

Lead Non-Executive Director

Candidate Information Pack



Department
for Education



**We are the department
for opportunity**

We work to deliver better life chances for all – breaking the link between background and success. We do this by protecting children and ensuring the delivery of higher standards of education, training and care.

We create opportunities for children and learners to achieve and thrive today, so they have the freedom to succeed and flourish tomorrow, strengthening our society, powering our economy, and enabling equality.

WELCOME

The Department for Education is leading delivery of the Government's Opportunity Mission, seeking to break the link between young people's background and future success. Working closely with key partners across and beyond government, we will create opportunities for children and learners to achieve and thrive today, so they have the freedom to succeed and flourish tomorrow, strengthening our society, powering our economy and enabling equality.

We also have a key role to play in delivery of the Government's other missions, including:

- Working with HMT and other departments to ensure a strong skills offer and pathways into work – helping to kick start economic growth
- Developing the skills needed to make Britain a clean energy superpower
- Building opportunities for young people, helping to prevent them falling into crime
- Working with the Department for Health and Social Care to improve child health and develop the skills our NHS needs

At the same time, my department is directly responsible for the children's services and education systems, including early years, schools, higher and further education policy, apprenticeships and wider skills in England.

The DfE's Non-Executive Directors are central to supporting the Department in all of this – by providing strong advice and challenge, to me, my ministerial team and senior officials.

In doing so, it is vital that the DfE Board is diverse, including in skills, experience and backgrounds. Whether you're from an underrepresented group, or you have achieved success through non-traditional education routes, I encourage candidates from all backgrounds and professions to apply for this role.

Thank you for your interest and for taking the time to read through this pack. If you have the skills and experience that we are seeking, I hope that you will apply. It is truly an exciting time to join the Department for Education and help to achieve our missions.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP
Secretary of State for Education



ABOUT THE ROLE

About the DfE

The DfE is responsible for children's services and education, including early years, schools, higher and further education policy, apprenticeships and wider skills in England. The DfE is leading the delivery of the Opportunity Mission, seeking to break the link between young people's background and future success; and contributing to all of the Government's other missions.

About the DfE Board

The DfE Board is chaired by the Secretary of State for Education. The Chair is supported by a Lead Non-Executive Board Member, Baroness Smith (as Minister for the departmental Board), other Non-Executive Directors, and senior departmental officials (executives who are senior civil servants).

The departmental Board has three main responsibilities: to provide strategic and operational leadership to the department; to scrutinise the delivery and performance of policy; and to challenge the department and its senior officials on how well it is achieving its objectives. You can read more about departmental governance [here](#).

Further Information

[Code of conduct for board members of public bodies](#)

[DfE 2023 – 24 Annual Report and Accounts](#)

[DfE's 18 Agencies and Public Bodies](#)

[DfE's Summary Board Minutes](#)



What do our Non-Executive Directors do?

Non-executive Directors provide independent challenge, scrutiny and support to ministers and departmental executives. They advise on organisational performance; the running of the Department, including the operational and delivery implications of policy proposals; and on the effective management of the department (including succession planning, senior civil service talent and underperformance).

In addition to the above, the Lead NED will:

- Lead the Department's non-executive team, ensuring that they are able to fulfil their role effectively;
- Support the Secretary of State in their role as Chair of the Board;
- Lead on tasks normally fulfilled by a Board chair outside meetings as requested by the Secretary of State, including taking an active role in maximising the effectiveness of the DfE Board;
- Work with the Government-wide Lead Non-executive Board Member, and non-executives across government, to learn from the experiences of other government departments and other comparable organisations;
- Contribute to the Department's annual report and accounts and the Permanent Secretary's performance review.



ABOUT THE ROLE

The Lead NED will use their experience of leading complex organisations to offer challenge and support on a wide range of management and delivery issues, contributing to the effective strategic and operational leadership of the Department.

