack of time; difficulty in accessing them; and that the topic was not relevant to their work as a school governor.

Whatever the subject has been that I've delved into I've always got value out of it and taken various notes like off the back of that, and I know that they will continue and that is for me sort of vital that source of very useful information. (e-gov1)

The other thing is some of the topics just aren't applicable. I'm in a school which is not a local authority and therefore has different challenges, so some of the topics that they talk about are just not applicable for me. (FG8)

The online training module

In November 2016, just after the start of the evaluation, SGOSS, in conjunction with LBG, launched their online governor induction training module. The module has been generally well received by participants, with two-thirds having completed the training. Several have also recommended it to new governors on their Governing Board. However, whilst less than one-third of second survey¹² respondents (32%) had completed the module by August 2017, the majority of those who had (70%) rated it as either useful or very useful, with nearly half (45%) of all second survey respondents stating they would recommend the training to others.

Other sources of support

Other sources of support participants accessed included: tapping into LBG internal support networks, both formal and informal, such using HIVE and The Governor Network; and meeting with other LBG colleagues who were also volunteering as school governors (but not necessarily via the SO programme). Survey respondents reported that the Governor Network had increased their confidence, knowledge and overall effectiveness as a school governor. SO participants are also eligible to be allocated a mentor. Overall, both participants and survey respondents felt supported by their LBG line manager and other LBG colleagues in their governance role.

Finally, most participants found the reflective logs (originally intended as a data collection tool) useful at the start of their governance role to help them scaffold their learning and reflect on their governance activity. Participants used it in various ways including: to help frame questions when preparing for meetings; as a checklist before meetings; and as a record of how much they had done and how much time they had spent on governance.

¹² The online training module was not live at the time of the first survey.

It gave me a bit of an insight into what was coming, because obviously when I first got the log, clearly, I looked ahead, all of which I think was quite useful to give me that path of where I was likely to be going. I suppose the other thing is, it reminds you of the incremental steps that you've taken along the way because otherwise it's very easy, 16 months on, to think well actually now you're asking me what did I do? (FG3)

I think it was good at the beginning when I first did it...I think it was useful. It does make you think about what you've actually done. It does make you think about what your impact has been in that particular meeting. It probably does make you question it a little bit as well. I did find it useful. (FG7)

NEDs' training and support

NEDs were least likely to have accessed formal training, preferring instead to use The Key to source information as and when needed. This was due to a combination of factors, namely that they are already highly skilled individuals within LBG and that they lack time.

I've not tapped into any. I felt like I didn't need it, I've done leadership days before, I've facilitated before, I've set strategies for teams and areas before. So, that, it's more been me using that and applying those experiences into the Trust, rather than me thinking, right I need to go away and learn something. (NED4)

I haven't yet I'm afraid, I'm a bit like a broken record on this. I fully intend to but I suppose this is one of the challenges of doing it in addition to doing the day job. The job I'm doing is quite challenging and I'm having a lot of travel, my time has been very limited. I do absolutely see the benefit of it and I genuinely would like to have some training but it's just making it fit into the diary is a bit of a challenge... (NED2)

Training and support summary

Overall, in terms of training and support:

- Participants felt that all training was valuable;
- The Key was a useful source of information and one of the most regularly used support tools;
- Several participants were tapping into local informal networks at their place of work;
- No training gaps were identified by participants;
- The SO programme appears to be raising the profile of volunteering and school governance within LBG;
- Most participants found the reflective logs useful at the start of their governance role to help them scaffold their learning and to reflect on governance activity.

Roles and responsibilities

During their first year on the SO programme, most participants were allocated specific roles and responsibilities and one (FG11) was elected as Chair for the start of this academic year (just a few months after being a newly appointed governor). In addition, FG4 was asked to take on the role of Chair but declined. NED1 has also been asked if he will consider becoming Chair of the Board of Trustees when the current Chair steps down.

In the summer of 2016, just six months after being appointed, FG11 was elected to Chair of Governors. He put himself forward to be Chair when four members of the Governing Body, including the Chair and the Vice Chair, announced their resignations. He commented 'I'd like to tell you it was because I was a stunning candidate, but I think there's an element of other people being reluctant to step forward. The Headteacher acknowledged that being elected as Chair so soon after joining the governing body was unusual and would not have occurred if so many people had not left at the same time. (Extract from the FG11 case study)

Other roles and responsibilities SO participants have taken on included:

- Vice Chair of the Governing Body
- Chair of the Audit Committee
- Chair of the Finance and Resource Committee
- Chair of the Resources Committee
- Chair of the Pay sub-committee
- Health and Safety Governor
- Sports Funding Governor
- Member of the Resource committee
- Governor for Premises
- Responsibility for Pupil Performance data
- Point of contact for the SBM
- Member of the Improvement Board

E-governors were least likely to have a specific role or area of responsibility. Indeed, just two of the e-governors (e-gov1 and 4) had been allocated a particular area on which to focus (keeping up to date with the Pupil Premium and conducting a web audit, respectively). In both cases, these were only allocated after the participants repeatedly requested they be given an area for which they could be responsible. E-gov1 was more than happy with his role as Pupil Premium lead and was fully aware that, as an e-governor, it is not practical for him to take on certain roles within the school, as this would require a more hands-on approach to governance than his role as an e-governor permits.

