



**Governing Body Adviser – information for
prospective applicants**

Governor Services

www.lancashire.gov.uk

Governing Body Adviser – what does the role involve?

Are you are looking for a challenging role that is flexible around school holidays and family commitments? Are you are considering reducing your hours? If so, a role within Governor Services may be suitable for you.

School Governors form the largest volunteer group in the country. They are people from all walks of life, who care about children's education and are prepared to work as a team to support their school and local community. Governing Body Advisers are trained and employed by Lancashire County Council to provide advice and support to each Governing Body.

Effective Governing Body Advisors do not need educational expertise but do need to be willing to ask questions and act as a critical member of the board. They also need to be able to work as an enthusiastic member of the governing body team.

Governing Body Advisers are responsible for arranging Governing Body meetings in liaison with the Headteacher and Chair of Governors and for recording the discussions and actions agreed within the meeting.

However, a large part of the role relates to providing up to date advice to the members of a governing body and challenging their work and decision making. A role of this nature is hugely rewarding – not only in terms of supporting schools with their on-going development but in playing a part in providing opportunities for young people across Lancashire.

Each new member of the team has a period of induction during which they are supported and trained in how to support their schools. Work shadowing with a more experienced member of the team allows new colleagues to deepen their understanding of school governance regulation in a real life setting.

The hours are variable with a guaranteed **minimum** of 19 hours per week, term time only. The hours worked generally peaks mid-term and can then be up to 30 hours per week for a few consecutive weeks dropping off again before the end of term. Few, if any Governing Bodies meet on a Friday. Many of the hours are in the evening, allowing our staff to care for young children or see to other family commitments during the day. Although the Service has office bases in Chorley, Lancaster and Burnley, many of our existing staff choose to work from home, only coming into the office once or twice a week to collect documentation, be briefed and catch up with other team members.

What do governing body advisers say about the job?

I am in control of my diary. I work out my deadlines and arrange childcare, this can change if I need to juggle my days around to accommodate child illness.

The role fits in with family life allowing me to run the children to and from school and attend special events.

I am able to manage my diary to fit in both family and work commitments.

Being term time I am able to care for my children during the holidays. The role provides flexibility, fits with family life and provides job satisfaction.

Visiting new schools, meeting new people and answering a variety of questions means that I never get bored.

A Term in the Life of a Governing Body Adviser - Case Study One

I am a mum of two primary aged school children and work as a part time, term time Governing Body Adviser. I have been working within the role for over a year now and thoroughly enjoy it.

I begin each term with approximately 25 meetings. As I am in control of my diary I work out my deadlines and arrange childcare. This changes if I need to juggle days around to accommodate child illness or to undertake additional duties.

Tasks for the beginning of each term involve preparing draft agendas in liaison with the Headteacher and Chair of a Governing Body, producing and circulating meeting papers and updating centrally held records.

I work from the office for two days per week and one day from home to draft minutes. My hours vary from between 10 – 19 hours per week at the beginning of term.

By the middle of the term, meetings are in full swing and in these weeks I am likely to work between 20 - 30 a week, plus additional hours as needed. At this point of the term, I will normally attend three meetings per week and be busy drafting minutes and following up queries that have arisen in meetings.

Towards the end of term, actual meetings have slowed down I am focusing upon drafting minutes and circulating them to the Headteacher and Chair of Governors, ready for the next term.

A Term in the Life of a Governing Body Adviser - Case Study Two

I've been a Governing Body Adviser for two years. I didn't have a background in education but felt that I had a lot of transferable skills for the role. I am highly organised and like the challenge of juggling lots of areas effectively. Whilst learning about the education sector was a steep learning curve; my lack of knowledge wasn't an insurmountable problem.

The part-time, term-time, variable nature of the job appealed to me; together with the combination of office, home and school working. I am married and my husband works part time, often working evenings. We can spend time together during the day before we both go out to work. I combine my job with a volunteer job on a Friday.

During an actual Governing Body meeting, I will offer complex procedural advice and guidance in line with governance regulations. I may be required to deal with conflicts of opinion or advise in relation to meeting protocols and procedural matters should a Governing Body be acting inappropriately. At the meeting I will highlight issues in relation to attendance, apologies, membership, items brought forward and particular actions which governors need to take in relation to items on the agenda. I will also provide any other guidance required or signpost them to more appropriate colleagues or services if it is a particularly detailed query, on which other specialists will be able to provide guidance.

Throughout the meeting I will take detailed notes, enabling me to record a set of minutes which comply with legal requirements. The accurate recording of the business of the meeting is crucial as when a school is inspected by Ofsted, Inspectors will look at the minutes for evidence of the Governing Body's involvement in the leadership and management of the school, together with their ability to hold school leaders to account through challenge. It is therefore extremely important to ensure that the minutes are comprehensive and represent the workings of an effective Governing Body.

Where a Governing Body is not operating effectively, I take advice from other Governing Body Advisers and my Managers, which, coupled with a regular programme of whole service training days and an initial two day training programme gives me the skills and abilities to address many issues which arise.

For further information please contact:

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For information on possible childcare options please visit: www.lancashire.gov.uk/education/childcare