

Good governance: a practical guide for trustees, chairs and CEOs

| About this book

Chapters 1-10 © 2000-11 Dorothy Dalton

Chapter 11 by Tesse Akpeki edited by Dorothy Dalton

Contributions by Lindsay Driscoll, Robin Stephenson, Anne-Marie Piper,
Julia Unwin and others.

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| About the author

Dorothy Dalton is editor of *Governance: essential information for effective trustees*. She is a leading expert on governance and advises several national charities.

With a 'first' in mathematics, Dorothy, a former Headteacher, was chief executive of ACEVO, the association of chief executives of voluntary organisation from 1992 to 2000. From 2000 to 2003 she was a non-executive director of the Inland Revenue. She is a trustee of EveryChild and Grandparents Association, and governor of Northwood College where she chairs the Governance Committee. She has been chair of trustees of the Journey of a Lifetime Trust (JoLt), chairman of governors of Orley Farm School Trust, and trustee of several charities including Marie Curie Cancer Care. She is a fellow of the Leadership Trust Foundation and International Students House. She is on the Advisory Council of the Institute for Global Ethics UK Trust and of the Leadership Trust. She founded JoLt, the Network of Women Chairs, and *Groundbreakers: Voluntary sector women leaders*.

During her spare time, Dorothy has organised and led month-long challenging expeditions for disabled and disadvantaged teenagers to remote corners of the world as well as organising and participating in fundraising expeditions such as crossing the Jordanian Desert by camel or canoeing, kayaking and white-water rafting the Zambezi between Zimbabwe and Zambia.

Previous NCVO publications written by Dorothy:

- Recruiting a New Chief Executive: a guide for chairs and trustees
- The Board's Responsibility for Appraising the Chief Executive
- Good Governance: The Chair's Role
- Good Governance: The Chief Executive's Role

About the publication

This publication is primarily aimed at organisations with staff. Smaller organisations may benefit from the information outlined in this publication, but they are not the primary audience and as such may need to adapt the information for their circumstances.

This guide is written for chairs, chief executives and trustees. Chapter 5 is written specifically for the chair while the primary audience for chapter 6 is the chief executive. Nevertheless all trustees are advised to include both these chapters in their reading as it will give them a better understanding of the role of the chair and the chief executive in good governance.

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While all the chapters are useful to anyone with an interest in governance and can be used practically by chairs, CEOs and trustees, each chapter has been designed with a primary audience in mind. This primary audience is indicated on the edge of each page with the following key.

■ Trustees ■ CEO ■ Chairs

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Finally, this publication is dedicated to my fantastic family: to Bill to whom I have been married for 40 years; our terrific sons, Mike and Tim; two fabulous daughter-in-laws, Emily and Casey; and four wonderful grandchildren Emma, Jacob, Kate and Beth. Without their support, encouragement, tolerance and the happiness they bring, none of my achievements would have been possible.

I Introduction

Good governance on its own does not guarantee the success of a charity as strong governance cannot make up fully for weak management. Similarly, weak governance may not prevent a charity from being reasonably successful as outstanding management can carry a weak board. Good, strong governance balanced by good, strong management is a winning formula that creates opportunities and enhances the success of the organisation. Achieving this has to be the aim of every trustee, every chief executive and every chair of a professionally managed charity.

Although every board should aspire to delivering high quality governance, it is important to remember that perfect governance does not exist. Each of us can only make our own contribution to governance that is constantly evolving for the better and constantly improving. It is vital that each of us, each of our fellow trustees and our chief executive want to make governance of our charity as good as we can possibly make it.

I am a great believer in learning from others and adapting good practice in other charities to the needs of my 'own' charities. It also seems pointless to me to spend time reinventing the wheel. I have therefore tried to bring together in one publication lots of ideas and model documents that can be adapted easily to the needs of your charity. I hope you find them useful.

Good governance is all about team work and the willingness to learn and improve thereby being better able to achieve our vision and being of greater service to our charity's beneficiaries. It is a serious role that carries responsibilities and liabilities but should also be satisfying and fun. Thank you for all you do for your charity.