

Report on surveys of Further Education Governors and Clerks to Governors

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1. Introduction

The FE Women's Leadership Network (WLN) is undertaking a research project to gain a better understanding of the involvement of women on college boards of governors. The project is looking at how the make-up and operation of governing bodies have changed over the past 10 years and if their gender composition influences the way they operate or see their role. The research aims to shine a light on the performance of the FE sector in the context of the Davies Report in 2011 about Women on corporate Boards, which highlighted the under-representation of women in Board positions, considered the positive contributions of those women who were on Boards and made a series of recommendations to improve the gender mix. The project was also prompted by a direct approach from women Chairs who were interested in a full and accurate view of the sector as well as in forming a support and exchange network for themselves.

Part of the primary research involved surveying governors and clerks to governors to find out how women participate in and influence college governance. This report focuses on the information obtained from two web-based surveys: one completed by governors and the other by clerks to governors. Follow-up interviews will be held with a selection of the respondents to explore interesting aspects in more detail.

We are grateful to the Association of Colleges (AoC) for publicising the surveys and to the Network for Clerks who kindly circulated the survey for us. Both governors and clerks completed the surveys via embedded links to the Women's Leadership Network's website.

Initial desk research sought to establish how many women sit on Boards and how many chair Boards and Committees.

2. Summary of findings

The findings are based on the responses received from two separate surveys, issued simultaneously to governors and clerks to governing bodies of all English FE colleges over a six week period in May-June 2012. The findings are based on responses from 120 governors of 50 colleges and from the clerks of 81 colleges.

Profile of governing bodies and governors

- The average size of the governing bodies represented in the surveys was 18 of which, on average, 13 were independent members with one vacancy per governing body. Overall, the ratio of male to female governors was 11:6 – so there generally appears to be almost twice as many male governors as female ones on college Boards represented by this survey.
- For the colleges represented, it was interesting to note that there were only half as many female Chairs of Governors as there were female Principals/Chief Executives.
- Almost three quarters of governors were 50 or older and only 12.5% were under 40, of whom a third were student governors. More than half of respondents have been on the Board for more than 3 years, with 15% having served for over 10 years.

Chairs profiles and responsibilities: differences based on analysis by gender

- The number of Chairs of governing bodies participating in the survey was relatively small – just 16 men and 8 women, so the findings are indicative at best. However, within this relatively small cohort, there was a marked contrast between male and female chairs in the length of time they have been in the role – with only 37% of female chairs having been in the role for more than 3 years as compared with 57% of male chairs for a similar period.
- Female Chairs met more frequently than their male counterparts with the college's Chief Executive/Principal – at least once every 3 to 4 weeks, while at least 60% of the male Chairs had such meetings only about once every 4-6 weeks or even less frequently.
- Female Chairs also met more frequently than male Chairs with one or more of their individual governors on Corporation business. Their frequency of meetings ranged from 'once a week' to 'about once every 4-6 weeks', with half holding such meetings 'about every 3-4 weeks'. In contrast, a third of the male Chairs indicated that they met with other governors about once every 4-6 weeks and a further 14% even less frequently.

Recruitment of governors

- Very few respondents (just 2.5%) indicated that they had been selected following a competitive interview although women were more likely to be recruited as a result of a public advertisement than men. Most governors were recruited as a result of being approached by the College's Corporation Search Committee. Men were more likely than women to be encouraged by an existing governing body member to apply.

Governing body and Committees

- The average number of meetings of the full governing bodies over the past year was 5.46 and about 2/3 lasted between two and three hours.
- Men were much more likely to chair and be members of college Audit and/or Finance committees than women, who were more likely to chair and be members of a college's Search, or possibly Quality Committee.
- Only about a quarter of the colleges had committees related to self-assessment, students or employment policy. Self assessment appears to be a very low priority – meeting less than Remuneration.
- According to Clerks of governors, committees were almost three times more likely to be chaired by male than female governors.

Attendance patterns

- Timings of full governing body and committee meetings may pose particular difficulties for many women – particularly in the under-50 age groups. Over 30% of women (compared with 17% of men) were unable to attend meeting of the full governing body on three or more occasions over the past year. Women were also more likely to be unable to attend college-hosted events to which they were invited than men on a similar ratio.
- The majority (over 60%) of both full governors' meetings and of committees were held in the early evening (5:30 - 7:00pm) on weekdays.