One of the things that I previously requested from the Chair is to give me something that I can actually focus on... I was very conscious that there are a lot of aspects which you do need to be much closer physically to the children and the school itself to fulfil aspects of the governor's role, which is always going to be outside my reach. But this particular subject matter is more academic. It's something that you can research. It's something that is very important in terms of how the school is run and needs to be able to report back on. And it's something that keeps on changing all the time. So it's something that I can keep an eye on and make sure that we're completely up to date with. (e-gov1)

Whilst progress is slow, mainly because governors only meet each other once or twice a term, participants reported that by the end of the evaluation they were beginning to build relationships with their fellow governors, Chairs and Headteachers.

E-governors: technology and other e-governor specific issues

The four schools involved¹³ in the evaluation that appointed LBG e-governors wanted to do so because they were struggling locally to fill vacancies, both skilled and otherwise. This was mainly attributed to schools being located in rural and not particularly affluent areas.

One thing we do struggle with at the school is the fact of being on the end of the Lincolnshire Road network. So it is quite out on its own really so being able to appeal to skilled professionals can be quite difficult... it's just quite a sparse pool of people who are able and willing to become governors. So it's broadening the area we can pull from really. (Chair, e-gov1&3)

The general consensus amongst the schools was that the e-governors had settled in well. The main issue had been adjusting the way schools prepared for, and conducted, meetings. They needed to be mindful that at least one governor was not physically present in the room. This meant other governors had to be clear at all times as to who was speaking in meetings. In addition, papers needed to be clearly marked and circulated in advance rather than tabled at the meeting. Some schools had also struggled with having a member of the Governing Body that most, if not all, had

¹³ Whilst there were five e-governors, two were appointed governors at the same school.

never met in person. This problem was addressed by e-govs2 and 4 who had both been able to attend initial meetings in person as, unlike e-govs1, 3 and 5, they both lived and worked within an hour's drive of their respective schools.

I'd been to a few of the meetings so I'd met them all face-to-face and they were a really good group of people. So being on the phone worked really well because I never felt like they'd forgotten that I was there and they kept me included as and when if anything was happening. So they'd acknowledged that we were on the phone and couldn't see what they could see, or if something happened in the room they acknowledged that obviously we didn't know. So it didn't feel awkward or like there was no point in me being there at any point because they kept me included, so it worked well. (e-gov2)

Undoubtedly, the main difficulty e-governors and the schools both faced was getting the conferencing technology to work fully and effectively. Schools were not generally equipped to accommodate Webex, conference calling or even a simple dial-in, either in terms of their infrastructure or their technical onsite expertise. One year into the programme and the technology was still not fully functioning in three of the four schools. Only e-gov4 seems to have been able to fully use the Webex, having both audio and visuals.

We still haven't properly overcome the actual physical presence, in as much as we should be able to get moving pictures going. Considering the technology that's actually on site, there seems to be a bit of a barrier in actually connecting it up with what we're using which I'm led to believe is not insurmountable. (e-gov1)

For e-gov5, the technology never worked and was instrumental in her decision at the end of the school year to resign from her role as an e-governor. Attending meetings in person was not an option as she lived more than one and a half hours away from her school. She felt the lack of technology, as well as the inability of the school to dial her into meetings using a mobile phone, made it almost impossible to work with the school in any meaningful way. E-gov5 only dialled into one meeting and the rest of the time, she liaised with the Chair of Governors by phone prior to full Governing Body meetings. The Chair would then take her thoughts and comments to the meeting. The school's Chair and CEO both agreed that the school did not have the infrastructure required to accommodate the technology that would make a pure e-governor appointment successful.

E-gov5's perspective

For the school that I was with, it did not work being remote, they just don't operate in that way. They work on a face-to-face basis, that you're in the room for the meetings...You can't put a new governor into a school unless you've gone in there already and put in some technology and helped them understand how they use that technology, to make an e-governor work.

So, for example if I could have Webexed into the meetings with the school and seen the people I was talking to, that would have made it a lot easier to integrate as a governor but as it was, I think it was three or four meetings in before I could even dial into the meeting. I don't know what that problem was because they only had to dial me in, but they weren't able to do it.

From my perspective that was a key decision as to why I resigned because I wasn't adding anything to the role of a governor...So I thought I should free that place up on the governing body for somebody who can participate in a face-to-face meeting.

The school wasn't getting what they wanted from my perspective. I certainly wasn't able to contribute my skills, or what I feel is my skill set in working a large corporate and dealing with finances...I couldn't do that because I couldn't effectively work with them from a remote setting.

School's perspective

One of the big difficulties we had with this pilot was our technology. We didn't have the right technology to enable e-gov5 to be an active part of the meeting. I mean it's a very old school. The technology is about 30 years behind the times and we just really had problems in getting an audio contact with e-gov5 during meetings. It did happen once or twice but it was very amateurish. So

we started to analyse the paperwork and the reports and the data before the meeting so I'd got an idea of what challenges e-gov5 would have made had she been physically at the meeting.

