

LOOKING FOR INSPIRING GOVERNORS?

A year ago in *Governing Matters* Lord Nash introduced the Inspiring Governors Alliance, through which a wide range of organisations have demonstrated their public commitment to high quality school governance: "I'm not afraid of saying that we need more professional standards of governance, and that people from the world of work have a wide range of transferable skills that they can bring to school governance."

The Alliance aims to:

- inspire more people with relevant skills and experience to volunteer as governors
- inspire more employers about the benefits of supporting their staff to be governors
- inspire more governing boards to actively recruit governors for their skills.

In the survey NGA published with the University of Bath, we discovered that two-thirds of governing boards found recruiting governors difficult and about half of all chairs reported that they put a lot of effort into finding new governors. Generally the more challenging the setting the harder it is to recruit governors, yet sadly those schools most in need of strong governance seemed to make a little less effort than others on top of their game.

There was support for the idea that recruitment would be improved if employers promoted involvement of their employees in school governing, with 62% of respondents supporting this view. See the Inspiring Governors website for more information for employers about the benefits of employees volunteering.

So one year on, what help is being provided? The charity Education and Employers was instrumental in pulling the Alliance together, with NGA as one

of its most active founding members. The two organisations are working together to give schools a quick and comprehensive way to find individuals to serve as school governors.

New free service

There is now a second bank of volunteers for schools to explore when looking for governors: it is a free national service supported by the Department for Education (DfE). You can search for people in your area who have indicated they are willing to be a governor. You will be able to see their name, job title, organisation and a short biography. You can also send them a message via the online matchmaking service.

INSPIRING WOMEN

We need to bring about a significant culture change so that it becomes commonplace that girls, wherever they live and whatever their social background, get the chance to meet a wide range of people doing different jobs, from apprentice to CEO. The national Inspiring Women campaign has 15,000 women from a wide range of occupations who go into state schools to talk to girls. The programme is entirely free for state schools and employers and makes a real difference to the aspirations of young women.



Have you made use of the new national service which helps you find volunteers?

There are more than 2,000 volunteers waiting to be approached by a school. The volunteers come from a range of sectors including finance, law, property, civil service, marketing, health services – the list goes on.

It is frustrating that while we hear from schools struggling to find governors with the time to commit, we are increasingly coming across volunteers who have not found a school to govern.

We need to act now to join these two up: if you have a vacancy, have a look to see if there is someone with the skills you are missing. Some schools hesitate over contacting unknown people; however, we need to approach governor recruitment more in the way we would an employment vacancy – with a role description, a thorough search and then an interview against the person specification. NGA's role description is on both our website and that of Inspiring Governors. There is also new guidance on the recruitment process for governors and a role description on the NGA website. 

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