Governor development and training opportunities

- Overall, training for governors is well-regarded by both male (81%) and female (77%) respondents. Even so, only 57% of female respondents felt that governor training and development opportunities had been tailored for them either 'quite' or 'very well'.
- The most valued types of development included: 'getting to know you' sessions with managers, meetings with students and attachment to a specific manager or department.
- The highest priority areas for development of governing bodies by both women and men were: community needs, marketing, information and communications technologies and employer training needs.
- About 20% of Clerks to governors considered that training/development was either: 'not very well' or 'very poorly' tailored to meet the needs of the Chairperson and almost a quarter gave similarly poor ratings for tailoring to meet male and female governors as discrete groups.

Perceptions of effectiveness

- The main area where male and female governors' opinions of the Board's effectiveness diverged was in relation to increasing the levels and range of professional development opportunities for college staff. Only 30% of women felt their governing bodies were effective in this remit, compared with half the male respondents.
- Women governors generally tended to be more critical than men when applying negative ratings to aspects such as: assessing its own impact on the college's welfare; community responsiveness and influencing the college's overall culture.
- While the majority of governor respondents considered their Board was either 'quite highly' or 'extremely' effective in all aspects, more than 20% thought they were only 'moderately' or even less effective at: assessing their own effectiveness, making use of their own experience, and overseeing/directing the management and staff of the college.
- More than $\frac{3}{4}$ of the Clerks considered their governing bodies to be highly effective at: auditing the college's performance, working collaboratively with the principal, the rest of the SMT and together and at embedding Equality of Opportunity, but far fewer were convinced of their effectiveness in relation to community involvement and increasing professional development opportunities for college staff.
- Clerks' responses also indicated some discrepancies between their perception of the effectiveness of Boards with female and male Chairs. Boards with female Chairs were rated between 9% and 26% higher on factors ranging from influencing the college's overall culture to assessing its own impact on the welfare of the college. Male Chairs were rated higher on auditing the college's performance and working collaboratively with the Principal.

Governing body priorities

- The highest priorities for allocation of time by governors tended to be strategic planning and financial auditing, closely followed by capital planning, student

performance – then quality assurance and teaching and learning. The assessments of both women and men were generally similar, although a higher proportion of women recorded more substantial time allocations for quality assurance and teaching and learning matters than men did.

- Strategic planning at every stage is a key priority for the majority of governors, but particularly at the initial planning, approval and formal review points.
- Clerks consider that there are differences in priority between Boards chaired by women and those chaired by men.

3. Methodology

Two questionnaire surveys, one for governors and one for clerks to governors of FE colleges in England, were undertaken between 30 April and 24 June 2012. Invitations to relevant post holders to participate were issued through the Women's Leadership Network's website, the Network of Clerks in a targeted email request, an AoC Briefing and a request at the annual WLN conference. All responses were electronically collected using on-line survey software.

Both surveys were piloted and revised prior to final release on the WLN website. Each was designed to take no more than 15 minutes to complete.

The questionnaire for clerks to governors aimed to collect a range of factual data about how their own Boards operate – information which might not readily be available to individual governors - along with their perceptions about their own role and the effectiveness of different aspects of governance.

The questionnaire for governors focused on their own role and experience as an individual governor along with perceptions about relevance and effectiveness of internal aspects and approaches of their own Boards. It also tried to explore whether styles of leadership and interaction were affected in any way by the gender of the responding governor or the Board's Chairperson. Both male and female governors were invited to take part.

A copy of the questionnaire for governors can be found in [Appendix 1](#) and that for clerks to governors in [Appendix 2](#).

4. Survey of Governors

4.1 Profile of respondents

Valid responses were received from 120 governors, representing 50 different colleges by the closing date of 24 June 2012. The vast majority (78%) of respondents were from general FE colleges and there were slightly more male (52.5%) than female (47.5%) respondents overall. To view charts showing a detailed breakdown of these figures, please refer to [Appendix 3](#).

The age profile of governors revealed that almost three quarters were aged 50 or older and that only 12.5% were under 40, of whom a third were student representatives. Chairs of Boards were all between the ages of 50 and 69 with the majority of both women and men being in the 60-69 age group.

More than half the respondents (52.5%) have been college governors for more than three years, with 15% overall having been a member of their governing body for more than 10 years. One in five respondents has been a governor for less than a year. Twenty-one per cent of respondents chaired their governing body, with well over half (57.5%) of respondents describing their role as an 'independent governor of the Corporation' and 17% as staff or student governors.

Governors were asked to indicate their three most important reasons for involvement as a governor. A list of possible reasons was offered, although respondents had the opportunity to add others if they wished. The top three reasons given by respondents overall were:

- (1) to improve the performance of the college;
- (2) because I felt my expertise would be of use;
- (3) to do my bit to support further education.

