



BOARD SKILLS ASSESSMENT & NINE-YEARS APPRASIAL POLICY

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document outlines the Association's approach to measuring Board performance and continued effectiveness, training needs and arrangements for dealing with long-serving Board members.

2.0 REGULATORY & BEST PRACTICE FRAMEWORK

- 2.1 This policy takes account of regulatory and best practice requirements, including Section 6 of the Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management and the Code of Conduct for Governing Body Members.
- 2.2 In addition to the relevant chapters in the governance handbook, Employers in Voluntary Housing (EVH) issued guidance on Board appraisal, *Great Expectations*, and this has been used in the development of this policy document. In particular, *Great Expectations* identifies three elements of Board appraisal:

- Measuring the Board's collective performance
- Individual Board member performance
- Appraising the Chair

This policy takes account of these components.

3.0 PERFORMANCE & ASSESSMENT REVIEW

- 3.1 In order to help comply with the Regulatory Standards, the Association will carry out an annual review of its own performance and an individual Board member's skills assessment. There are five strands to the Performance Review.
- i. The Board performance review
 - ii. The individual Board member skills assessment
 - iii. The continued effectiveness review for longer serving Board members
 - iv. 360° Chairpersons review
 - v. Annual training needs analysis (TNA).
- 3.2 The Board performance review and individual Board member skills assessments will take the form of a one-to-one meeting with the Chair and the Vice Chair (or the Secretary). We may engage the services of an external agency to assist in this process.
- 3.3 The Board will be provided with skills assessment form two weeks prior to the meeting so that participants can give the questions some consideration and be better prepared before the meeting. The Chief Executive Officer will retain the completed forms for audit trail purposes on a confidential basis.

3.4 This will enable the Chief Executive Officer to: -

- Identify any areas that we can strengthen when promoting and/or targeting individuals for Board membership in advance of the Annual General Meeting, and
- Discuss and assess the requirements for individual training plans; and
- The development of a Board-wide training and development plan

3.5 The skills assessment process has the following important roles:

- a) To help identify any areas in performance that could be improved by attracting new Board members with a particular skill set. For example, if a Board considered its performance to be very poor in relation to financial or budgetary matters, it may be appropriate to consider targeted recruitment of someone with financial knowledge/experience.
- b) To assist in succession planning. It is critical that the Association has a clear method of ensuring that Board members who may be interested in being an Officer Bearer or Chairperson has the appropriate support and training to prepare them for these important roles.
- c) To help identify training requirements and therefore feed into the training needs assessment.

3.6 The results of the annual Board and individual Board skills assessment will be evaluated by the Chief Executive Officer. The Chair, Vice Chair and Chief Executive Officer will agree a draft training and development plan, for approval by the Board.

4.0 ASSESSING EXISTING SKILLS, IDENTIFYING GAPS & THE TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

4.1 The Association has a long-established practice of assessing the skills, knowledge and experience present within the Board in order to help ensure that:

- (i) all of the key skills and knowledge areas are covered; and that
- (ii) members are able to keep up to date with evolving legal, regulatory and best practice requirements.

4.2 As well as identifying the skills present within the Board, the assessment also highlights any gaps that exist. These gaps can then be prioritised and addressed via a training plan which consists, in the main, of training sessions taking place in the Association's office, led by staff or external trainers. Where a small number of members have a specific need, such as chairing skills or interviewing skills, this may be addressed by attending an external session.

4.3 The skills analysis will highlight areas where training is required. The output from the training needs assessment will be a two-year training plan.