To do this, as lead Non-executive Director, you will be expected to:

- Help shape the Department's strategy by challenging and supporting senior officials and ministers, including through attendance at departmental Board meetings approximately six times per year (in person or via Microsoft Teams).
- Hold the Department to account on strategy, performance and spending, ensuring that the DfE delivers value for taxpayers' money.
- Meet regularly with the Permanent Secretary; the Secretary of State; and the Government Lead NED to provide honest, informed feedback on the departmental and senior officials' performance, and to provide advice, challenge, and support on departmental strategy, risks, and issues;
- Chair monthly meetings with the NED team to ensure excellent information flow between central Government and the DfE's NEDs and that all NEDs are sighted on the Secretary of State's asks of the cohort;
- Attend cross-government meetings with other government departments' Lead NEDs to help drive the Government's agenda;
- Chair the the quarterly Nominations Committee (as NED cohort and with senior departmental officials) to support succession planning, senior official talent management and departmental change;
- Gain an in-depth knowledge of the Department's work in order to support and challenge departmental leaders through regular meetings with Directors General and other senior officials including Senior Responsible Officers;
- Commit, as a minimum, 24 days per year to your role as Lead Non-executive Director, with the expectation that you would need to spend more time dedicated to the role in order to execute it to a high standard; and
- Adhere to the key principles of public life (The Nolan Principles, as detailed on slide 9 of this pack).

You will be expected to declare any conflicts of interest ahead of and throughout your appointment as a Non-executive Director.

THE RIGHT CANDIDATE

Essential criteria

The Department for Education (DfE) is looking to recruit a new Lead Non-Executive Directors to sit on the DfE Board. Candidates should meet the following essential criteria to be suitable for this role:

- Knowledge and understanding of the education, skills and/or children's social care systems
- Experience and expertise related to our mission to break down barriers to opportunity and create better life chances for all.
- Leadership experience in a large and complex organisation (public or private sector), including experience in at least one of the following:
 - Strategic planning
 - Financial management
 - Performance management
 - Risk management.
- Experience of holding a large and complex organisation to account for delivery of its mission, values and strategic goals through regularly reviewing performance reports, financial statements and compliance with legal and ethical standards.
- Experience of leading across organisational boundaries in the public or private sector.



HOW TO APPLY

In order to apply you will need to create an account or sign in.

Once you are logged into your account, click on 'apply for this role' and follow the on-screen instructions. To apply, all candidates are required to provide:

- A Curriculum Vitae (CV) (no more than one page/two sides)
- A supporting statement of no more than 1000 words that outlines how you fulfil the essential criteria
- Equality information
- Information relating to any outside interests or reputational issues

We will ask you to check and confirm your personal details to ensure your application is accurate.

You will also have the opportunity to make a reasonable adjustment request or apply under the disability confident scheme before you submit your application.

The Advisory Assessment Panel reserves the right to only consider applications that contain all of the elements listed above, and that arrive before the published deadline for applications.



Equality and diversity are at the heart of our Department, essential to achieving our missions.

Fostering an inclusive environment is pivotal to delivering for the Department, our sector partners, and the children and learners we support. Our many Staff Networks help to create and maintain an inclusive and diverse environment. Through our commitment to equality of opportunity we want to ensure that our public appointments reflect a better representation of the communities which we serve. We are committed to actively recruiting from a wide range of backgrounds, cultures, and experiences creating an atmosphere that nurtures talent and different perspectives.

We want to ensure any appointee to the Department is committed to promoting diversity, in its broadest possible sense. This will include embedding a commitment to the principles of championing opportunities, helping to ensure that the Department is one which a genuinely diverse range of views can be expressed, without fear or favour.

CHAMPIONING SOCIAL MOBILITY

The Department champions social mobility in all of its policies and is committed to opening up opportunities for people from all backgrounds, all socio-economic classes and all regions of the UK. We are committed to embedding this principle into our recruitment and public appointments and expect all our leaders, including in arm's length bodies, to take action to attract and retain staff from all backgrounds, while also supporting them to progress within their careers.

DISABILITY CONFIDENT

We are a member of the Government's Disability Confident scheme and have achieved Disability Confident Leader status, signifying our role as champions of the scheme. We use the Disability Confident symbol, along with other like-minded employers, to show our commitment to good practice in employing people with a disability. All applicants will be asked to complete anonymised diversity monitoring information only in order to ensure departments are recruiting from the widest possible pool. The information you provide will not be shared with the selection panel.



PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE

SELFLESSNESS

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

INTEGRITY

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

OBJECTIVITY

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

OPENNESS

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

HONESTY

Holders of public office should be truthful.

LEADERSHIP

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.



Department
for Education

Complaints

Please contact the Department for Education's Board Secretariat Team if you would like to make a complaint regarding your application ned.support@education.gov.uk

We will acknowledge your complaint upon receipt and respond within 15 working days.

If you are not content with our response, please contact the Commissioner for Public Appointments at:

publicappointments@csc.gov.uk

Further information on complaints can be found on the Commissioner for Public Appointment's website:

<https://publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk/>