4.2 Roles and responsibilities of Chairs

Where respondents indicated that they chaired their governing body, they were diverted to a small set of additional questions that only they were required to answer. The Chairs who participated in the survey included 16 men and 8 women.

Firstly they were asked how long they had been chairing their Board of Governors.

Overall, just over half (52%) have been in the role for more than three years, with 16% having performed the role for more than 10 years. There was, however, a marked contrast between male and female chairs in the length of time they have been in the role – with only 37% of female chairs having been in the role for more than 3 years as compared with 57% of male chairs in situ for a similar period. This (and the following) data should be treated with caution, though, as the overall numbers are relatively small.

The frequency of meetings between Chairs and their Principal/Chief Executive for almost two thirds of respondents was either about once a week or fortnight. A quarter met once every three to four weeks and the remainder once every four to eight weeks. However, none of the female Chairs met less frequently than once every 3 to 4 weeks, while at least 60% of the male Chairs had such meetings only about once every 4-6 weeks or even less frequently.

Meetings between the Chair and individual governors on Corporation business tend to be less frequent overall with almost 70% reporting they hold such meetings about once every 3-8 weeks or even less frequently. Female Chairs however, met more frequently than their male counterparts with one or more of their individual governors on Corporation business. Their frequency of meetings ranged from 'once a week' to 'about once every 4-6 weeks', with half holding such meetings 'about every 3-4 weeks'. In contrast, a third of the male Chairs indicated that they met with other governors about once every 4-6 weeks and a further 14% even less frequently.

4.3 Operational considerations and gender-related implications

Recruitment: More female (37.5%) and male (45%) governors were recruited as a result of being approached by the College's Corporation Search Committee or its equivalent than by any other method. Men were more likely to be encouraged by an

existing governing body member to apply than women were: 25% to just 17.5%. Women were more likely to be recruited as a result of a public advertisement than men: 22.5% of women were recruited this way compared with only 10% of the men.

Very few respondents (just 2.5%) indicated that they had been selected following a competitive interview. Approximately half the respondents reported that they were nominated to represent a particular group or organisation – eg a university, Chamber of Commerce, student or staff groups.

Committee involvement: 47 respondents declared involvement in working groups or committees, of whom 22 were women and 25 men. Seven of the women chaired a total of 12 different committees – the majority of which were for the college’s Search Committee. Overall women were most likely to be members of the following committees/working group: Search (9); Quality/standards (6) Remuneration (4) Audit (3). Of the 25 male respondents, 11 chaired 17 different committees. Overall, men were most likely to be members of: Audit and/or Finance committees (17)

Attendance patterns: There were some, albeit not statistically validated, differences in the attendance patterns of female and male governors for the meetings, special events and development sessions that they were invited to or were expected to attend. The highest attendance levels of both men and women were recorded for governor development sessions (for which 57.5% of respondents had not missed a session in the past 12 months).

It was interesting to note though, that 25% of respondents indicated that they had been unable to attend meetings of the full governing body three or more times over the past year. However, a considerably higher proportion of women were in this category (32%) than there were men (17%). Women were also more likely to be unable to attend college-hosted events to which they were invited than men with 30% of women unable to attend on three or more occasions as compared with 17% of men.

4.4 Leadership and management styles

The majority of respondents (at least 90%) considered that their Chair of Governor’s leadership style is either ‘very frequently’ or ‘quite frequently collaborative, participative and consultative. 78% of respondents also thought that their Chair’s style was interpersonally-oriented and 74% that it was task-oriented ‘very’ or ‘quite’ frequently. A directive style of leadership was adopted either ‘very’ or ‘quite’ frequently in the view of 38% of respondents. There were no substantive differences between the views of female and male governors for any of these leadership styles.

Respondents were asked to rate the extent of non-formal networking linked to college business that took place outside normal governing body meetings by: the Chair of Governors, other governors and by themselves. Almost half (46%) rated such networking as either ‘very extensive’ or ‘considerable’ by their Chair of Governors. Only just over 1% thought that such networking by other governors was ‘very extensive’ although almost 9% (excluding Chairs themselves) thought they were ‘very extensively’ involved in such activity.

Unfortunately it was not possible to make comparisons in leadership styles based on the gender of the Chair.

4.5 Governor development considerations

Governors were asked to list any formal governor development or training sessions they had attended in the past 12 months. Responses were provided by 65 governors and the

most frequently mentioned included: Equality & Diversity and Safeguarding training, strategic planning, national conferences and other training sessions provided by AoC and by LSIS, and training related to finance and funding issues.