(Chair, e-gov5)

ICT infrastructure-wise I think that there's a presumption through the e-governor route that schools have got what you describe as pretty standard ICT facilities and most schools may have, our schools don't. So, just getting a phone line and having to use mobile phones on speaker it is the best we could manage. And I don't think that helped the experience overall because it's difficult on speakerphone, when you've got more than one person talking to be able to unpick what's being said, the sound quality is poor, et cetera. (CEO, e-gov5)

From his experience, e-gov3 observed that the role of an e-governor is somewhat limited to people who have a degree of flexibility within their work. E-gov1 agreed that this would appear to be the case. For example, e-gov3 works in the organisation's Call Centre and, as well as not having flexibility over his working patterns, initially he did not have access to a Webcam or external email due to data protection constraints that are placed on his organisational role. This meant it was challenging for e-gov3 to carry out his e-governance duties effectively, until he found a way to work around the issues by using his own tablet.

It was clear from the interviews with both schools and e-governors that, overall, all four schools would have preferred a more conventional governor - one that could, at least some of the time, be physically present at meetings and be able to engage in other aspects of school life.

Challenges

During their first year in post, participants faced challenges that were both personal in nature and a result of the situations in which they found their individual schools. Initially their main challenge was understanding an unfamiliar sector, how it operates and the terminology used. This was especially so since none of the participants had any previous experience of the education sector beyond some having school-aged children. However, most of these difficulties had been resolved by the end of the evaluation with most participants reporting that one year on they had a good grasp of how the education sector operates.

The main challenge participants reported throughout the evaluation was that of a lack of time and balancing the conflicting priorities of work, school and home. This continues to be the case. Despite LBG being a flexible and agile employer (something all participants both recognised and appreciated) participants still found the role more demanding, especially in terms of time, than they had initially envisaged. Preparing for, and attending meetings, especially when they took place during the day, was reported to be particularly challenging.

...probably the main challenge is just purely the fact that obviously if you do work full-time and I do additionally primarily work in Halifax rather than Leeds where the school is based, it is that bit more difficult to organise things. That being said, we've managed it... (FG3)

Changes within individual schools, especially where these changes related directly to the school's governance or status, has also been a key challenge for some participants. For example, one school converted to an academy, one changed its status from an academy to a MAT and several saw significant changes to their senior leader team and/or their Governing Body.

Part two: Impact and outcomes

This section directly addresses the four research questions relating to the SO programme that LBG asked the evaluation to explore, namely:

1. How does the SO programme contribute to improved school performance and educational outcomes?
2. What evidence is there that the interventions increase the confidence, knowledge and skills of school governing bodies and leadership teams?
3. What evidence is there that the interventions strengthen school governance and business practices?
4. How do these interventions contribute to colleague CPD?

1) *How the SO programme has contributed to improved school performance and educational outcomes at participating schools.*

There seemed to be a general consensus amongst both schools and MATs that the role of a governor or NED is *not directly* linked to pupil outcomes, rather this is the responsibility of the Headteacher.

I have difficulty with this because in some regards there could be a presumption that governors are actively pushing up pupil progress and increased outcomes, improving outcomes. I'm not sure I agree with that as a sentiment. I think that governors should be enabling that, rather than disabling it, but actually that is the domain of the Headteacher and the school leadership team and if they're doing that already and if they're moving in the right direction and governors check and challenge, they are affirming that. But governors aren't directly having that impact on pupil outcomes, the Headteacher is. Governors are just being that check and balance to make sure that we're doing as much as we can. (CEO, e-gov5)

However, the work that governors and NEDs undertake does *indirectly* contribute to improving school performance and the educational outcomes of pupils. As such, most schools and MATs agreed that SO participants had made an *indirect* contribution, as had their fellow governors and NEDs. Examples of how all governors and NEDs (including SO participants) indirectly contributed to improved school performance and educational outcomes for pupils, included:

- Ensuring the school is using the allocated budget wisely and making collective savings from the back office that can be re-invested into classroom delivery;
- Governors or Trustees asking particular and challenging questions or requesting specific information;
- Strong secure governance and leadership giving confidence to the Board and constituting a key contributory factor in school improvement;
- Ensuring policies are up to date and their legal obligations are met;
- Providing training on efficiency so that the MAT can grow without losing the quality it needs to be able to maintain and improve educational outcomes of pupils;
- Constituting a well-balanced, well-considered Governing Body which filters down through the school and positively affects the experience pupils receive; and
- Having a governor linked with a specific class to facilitate relationship building and improved pupil outcomes.

Her roles are more to do with the business side as opposed to the children's progress. [But] what we always say is that if the resources and the business and the financial state of the school isn't intact then it's really hard to think about improved outcomes for the children. So indirectly, yes, FG3 and the team do have that positive impact... The business side of the school has to be intact and running smoothly for improvements to come about. (Headteacher, FG3)

For several participants their remit last year had been to focus on the financial implications of potential changes to their school's status, namely academisation, rather than on pupil outcomes. However, this too had indirectly had an impact upon pupil outcomes.

