

Code of Governance Toolkit



Using Learning to Fly to review your governance arrangements Assessment table

This table can be used to review how your organisation meets the principles of good governance in *Learning to Fly*.

It is designed to be used in conjunction with *Learning to Fly*, following the assessment method on pages 47 and 48 of the *Code of Governance Toolkit*.

Item	We do this well	We probably do this	We do not do this / need to improve	Notes
A. Sort out who does what Be in charge: A1. The management committee/trustees must take ultimate responsibility for the organisation and for the people it aims to serve. This team must: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- set the strategy- direct the work of the organisation and- make the key decisions. It also needs to make sure the organisation is well-run- has enough money and- is doing what it was set up to do.				
A2. Committee members who are involved in the organisation's day-to-day work need to keep this separate from their work as a Committee member.				



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Make sure everyone knows what they have to do: A3. Write down what everyone is supposed to do – staff, volunteers, advisers, and Committee members. These can be role or job descriptions, or just letters setting out the key points.				
Delegate: A4. Delegate the jobs the Committee can't do to other people, making sure that everyone knows exactly what they can and cannot do. You might need to take on staff, volunteers, consultants or advisers to make sure everything gets done.				
A5. If you have a senior staff member, she or he should be the bridge between the Committee and the staff and volunteers.				
A6. Get reports back from people working on behalf of the Committee.				



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B Read the flight manuals Follow your own rules: B1. If you have a legal governing document, make sure all the Committee members have a copy and understand it.				
B2. Make sure that your meetings and the rest of the Committee's work follow it, for instance when it comes to electing new members. Always remember what the organisation was set up to do.				



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C Get ready for takeoff				
Get the 'house-keeping' right:				
C1. Keep written records of meetings, and decisions taken on important issues.				
C2. Set budgets for all areas of work				
C3. Keep detailed financial records of all costs and income.				
C4. Have policies and plans to guide everyone's involvement.				
C5. If you employ staff, make sure they have proper contracts of employment.				
Get the finances right:				
C6. Set annual budgets				
C7. Keep clear records				
C9. Set rules for who can spend money and how much				



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C10. Be especially careful when handling cash, when investing or borrowing, and with donations. Never commit the organisation to spending money it doesn't have.				
Plan for problems: C11. Set up fair ways of dealing with complaints and disputes. Make sure everyone knows about the procedures and how to use them				
Prepare for risks: C12. Every organisation is sometimes at risk. Risk may affect property, assets, income, staff, volunteers, service users or the organisation's reputation. Get information about likely risks, and do what you can to avoid them or reduce their impact. If you can, take out insurance against major risks.				
Seek professional or specialist advice when needed: C13. Make sure you get independent advice about risks, important decisions and other major issues. Even the most qualified Committee may need financial, legal or technical advice to help them make good decisions.				



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<p>D. Obey air traffic control</p> <p>Check which laws & regulations apply to your organisation:</p> <p>D1. This could be quite a long list, and you may need to get outside advice. Depending on what kind of governing document your organisation has, you might need to comply with the law on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - charities - companies or - Industrial and Provident Societies. <p>D2. Depending on whether the organisation employs staff, & what kind of work it does, you may need to know about some or all of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - employment law - health and safety - data protection - anti-discrimination - child protection - protection of vulnerable adults and more besides. 				
<p>E. Know where you're going – keep on course</p> <p>Know where you're going:</p> <p>E1. Always remember what the organisation was set up to do, and what it's trying to achieve.</p>				



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E2. Make sure the strategy supports the overall objectives.				
Be organised:				
E3. Be sure that all the Committee members understand their job.				
E4. Be sure that Committee meetings are well-run				
E5. The Committee needs to make sure that between all its members, it has a good balance of skills knowledge and experience.				
E6. If Committee members need support or training, this should be arranged for them.				
Keep it clean:				
E7. Set up ways for Committee members to declare conflicts of interest, and for conflicts to be recorded and dealt with openly.				
E8. Have a way for Committee members to claim fair travel and out-of-pocket expenses.				
E9. Don't pay Committee members unless it's allowed by				



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the law, the organisation's governing document and (for charities) the Charity Commission.				
Equality: E10. The Committee should make sure that the organisation's work is open and fair to all sections of the community. This includes thinking about: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- services provided- membership of the Committee- employment of staff; and- accessibility of communications and meetings.				



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F. In-flight: controls and instruments				
Control:				
F1. The Committee is responsible for making sure that the organisation does all that it needs to comply with the law, with its own rules, and with any other regulations.				
F2. Make sure that your Committee gets the information it needs to be sure this is happening.				
Monitor progress:				
F3. Get regular reports on how the organisation is doing against its plans.				
F4. Set performance targets, and check they are being delivered.				
F5. Set a timetable for projects. If things are not going to plan, find out why, and take action to sort out any problems.				
Keep an eye on the finances:				
F6. Get regular financial reports (quarterly or monthly), and make sure that you understand and deal with any major variations from the budget.				
F7. Make sure the organisation has enough cash to pay its				



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staff salaries and all other bills.				
Make the meetings work:				
F8. Keep meetings short and focused.				
F9. Make sure you have enough information, but not too much.				
F10. Meet as often as you need.				
F11. The Chair should make sure that everyone has their say, and that no one dominates the meeting.				



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G In-flight announcements Consult and inform: G1. Identify everyone with an interest in your work – people who use or benefit from it, staff, volunteers, donors, members of the organisation and partners. G2. Set up ways to consult them, keep them informed and involve them appropriately. G3. Use plain language and provide translations or other versions if necessary and wherever possible. G4. Most organisations have to produce an annual report and accounts; consider if you also need more regular ways of communicating, such as newsletters, a website or public meetings.				
H Maintenance tips Review your performance: H1. Identify the skills, knowledge and experience the Committee members bring against what the organisation needs. H2. Assess whether they are contributing what is required.				



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H3. Look ahead to make sure you recruit new Committee members with the skills and experience needed for the future.				
H4. Plan for the succession of people who are going to leave. Help people to move on when their contribution is coming to an end.				
Review the organisation's work: H5. Some organisations or projects are set up for a short or fixed length of time. Others might be needed for many years. Take time out to think about whether what you are doing is still relevant, or whether you need to change the way you work. If you have done all you can, then it's fine to wind up or merge with another group.				



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Support the Committee:				
H6. Identify what support the Committee members need to do their job.				
H7. Arrange for individual and group training and support, not just at the beginning but later on as well.				
H8. Help Committee members stay up-to-date with newsletters and briefings.				
Review how things are done:				
H9. Keep track of changes in laws and regulations. Make sure for its needs. Make sure you have the right people doing the right jobs. Make the changes needed to stay effective.				
H10. Fee back to the Governance Hub on Learning to Fly We invite all people and organisations who have used Learning to Fly to provide us with comments. This will help us refine and develop the leaflet and the Code, as we move towards preparing a second revised edition. Please register your comments at www.governancehub.org.uk or write to the Governance Hub, c/o NCVO, Regent's Wharf, 8 All Saints Street, London N1 9RL.				



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