

Report to: County Consultative Committee

Date of meeting: 09 July 2025

By: Charlotte Johnstone

Title: Local Authority Governor appointments and Governor and Clerking Service Update for Councillors

Purpose: To update Councillors on the nomination for appointment of local authority governors and governor training

RECOMMENDATIONS

1) For information

1 Background

1.1 The local authority has a statutory duty to approve nominations for local authority governors. Once nominated, schools then appoint local authority governors onto their governing board.

1.2 This report provides a summary of local authority governor applications approved for nomination, and information about the level of governor vacancies across the county.

2 Supporting information

2.1 Since the report sent to Councillors on the 19 March 2025, 9 local authority governors were nominated for appointment, all were approved for a 4 year term of office. These were formed of 7 reapplications and 2 new applications.

Helen Fuller	Rotherfield Primary School	Reapplication
Niall Ruiz-Smith	Ashdown Primary School	New Application
Azita Zohhadi	Willingdon Primary School	Reapplication
Peter Chowney	Sandown Primary school	Reapplication
Jonathan Nay	Bourne Primary School	Reapplication
David Barton	St Mary's Catholic Primary School	Reapplication
Denise Kong	West Rise Primary School	Reapplication
Katharine Wenden	St Peter & St Paul CofE Primary School	New Application
Paul Page-Mitchell	Manor Primary School	Reapplication

2.2 When the County Consultative Committee last met, the Governor and Clerking Service discussed that we were developing full complaints training for Headteacher's to take them through the complaints process. The training focuses on what you need to have in place before a complaint is made, and then it explores what the Headteacher's role is across the three stages of a complaint. The intention of the training was to be much more in-depth and focus Headteacher's to the finer details of the complaints policy and procedure. We have now delivered the session three times to East Sussex Headteachers and received feedback following these sessions. Some of the feedback included:

- *"I found the session extremely valuable. The involvement of the Clerk at every stage was something I found new... so I will definitely be ensuring we all do this".* – East Sussex Headteacher.

- *“Thank you for running this excellent session. All speakers were knowledgeable and engaging and having the slides will be a very helpful reference tool”*. – East Sussex Headteacher.

We will continue to run these sessions across the next academic year, and we are already seeing Headteacher’s engaging with the training offer and booking their places on the session.

We are particularly proud of the training that was developed on Governor Disciplinary Committees (GDC’s). Last academic year, our team did not run training on the topic of Permanent Exclusions (PEX’s) or GDC’s, but we could see it was a growing area that governors were becoming involved in, and we identified this as a training need.

With support from the Inclusion and Alternative Provision team, we built three information sessions targeted at Clerks, Governors and Headteacher’s to triangulate our training and ensure each group understands their responsibilities, and how they intersect. In developing this training, the Governor and Clerking Service also has become knowledgeable and able to provide more bespoke and specific advice to schools, especially for more complex cases. We recognise this was a great achievement for our team and a timely addition to our training programme and we hope this has given governors, clerks and headteachers the confidence to support their schools with GDC’s, and the knowledge to perform the task effectively and accurately.

2.3 The Governor and Clerking Service were also invited to attend the Headteacher Induction and Aspiring Leaders’ Programme in May. It was a privilege to attend and to have the opportunity to speak to new and aspiring Headteachers, and to draw their attention to the importance of school governance. To echo our new training sessions, we did focus our presentation on the topics of Complaints and Exclusions and engaged the attendees in some case study activities to explore what they would do with the example complaint or exclusion. We also used the opportunity to speak to the attendees about the benefits of encouraging their middle leaders to become governors, as they will gain valuable CPD and experience which will benefit any future applications to be a school leader.

2.4 The Governor and Clerking Service are finalising the plans and topics for the upcoming academic year. New sessions will include looking at Transition, Relationships on the Governing Board, how to have courageous conversations, and succession planning for headteacher’s. These topics all support our overarching Excellence for All Vision. The Governor and Clerking Service work closely with Education Division colleagues and our governor consultants to respond to changes within the education landscape, and we await further information and updates from the DfE, especially developments around SEND policy, Ofsted and the curriculum review.

2.5 Since the County Consultative Committee last met in March 2025, there have been 57 new governor appointments in maintained schools. This is a slight increase from the 52 new governors who had joined boards as reported in the previous 3-month gap between the meeting of the County Consultative Committee. Due to the way that tenure dates work on governing boards, and the rapid change that can sometimes occur in board membership it is not possible for us to determine how many governors have left their role. However, where schools have issues with retention our service can support with bespoke recruitment.

2.6 Clerking: Since the County Consultative Committee last met in March 2025, there has been 1 new clerk induction provided to maintained schools. This ensures that new clerks are aware of the basic expectations of their role, the key tasks they need to complete and the training available to support their knowledge and development. This is a lower number than our average, however the Governor and Clerking Service has been working closely with boards holding vacancies for Clerk to Governors to recruit quickly. We have found that some current ESCC Clerks are interested in expanding the number of boards they clerk for. We therefore have put these interested clerks in touch with Chairs and Headteachers who have vacancies to see if they are the right fit. We have supported several schools with recruiting clerks in this manner over the past few months, which reduced the length of time that governing boards were without substantive clerks.

Additionally, we have found that the majority of clerks willing to expand on the number of boards they clerk for have recently completed the East Sussex Excellence in Clerking Programme. We are pleased to see that upon the completion of the programme our clerks are feeling more knowledgeable and confident in their skills, and we are glad to see the positive impact this is having on a number of schools in East Sussex.

The Locum Clerk Service has also been a beneficial service this term, with our locum clerks supporting 5 meetings across 3 schools since the County Consultative Committee last met in March 2025.

Our ESCC certified course for Clerks, the Excellence in Clerking Programme is currently running its third cohort and is scheduled to end at the end of term. As mentioned earlier in this report, we are pleased to see the active engagement from the clerks enrolled the programme, especially sharing how their school settings work and good practice they recommend.

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