E-gov2: An example of a SO participant's indirect impact on pupil outcomes

At the end of the year we were going to become an academy. But what happened was, near the end of the year we'd all made the decision about which Academy we were joining and then three-quarters of the way down the line a new academy came on the table. So I presented to governors and said, 'Another Academy chain has asked if we're interested in joining them.' E-gov2 definitely attended this meeting. She was very good at listening first. She listened and then she gave her thoughts, rather than just jumping in.

E-gov2 sat there and she listened and I put the pros and I put the cons for joining and the rest of the governors were beginning to be swayed... I remember e-gov2 saying, to the point, "What were your reasons for joining this Academy in the first place?" Everybody stopped and they all went, "Oh, well it was this, this and this." So she said, "Well it sounds like this new Academy isn't giving you those reasons."

When it comes to educational outcomes and improvements for children, she had a massive impact at that meeting because of her business side, she listened to everybody sitting round that table, reasoned it out with us and said, "Well actually, you've just reasoned it out to say, "Well actually, we need to stay with that Academy."" She had the confidence to do that, which I think a lot of governors didn't. I think governors through industry or people that are in business are a lot more confident with meetings and things. So because what she said then she made the school decide to go with this particular Academy. She had a massive impact on outcomes and where we were going and the lives of our children. But it was from a business reasoning rather than a fluffy, emotional... (Headteacher, e-gov2)

Ofsted ratings are commonly viewed as an indicator of successful pupil outcomes, and therefore the effectiveness of the Governing Body. During the lifetime of the evaluation, three participating schools were inspected. Whilst two remained 'good', one received an improved rating, from 'good' to 'outstanding'. However, neither participants nor schools attributed their Ofsted rating as a direct result of having a SO participant on their Governing Body.

2) Evidence that the SO programme has increased the confidence, knowledge and skills of participating schools' Governing Bodies and their senior leadership team

Three-quarters of participants felt they had increased the confidence, knowledge or skills of their Governing Body in some way, with one-quarter feeling it was either too early to say this was the case or that the Governing Body already operated at a high level in these areas.

But to be fair it's an outstanding school anyway. So I think maybe my influence would have been greater if I had perhaps gone into a school that wasn't outstanding. So I suppose what I'm saying is they were pretty good already. (FG8)

Confidence was largely built through their ability to ask challenging and pertinent questions and by encouraging others to do the same, rather than accepting the status quo. For example, according to FG8's Chair, FG8 was not afraid to ask questions that some people might have been a bit shy of asking. He was able to scaffold the asking of challenging questions to the Governing Body and in so doing he acted as a role model, encouraging others to do likewise.

Both FG11's ex-Chair and Headteacher strongly felt that he had provided confidence and leadership to the Governing Body a time when it was much needed, especially since being elected as Chair.

When we lost those key governors last summer we were almost like a ship without a rudder... By the fact that he was willing to stand up and offered to take control with it helped steady the ship. We have now managed to get another couple of governors to join us and as FG11 has grown in confidence and experience from being with us that bit longer, we are now in a much stronger position again. If he hadn't been willing to put himself forward, we were really struggling with governance. (Headteacher, FG11)

Some schools suggested evidence of building the Governing Board's confidence could be clearly found in the minutes of governor meetings.

Other areas where participants and schools felt SO governors had specifically made a difference to their respective governing body included:

- Having a financial background;
- Coming from an external environment, especially a non-public sector background;
- Still being in the workplace, since many fellow governors were retired;
- Questioning the norm and bringing a new perspective;
- Raising awareness of issues; and
- Being able to give a balanced, objective view.

E-governors were particularly hesitant to claim they had increased the confidence, knowledge and skills of their Governing Body. However, with the exception of e-gov5 (who never actually attended a full Governing Body meeting), e-governor schools felt that their e-governor had resulted in a more confident Governing Body overall. E-gov2's Chair felt that having e-governors not only '*raised the bar*' at governing meetings, but also helped other governors to keep focused and made meetings more businesses-like. The Headteacher of e-gov4's school - which already had an outstanding Governing Body - felt his appointment had brought reassurance to the Governing Body.

E-gov1 felt he had made a difference by opening up the school to new ways of working with technology, for example conference calling. He noted that many on the Governing Body are retired and not necessarily familiar with current working practices or new forms of communication technologies.

3) Evidence that the SO programme strengthened the governance and business practices of participating schools.

Most of the participants sat on their school's finance and resources (or equivalent) sub-committees. Roughly half felt it that it was either too early in their appointment for them to have made a difference, or that their school or MAT already had an effective SBM or Governing Body in place. The other half felt that they had influence over strengthening their school's governance and businesses practices by asking challenging questions of the school's business strategy and its finances. Interviews with schools, and especially their SBMs, showed a similar picture.

