

What can we do? Good practices for governing bodies

Task	Some questions to ask	Example	What can we do?
Make governance induction sessions mandatory, and further training accessible.	Do the members of our governing body know all that they need to about governance?	A media association requires new board members to take part in induction workshops about the history of the organisation. The workshops also explain how the board operates and new members' roles and responsibilities, and encourage board members to take extra training on governance issues.	
Stagger the terms of your governing body so that change is gradual.	Has our governing body operated in the same way for too long? Are new people elected to the governing body all at once or at different times?	A medical service has a board of 12 members who each serve a three-year term. Each year four members are elected, ensuring continuity and gradual change over the three-year cycle.	
Bring in outside experts as special board advisers.	What new skills or expertise would benefit our governance? Do we know anyone who would be a good addition to our governing body?	An enterprise changed its rules to allow 'skilled directors' to sit on its board as advisors. Other board members are nominated by members and employees. The enterprise has a lawyer as its special skilled member.	

Make sure everyone is aware of their roles and responsibilities.	How do we make sure that all our members know what they are responsible for?	Members of a corporation sign a duty statement for the role they are taking on (for example, chairperson, secretary, treasurer or executive member) to ensure they understand their role and responsibilities.	
Allow time to talk with staff and board members.	How can we make our governance practices more accessible?	A health service has quarterly board meetings that last two days. The first day is an informal briefing session that includes time to talk with senior staff. The second day allows board members to examine, clarify and discuss issues. Formal decision-making takes place on the second day.	