5.0 LONG-SERVING BOARD MEMBERS

- 5.1 Regulatory Standard 6.2 requires all Board members wishing to serve beyond nine years to demonstrate their continued effectiveness. Whilst we are keen to comply with this Standard, we equally endorse the general assertion that automatically regarding longer serving members as somehow less effective is, at best, subjective and insulting, and at worst (given that they may also tend to be older) potentially discriminatory.
- 5.2 The Association believes that members attaining nine years' experience as a Board member will have amassed a huge amount of skills, experience and knowledge, not only in terms of functional/technical subjects but also in relation to being able to contribute in an increasingly effective manner.
- 5.3 The Association has prepared a template to be used when an individual is considering standing for election after nine years' service. It will be completed by the Board member and the Chair at a meeting arranged for this purpose.
- 5.4 The Regulator requires Board members serving for more than nine years to be able to show (i) objectivity, (ii) independent challenge and (iii) continued effectiveness. The template allows each of these to be demonstrated via a series of questions/pointers – these will be considered by the Chair (or the Vice Chair) and the Board member and an overall view taken of each of the sections.
- 5.5 Once a Board member has completed a 'nine-year' review, they will not be expected to do so every year. However, they will be required to show their continued effectiveness every time they are up for election due to it being their "turn" to stand down in line with the rule that requires one third of the Board to stand down each year. This means that, on average, members will need to show their continued effectiveness every three years after their first nine years.

6.0 APPRAISING THE CHAIR

- 6.1 *Great Expectations* recommends an approach called "360° appraisal" and this will form the basis of the Chair's annual assessment. 360° appraisal involves the Chair completing a self-assessment (similar to the self-assessment process carried out by all Board members in preparation for the annual group session) in addition to an assessment of the Chair being carried out by the other Board members.

- 6.2 A simple pro forma will be used to appraise the Chair. This pro forma contains a range of key statements with which each Board member agrees or disagrees. Additional comments can be added if required. The forms will be passed to the Vice Chair and Secretary in advance of an annual appraisal meeting with the Chair – the forms can be anonymous or, where the Board member provides their name, this will be treated in complete confidence by the Vice Chair and Secretary. The Vice Chair and Secretary will then assess the forms and provide feedback to the Chair at the annual meeting.
- 6.3 The appraisal will be carried out by the Vice Chair and Secretary and the output will be an action plan comprising:
- (i) any specific training required and
 - (ii) any changes in approach to certain areas that have been highlighted and agreed during the meeting.
- 6.4 Feedback to the Board as a whole will be limited to the fact that the meeting has taken place and an action plan has been agreed. The detail of the meeting will remain confidential.
- 6.4 The annual review meeting with the Chair should take place in December after the Board review in October/November.

7.0 SKILLS ASSESSMENT REVIEW TIMETABLE

7.1 The following table outlines the annual timetable of meetings:

Month	Meeting	Attendees	Output
October	Individual Board member skills assessment	All Board members	Self-assessment completed and returned to the Chair and held in confidence for audit trail
November	Board meeting to evaluate outcome of Board performance review and individual Board member skills assessment	All Board members and Chief Executive Officer	Action plan for year ahead
December	Appraisal of the Chair	Vice Chair & Secretary	Confidential feedback to the Chair and confirmation to the Board that the meeting has taken place
From January	Meetings with long-standing members who are standing for election at that year's AGM	Chair (or Vice Chair) and individual Board member concerned	Details of meeting will be confidential but the Chair (or Vice Chair) will confirm whether objectivity, independent challenge and continued effectiveness has been shown
February	Skills Audit Report. / training needs analysis	Board members	Report by the Chief Executive Officer on training programme agreed for ensuing two years.

8.0 WHAT TO DO IF YOU WISH TO COMPLAIN ABOUT OUR APPROACH TO BOARD SKILLS ASSESSMENT & NINE YEARS APPRAISALS

- 8.1 If tenants and/or residents wish to complain about our approach to Board Skills Assessment and Nine Years Appraisals, they should refer to the Association's Complaints Policy.

9.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

- 9.1 We aim to ensure that all services, including the delivery of this policy, provide equality of opportunity.
- 9.2 We will respond to the different needs and service requirements of individuals. We will not discriminate against any individual for any reason, including age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, or other status.

10.0 REVIEW CYCLE

- 10.1 This policy will be reviewed on a three-yearly cycle.