

# Staying safe: a guide to governance

**Governance describes the systems and processes an organisation has in place to maintain their business aims, effectiveness and accountability.**

Your organisation is likely to be a not-for-profit company, NGO, social enterprise, Community Interest Company, Charity or other kind of organisation with a board.

*The 'board' is an organisation's governing body.*

It provides good governance and leadership by: .....

Boards consider issues and policies that effect the organisation's legal compliance and integrity, including:

An effective board must have a strong set of skills and experience across a broad range of areas.

A skills audit can be used to examine the skills of the board and highlight gaps where new skills might be required.

Consider how board members' background and experiences can help to bring different points of view, and whether it reflects the diversity of the community it is serving.

Your organisation's governing document should say how long board members' appointments should last, and whether they can be reappointed after their term ends.

“ Become familiar with the rules and regulations which the organisation you are working with has to follow. Ask if there is an induction programme you can do to familiarise yourself with how to work safely. If in doubt, ask for help! ”

*Julie Harding*

*Director of Business Development, Choices Housing*

1. Understanding their role
2. Ensuring delivery of organisational purpose
3. Working effectively both as individuals and as a team
4. Exercising effective control
5. Behaving with integrity
6. Being open and accountable

Source: Good Governance – A Code for the Community and Voluntary Sector  
[www.governancecode.org](http://www.governancecode.org)

### Think about...

... situations where there is a decision to be made where a board member might have a conflict of interest. In order to comply with their duty and avoid risking the organisation's reputation, board members should:

- Be alert to any **conflicts of interest**.
- Deal with a conflict of interest quickly and openly.
- Record how they have dealt with it in minutes of meetings.

### Help & advice

Look for national bodies for voluntary organisations and charities who can provide help, advice and guidance on good governance.

Employment, volunteering and equality  
Safeguarding of young and vulnerable people  
Health and Safety  
Finance and insurance  
Copyright, data protection and consent  
Environmental and ethical policies

Guide on conflict of interests for Trustees:  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/conflicts-of-interest-a-guide-for-charity-trustees-cc29](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/conflicts-of-interest-a-guide-for-charity-trustees-cc29)

Template for Skills Audit: [www.governancepages.org.uk/sample-documents/skills-audit/](http://www.governancepages.org.uk/sample-documents/skills-audit/)

Full and summary copies of Good Governance – A Code for the Community and Voluntary Sector are available from their website:  
[www.governancecode.org](http://www.governancecode.org)

KnowHowNonProfit is a website that provides a forum for non-profit organisations to share what they have learnt with others and contains useful case studies, tools and resources:  
[www.knowhownonprofit.org](http://www.knowhownonprofit.org)