**Board Diversity Planning**

**Introduction**

In its guidance on succession planning, the Scottish Government makes its case for Board diversity:

*Diverse Boards are more likely to be better able to understand their stakeholders and to benefit from fresh perspectives, new ideas, vigorous challenges and broad experience. This diversity of thought and contribution should result in better corporate governance and decision-making, and, in turn, support continuous improvement in our public services in Scotland.*

*A Board that reflects the people and communities that it serves is also more likely to have credibility with them, thus promoting public trust in Board decision-making.*

A key point for Boards and Board Secretaries is that diversity is a broad term that refers both to the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act and to the diversity of skills, knowledge and experience that will support good governance as set out in the Code of Good Governance and reflected in the Ministerial Guidance on appointments.

Some key points to consider when planning and undertaking our Board recruitment are listed below.

| **Raising Awareness of the Board and its Work** | |
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| 1 | Ensure website includes gender balance and that members' biographies focus on Board members' diversity and the value of a diverse Board. |
| 2 | Seek ways to promote the Board and its work to a wider audience, for example, through social media, newsletters, and keeping the website regularly updated. |
| 3 | Consider making downloadable podcasts of relevant meetings or events. |
| 4 | Consider adding an FAQ about Board appointments and the role of a Board member to the website. |
| 5 | Run workplace events to develop staff awareness and encourage employees to see Board positions as development opportunities. |
| 6 | Work with equality and diversity teams within the college/region to explore other ways to reach underrepresented groups and further promote inclusion. |
| **Improving Induction and Support** | |
| 7 | Consider co-option to a committee and/or shadowing to engage and develop less experienced candidates with strong potential. |
| 8 | Consider allowing prospective Board members to meet with a current member or observe a meeting before applying for a position. |
| 9 | Explore the option of mentoring for new/less experienced Board members, creating a more supportive environment. |
| 10 | Ensure that the induction process is tailored to the individual's needs, and that it includes training on definitions, duties and the benefits of diversity. |
| 11 | Develop a supportive approach that encourages Board members to declare equality information. |

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| **Developing Board Structures and Processes** | |
| 12 | Ensure that the Board's business cycle includes the regular review of skills balance and diversity. |
| 13 | Consider not only the balance on the Board but on Committees, and take account of gender and diversity among Committee chairs. |
| 14 | Ensure Board equality and diversity monitoring and reporting are aligned to regulatory requirements and best practice guidance by consulting with E&D professionals and keeping this under review. |
| 15 | Monitor equality and diversity during application, shortlisting, interview and appointment stages. |
| 16 | Ensure recruitment procedures optimise the potential for underrepresented groups to access membership opportunities, for example, by using the bank of diverse media outlets collated by Public Appointments in Scotland. |
| 17 | Ensure that gender and diversity are taken into account in determining the membership of appointments/nominations committees and appointments panels. |
| 18 | Ensure members of appointments/nominations committees and appointments panels have received appropriate training including on unconscious bias. |
| 19 | Provide a named contact in the application pack to assist potential applicants with further information and advice. |
| 20 | Ensure the application pack promotes opportunities for induction, mentoring, and development to encourage less experience candidates. |
| 21 | Include statement such as, "We welcome and encourage applications from groups currently under-represented, such as women, disabled people, those from a BAME background, people aged under 50, and LGBTQ individuals" and use relevant ED&I logos in advert and other communications. |
| 22 | Identify and remove potential barriers for appointed members where possible, for example, by keeping the timing of meetings under review to accommodate childcare and other commitments and considering attendance via video-conference. |
| **Enhancing Board Member Training and Awareness** | |
| 23 | Incorporate aspects of equality and diversity training in the Board's annual development programme. |
| 24 | Identify external opportunities and encourage Board members' attendance (for example, Changing the Chemistry or Equality Challenge Unit events). |
| 25 | Ensure annual self-evaluation and individual development plans take into account members' potential to develop, for example, skills to chair a committee or a Board in future (consider use of vice-chair roles). |