The finances of the school were in a dire state when I took over as Chair. So a lot of the focus in the early days was getting the budget right. So when I had conversations with e-gov5 a lot of the conversations were around the financial aspects of the school because what we'd got is a new Headteacher who was a damn good teacher and a good Headteacher, that hadn't grasped the concept of actually the school should be run as a business. The school had a £2.5 to £3m a year turnover which, in anybody's book, is a big business. Well not a big business but it's a business with a meaty financial turnover. The aspect of delving into the finance was quite a big part of my initial duty. E-gov5 was able to act as a mentor to me when I was starting to move things forward with the Headteacher. (Chair, e-gov5)

The following are some examples of how SO participants have strengthened their schools' governance and business practices over the past year:

- FG3's Headteacher and Chair felt she had strengthened business practices by always considering the legality of the situation (her areas of expertise). This was said to 'elevate' the level of discussion around issues being considered by the Governing Body, which the Headteacher valued greatly. The Headteacher also reported learning a lot from FG3's input, which he was then able to share with others, both internally and externally.
- In the case of FG11, the SBM particularly welcomed the appointment reporting feeling much more supported, especially when presenting figures and reports to the other governors. She also appreciated being challenged appropriately, but in a positive, 'critical friend' way as FG11 often offered solutions to problems. She further noted improvements in how meetings were run since FG11 became Chair at the start of the school year.
- As a result of working with the SBM, FG12 felt he had been instrumental in the school's decision to invest in upgrading their software systems. This included the facility to use a contractor's payment scheme, which enables parents to pay directly for everything school related. As a result, the school has been able to free up enough time and, therefore, finances to employ another part-time member of staff to assist the SBM three days a week.
- In respect to the NEDs, not only did they feel they had made a difference to the governance and business practices of their MATs, but their CEOs and Chairs agreed that this was indeed the case. Helping their MAT to put together a strategic financial plan for the future, regardless of their situation, was noted as one of their main strengths. Another was the expertise they brought in the area of risk management.
- NED1 was reported to have made two key contributions to the MAT's business practices on account of what his CEO referred to as his 'rigour'. Firstly, his knowledge of finance management placed the MAT in a position where, pending a 'Good' Ofsted outcome, they will be able to expand. This was attributed to both NED1's vision and his practical financial management. Secondly, NED1 was instrumental in leading the MAT's finance risk management by taking LBG's specific processes and matrices and adapting them for the SBM's use. This marked a crucial shift in the financial practices of the MAT. His expertise in this area has also led to him taking on a 'coaching and mentoring role' with the SBM.
- Another example was given by NED3, who had observed early on in his appointment that there was a high level of teacher absences - running at 18% in one school. He made the senior leadership team question why this was and one year later teacher absences across the MAT are now between 3% and 5%, with one school running at just 1.5%.

NED3: Evidence of SO participant's strengthening school business practices

What was interesting was that exactly one year on we went back to review those figures. It was interesting that the Finance Director opened up by saying: this is something that was flagged twelve months ago at a Board Meeting, where I'd pointed out the fact that these were unacceptable and now we can report on these. And they were much, much healthier. I'm not saying that that was a direct consequence of me saying anything. But, I think the fact that we brought that into focus and I was quite pleased that we could say from where we were twelve months ago to where we are now, we've seen a material uplift and an improvement. I think that's a good step forward. (NED3)

The Finance Director supported this claim by saying:

I can remember a very clear single instance where he's provided the Trust with a benchmark, which has been very useful in relation to staff absenteeism, which we measure all the time, but have never really taken a view on what a respectable level of absenteeism is. We've always measured the difference between our best and our worst schools and always striven to improve, but we've never had the knowledge to say X% is a reasonable level of staff absence.

E-governors were least likely to have felt they had made a difference in this area of their school. Their respective Headteachers and Chairs agreed their impact had been valuable but, at this point, limited. Despite not having attended any formal governing meetings, e-gov5 appears to have had

the most significant impact in terms of strengthening her schools' business practices. The CEO of the MAT felt that having an e-governor from a professional background had led to the '*sharpening up*' of information presented to the Governing Body and the Chair reported a definite strengthening of their business practices as a result of the appointment, despite e-gov5's main contact being with the Chair by phone. The relatively recently appointed Chair (just nine months before e-gov5 started) had also found e-gov5 to be a valuable mentor for him in getting up to speed with the school's finances.

4) *How the SO programme has contributed to participating LBG colleagues' CPD.*

The majority of participants, and 40% of first survey respondents, reported that their governance role had positively affected their professional work and benefited them in terms of CPD, albeit often at quite a subtle level at this early stage in their appointments. The professional benefit most commonly cited by participants was not the acquiring of new skills per se, but rather a growth in their self-confidence which enabled them to carry out their professional role more effectively. Line managers agreed and it was too early for them to report any tangible professional career impact. However, they did note a positive change in participants' attitude and behaviour (specifically FG7 and FG11) as well as a broadening of horizons and a greater understanding of wider society (FG8) - all of which were having a positive impact in the workplace.

From the participants' perspectives, the professional impact came more from the opportunities the experience offered in terms of working with new people and exposing them to new environments. This in turn had a positive impact on their professional life. The following is a list of benefits and opportunities cited by participants:

- Increased self-confidence;
- More information to help deal with customers and think about how they are treated;
- Working with new people from different backgrounds, cultures and communities;
- Working in a new environment;
- Improving verbal communication skills;
- The discipline of reading papers before a meeting;
- Thinking differently in general;
- Personal development;
- Broader understanding of the education sector and the political landscape;
- Insights into setting up a company; and
- Understanding how the school operates in terms of HR.

I think because I've gone into something that I've not done before, it's given me more confidence because I've taken the skills that I've got in my current role, from a finance background, to use them in another environment and with people that I didn't know and who didn't know me. And I feel like they appreciated my input and appreciate the support they got from us, so it's just given me a bit more confidence in my role. (e-gov2)

I think it's more being exposed to a different environment which has made me think differently about how you work in meetings and just generally more confidence for me personally. (FG10)

Participants mentioned a range of ways in which they would be using the above skills, knowledge and experiences in their professional role, specifically:

- Performance management;
- Working with customers;
- Approaching meetings;

- Chairing meetings;
- Going back to basics in terms of problem-solving; and
- Simplifying their approach to work.

The NEDs talked about the added benefits of being part of the SO programme. For NED1 it had opened career doors that he felt were previously closed to him - as a result of becoming a NED, he recently represented LBG at an Institute of Directors dinner where he sat with Lord Nash. NED2 felt his appointment had given him developmental opportunities that he would not have had from working and interacting solely with people from the banking sector. NED3 felt he was now able to say he was taking an active role in the *Helping Britain Prosper* strategy and NED4 talked of being 'proud' to be part of the programme and feeling like he was making a difference.

I think there's a sense of pride, if I'm honest in terms of what I'm doing, almost the philanthropic nature of it. So, feeling that I'm using the experiences and learning that Lloyds have equipped me for a greater good. (NED4)

Line managers also reported that some participants had become more vocal in meetings (FG7) or that they were now able to plan their workloads more effectively (FG11).

Extracts from FG11 case study: A line manager's perspective

FG11's line manager had noticed a change in FG11 since being appointed as a school governor on the SO programme. Prior to taking on the governance, he felt their monthly conversations had focused on how lethargic he was finding his role at work. Being appointed as a school governor in a challenging school seemed to have provided him with some of the challenges he had been looking for. His line manager commented:

I feel that he's now got that drive and passion within him. It will end up seeping through into his work. Albeit, there is still some elements that he wants to change around work, I feel that it has had a positive impact on giving him that purpose that he has been looking for. That spark.

His line manager also reported that his team have seen a difference in him, finding him more upbeat and positive. He noted that whilst FG11 had always been willing to help and support his team, this had become more evident since taking on the governance role.

FG11 himself commented:

There is a little bit extra purpose in my life now and I feel better for it, I think to be honest. I do feel I am actually doing something where I'm contributing to the world outside of LBG. And it does actually feel good. The only regret I have is I should have done it a long long time ago.

Overall contribution, impact and difference

Many of the SO participants felt that they had begun to make a difference in how their Governing Body operated; they also felt that their skills, knowledge and experience were valued by others. The schools agreed and were generally more positive about their experience of having a SO governor or NED and the contribution they had made than the participants themselves were.

The main contribution reported by participants and schools alike was that they brought an outsider's perspective, a fresh pair of eyes and an objective viewpoint. Their impartiality was particularly valued by the schools with many reporting that often governors could be biased or have their own personal agenda - SO governors did not. This unique perspective enabled them to ask challenging but relevant questions in key areas of school life such as pay, risk and pupil outcomes. Participants were also said to have been skilled at critically analysing data, policies and budgets as well as asking relevant questions and providing constructive feedback. SO participants were seen as bringing enthusiasm, commitment and professionalism to the role.

Other specific contributions included:

- Streamlining governance systems, especially when asking for information to be presented;

- Helping to mature the way the Governing Body works with the senior leadership team;
- Standardising internal school systems;
- Implementing a school governance induction programme;
- Firming up 'terms of references' for sub-committees;
- Helping to secure additional funding;
- Improving school policies;
- Encouraging benchmarking; and
- Ensuring 'best value' when purchasing systems and items.

The first thing I call out is time to simplify and streamline the way that we ask for things as a governing body so that they are more efficient for the school. I think the other thing is in almost maturing the way in which the school works with its governing body such that it understands that we're all trying to get the best thing for the school... As I say, sometimes it will lead to conversations where we're not just agreeing everything, we are saying, "Have you thought about things or are you doing this?" (FG3)

I guess bringing a different perspective as somebody from outside the immediate community, not related to the school; it just brings a different viewpoint. (FG13)

I think I've brought a balanced outsider's view in terms of the board meetings themselves. Asking questions, making sure we've got a clear comms strategy, clear vision as to where we're going, making sure that they've got questions that have been asked that are non-education and semi-specific. So, that it's an outsider looking in, asking the questions. So, I feel I've brought value there. (NED1)

Despite having substantially less interaction with their schools and Governing Bodies than other participants, all of the e-governors and their schools felt they had made a positive contribution. E-gov1 felt that despite their remoteness, he and e-gov3's input had been valued by the school - their Chair concurred, telling e-gov1 he was pleased with their appointment and valued their feedback and challenge.

Extract from the e-gov case study (page 8)

Following a visit to the school earlier in the autumn term, e-gov1 commented on the change in attitude he found towards him, especially from the Headteacher, compared to his first visit 12 months earlier when he was appointed:

The Head herself, I think I did share with you on my very first visit to the school, as a form of introduction, it was a bit sort of frosty because she didn't know anything about the project, or she claimed she didn't, and she didn't know who I was, and I had to do an awful lot of selling at that point. The difference on this last visit has been remarkable, it's a much warmer, accepting approach, really pleased to see us...when I came back from the visit I got an email, which said pretty much that, "Thanks very much for the contribution it's been fully appreciated," and that she does look forward to continuing that working relationship.

The Chair confirmed how much the school valued the input of both e-gov1 and 3, especially their ability to 'see a different dimension to the school.' He observed that others are sometimes 'swayed' by visiting the school and 'having a cup of tea and a friendly atmosphere' which can make them less critical than they should to be. The Chair did not find this to be the case with the e-governors commenting:

Whereas the e-governors, they're able to just look at the data, look at the reports that are being presented, they're able to objectively look at all of the data and really drill down on the data because this is what Ofsted look at. They don't look at how friendly the staff are particularly. They're looking at the raw data. So that's been really helpful to have two people who are just really scouring the data that comes to meetings.

Schools reported full governors to be hard working, organised, reliable and quick to pick things up. They also brought stability to the Governing Body and, in some cases, acted as a critical friend to either the Headteacher, Chair or the SBM. Having a highly-skilled professional Governing Body to which SO participants contributed, allowed others to focus on their core areas of work within the school and, therefore, improve educational standards and pupil outcomes.

Because I feel I have a good set of governors, that leaves me free to focus and concentrate on the job of running the school and making sure that standards are good, and outcomes are good. So, I couldn't claim that there's been a directly identifiable impact, but I would feel that having people with the right skill sets and the right level of professionalism, frees me up to do my job, without having to worry about that side of things. (Headteacher, FG7)

Due to their status, the NEDs' overall impact was at a higher level than that of the FGs' or e-governors'. Indeed, the NEDs' input was greatly valued by their CEO and Chairs, regardless of the MAT's situation. However, NED2 felt that his contribution to date was somewhat limited and less than he had hoped for after 12 months in post. This was mainly because his time had predominantly been spent on establishing the MAT. The SO NEDs often became the CEO or Chair's 'go to' person, especially in the areas of finance, risk and audit. In addition, NED4's CEO reported that they had all learnt a lot about LBG as a result of the appointment.

Extract from NED1 case study: An example of the value and contribution a SO NED can bring to a MAT

NED1 holds a senior position within LBG. His MAT is relatively small, consisting of just two schools: a generic special school rated by Ofsted as 'good' and a secondary school rated by Ofsted as Inadequate. Much of the work undertaken by NED1 during his first 12 months was around ensuring the secondary school comes out of special measures. A secondary focus has been working on the early stages of the potential expansion of the MAT.

Everyone (participant, CEO and Chair) was extremely positive about the contribution NED1 has made over the last year to the running of the MAT. The Chair felt he had had a very strong impact on the MAT and the CEO was particularly impressed by him. He talked about the '[NED1]-effect', believing he had 'substantially' improved the running of the MAT:

I think I imagine that if you were talking to me and I'd worked with half a dozen Non-Executive Directors over a three-year period, I imagine that I would still think that [NED1] was in the top two of any ten because I just think he is a really, really well-balanced individual.

The CEO was also keen to emphasise that NED1 had improved the rigour of their business practices in a highly challenging and ever-changing context:

In the 12 months he's been working with us as a member of our governance, he's probably dealt with every single major bump in the road that schools encounter in the course of a decade. In that we've moved on members of leadership ... we've done a whole restructure of our business and leadership team to save half a million pounds as an urgent matter. We've dealt with competition from new free schools opening up, having to look at closing our sixth form... There's been an enormous amount of difficulty.

For the Chair, NED1's success in the face of this 'enormous amount of difficulty' was not only down to NED1's business experience but also down to his personal attributes:

I think he's just a thoroughly decent guy. He's got the schools' interests at heart. He's always available for meetings which is great. I think Lloyds do a good job in that respect by allowing their people to go and do this sort of thing. He's extremely supportive and I think he is very likely to be my successor as the Chair of the Trust.

Overall, schools were very happy with their SO governor. They all felt their SO governor had either met or exceeded their initial expectations and they would all recommend others making similar appointments.

I wouldn't want FG3 to go. She's absolutely great. We met FG3 at the same time as another governor who fills a position for premises and we wanted him to look at equality. We met them on the same day for an informal interview. FG3 is involved, attends, contributes, supports. The other person, in comparison, hasn't attended as many meetings, certain jobs they were tasked with haven't materialised yet. I don't want to do an injustice to that person but in comparison, FG3s a superstar. She's great. (Headteacher, FG3)

Yes, absolutely, without a shadow of a doubt. I think it's worked beautifully. We have had some governors that we've recruited in different ways that have been much less successful and people who have parted company with us very early on because they just didn't fit or they had a different agenda. That just hasn't been an issue with FG10 at all. (Chair, FG10)

I think we have so much to learn from people from outside. We can be too insular and it's good being able to work with people from outside. I think that is good for us. It creates new contacts and new ideas. I think we will get a lot more out of FG11 with time. (Headteacher, FG11)

Yes, absolutely. I mean schools struggle for governors and they struggle for a quality, informed governor. So the more workplaces like Lloyds that can offer the structural component of some of the work is brilliant. I mean there's a lot of schools out there and they all need ten governors working on a voluntary basis. (Vice Chair, FG13)

A final comment on how valuable the SO programme has been for schools came from the Chair of FG3.

I suppose there's just feeding back to Lloyds about how valuable it is to have governors from business backgrounds and that appreciating it's not easy for businesses to free staff to attend meetings and things that are part of being a governor. For a school, it's exactly what we need but actually because it is a school and the operational hours are as they are, whilst we can have some meetings after school, we do have to have meetings during the school day and being able to recruit from Lloyds where we know staff are supported, or allowed, to attend meetings is fantastic. I know some other governors have to take leave and things to attend meetings which in the long term perhaps isn't sustainable. So it's great to have an organisation that supports their staff to do school governors – particularly because the expectations now on school governing bodies are that you recruit people with skills and you're being asked to make more and more decisions. So we need people with expertise. (Chair, FG3)

Key findings and recommendations

Key findings

Process:

- Both SO participants and schools found the recruitment process straightforward and on the whole satisfactory.
- After one year in post, most participants have settled in well. In the initial stages of their appointment participants struggled to understand the processes and terminology of the education sector. However, most participants now feel competent in both of these areas.
- Schools reported that most participants began to make contributions to meetings from the outset.
- Skilled governors appointed from the private/business sector have the potential to act as mentors for those in schools, specifically Headteachers, Chairs and SBMs.
- All training received by the participants during the pilot was deemed as useful. The local authority governor induction training was seen as the most beneficial, especially when attended early on in the role.
- The Key was the most beneficial on-going resource available to participants, with many using it on a regular basis.
- Participants valued the support they had received from other LBG colleagues and the support and flexibility of line managers. They particularly appreciated being part of the SO programme and all the benefits that came with it, especially the status of the initiative and the commitment shown to it from within the organisation.
- The main challenge participants encountered was that of time. One year on, this continues to be their biggest obstacle to negotiate.

Process e-governors:

- E-governance works best for colleagues who have a degree of flexibility and autonomy over their working patterns.
- Some schools are not equipped, technologically, to support e-governance.
- It was clear that overall schools prefer (and are more equipped to take) a more conventional governor who can physically attend meetings at least some of the time - what SGOSS are now calling a flexi-governor.

Outcomes and impact

- SO participants have made a range of indirect contributions which have improved school performance and educational outcomes.
- There is evidence that SO participants have increased the confidence of school Governing Bodies and leadership teams in their decision-making processes, where these are not already working highly effectively.
- The appointment of SO participants has complemented the pre-existing skills of their Governing Bodies and in so doing they have provided expertise in a range of areas such as HR, finance and risk.
- There is evidence that SO participants have strengthened school governance and business practices, especially the latter.
- During the pilot, many participants have taken on additional specific roles and responsibilities and one has even been elected as Chair of Governors.
- Overall, SO participants were highly valued by their schools, especially for their impartiality, professionalism and commitment. All Chairs and Headteachers felt that the SO governors

had either met or exceeded expectations or that they would recommend appointing a LBG SO governor or NED to others.

- Schools also appreciated having governors that not only came from the private sector but who were also supported in their governance role by their organisation.
- Most participants reported that their involvement with SO programme had a positive impact on how they carried out their professional role and their career professional development. Their line managers agreed.

Recommendations

- LBG continues to run the StandingOut programme in Yorkshire and Humber and other priority areas. It is clear that their staff volunteering as FGs and NEDs gives Boards and Trusts a wider skill-set that facilitate them having confidence in their decision making processes;
- Continue to offer a wide range of training courses and access to The Key to both newly appointed and established governors. This will ensure governors are kept up to date with emerging education policy and practice in a constantly changing sector.
- Continue to work in close partnership with other organisations, such as SGOSS, Academy Ambassadors and The Key to deliver effective governance placement and ongoing support.
- Continue to promote the StandingOut programme within the organisation and the wider benefit it can bring to both employees and the organisation alike.
- Continue to be an 'agile' employer who allows employees to undertake important volunteering opportunities which have tangible benefits both for the local communities in which the organisation operates and LBG themselves.
- Replicate the success of the Yorkshire and Humber region elsewhere by focusing on what has worked well and by learning the lessons from what has been less effective, whilst taking into account specific regional need and drawing on local knowledge.
- Re-frame e-governors as flexi-governors and offer technical support and initial training on Webex to schools who appoint flexi-governors. In addition, schools should be assessed for their suitability - in terms of technical capabilities and infrastructure - prior to being offered a flexi-governor as an option. This should be undertaken in conjunction with SGOSS (now Governors of Schools).
- Undertake a further impact evaluation in one year's time to establish the sustainability and longer-term benefits of the programme to the schools, the participants and the organisation.

Concluding comment

Overall LBG volunteer governors, regardless of their type, were keen from the outset to learn about the educational sector. During the evaluation period all LBG volunteers demonstrated a passion and commitment to school improvement which is often associated solely with 'lay' governors (namely parents, teachers and those appointed from the local community). The success of the StandingOut programme in the Yorkshire and Humber region shows how other private organisations could also make a rounded and positive contribution to school governance in a climate of increasing academisation.

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