Approximately 85% of respondents said they were invited to participate in some form of professional development or updating, in addition to the normal business meeting agenda, two or more times over the past year with the remainder indicating that they were given such opportunities about once a year.

Overall, training for governors is well-regarded by both male (81%) and female (77%) respondents. Even so, only 57% of female respondents felt that governor training and development opportunities had been tailored for them either 'quite' or 'very well', compared with 79% endorsement by male respondents, who thought that it had been well-tailored to meet the needs of their female colleagues. At least one female respondent recorded that she felt the training and development was 'poorly' tailored to meet the needs of female governors.

However, female respondents were even more equivocal when rating the tailoring of governor training and development for just male colleagues: only 50% considered it 'quite' or 'very well' tailored for them, while 82% of male respondents rated it positively.

Overall, the most 'available' and regarded as 'worthwhile' opportunities offered to governors to learn about the day-to-day work of the college included (in order of priority):

- 'getting to know you' sessions with managers,
- meetings with students, and
- attachment to a specific department or section.

The least 'available' and 'worthwhile' activities were: work shadowing of staff, class observations and meetings with course teams. The views of both men and women were generally similar on these development opportunities.

Respondents were asked to rank up to five areas where they thought their governing body requires strengthening. The highest priorities identified (in descending order) were for:

1. Community needs
2. Marketing
3. Information and Communications Technologies
4. Employer training needs
5. Strategic planning/management

Conversely, the lowest priority areas (in ascending order) were negotiation skills, meeting management and education. There was no difference in the overall priority rankings by women and men.

4.6 Perceptions of effectiveness

The survey questionnaire sought views on the effectiveness of governing bodies in a list of key areas. Chart 16 in Appendix 3 shows the details.

The areas considered most effective by the majority of respondents were: 'working collaboratively with the Principal/CEO', followed by 'auditing the college's performance' and 'working collaboratively with the rest of the SMT'. For the majority of factors, there

was strong correlation between the rankings allotted by both men and women. For example:

- Working collaboratively with the Principal: F 95% - M 100%
- Auditing the college's performance: F 85% - M 95%
- Working collaboratively with the rest of the SMT: F85% - M90%
- Influencing the college's overall culture: F 68% - M 69%

The area of greatest divergence between positive ratings given by gender was:

- increasing the levels and range of professional development opportunities for college staff: F30% - M 49% (rated effectiveness as 'extremely' or 'quite highly').

Women tended to be more critical than men - ie applying the most negative ratings (ie: of 'to a limited'/ 'very limited extent or 'not at all') as follows:

- assessing its own impact on the College's welfare (F18% - M8%),
- community responsiveness (F18% - M10%),
- influencing the college's overall culture (F10% - M3%),
- developing the professional capacity of the board itself (F10% - M3%).

Of the other effectiveness ratings, the majority of respondents considered their governing body was either 'quite highly' or 'extremely' effective in all aspects, though there are sizeable minorities representing more than 20% of respondents who thought they were only 'moderately' or even less effective at:

- assessing the Board's own effectiveness,
- making use of their own experience,
- overseeing and directing the management and staff of the college.

Half the female respondents were somewhat critical of how well their governing body was at assessing its own effectiveness and almost 40% unimpressed by the extent their own experience was used.

4.7 Governing body priorities

Allocation of governors' business time: Almost 90% of respondents estimated that 'Substantial' or 'Very substantial' time was allocated by governors to strategic planning and financial audit. Around 80% gave similar ratings for capital planning and for student performance while almost ¾ included quality assurance and teaching and learning in this category. The aspects where fewer than half the respondents considered substantial time was allocated included:

- professional development of college staff,
- recruitment of staff and senior post holders,
- community engagement,
- professional development of governors,
- remuneration,
- health and safety,
- employer engagement,
- marketing strategy.

The assessments of both women and men were generally similar, although a higher proportion of women recorded more substantial time allocations for quality assurance and teaching and learning matters than men did.

Key issues for the college and its governing body: Governors were asked to list the top three priorities their governing body has had to deal with over the past 12 months. A wide range of issues were nominated, but financial and funding-related matters were given the highest number of mentions – at more than double the number of the next priorities which, in order of citations, were: capital planning/estates management, strategic planning, quality and matters relating to student recruitment, retention and achievement.

Involvement in strategic plan development and monitoring: Finally, governors were asked about the extent to which their governing body is actively involved in each stage of the strategic planning process. There was little difference between the assessments made by women and men across the various stages of involvement in development, reviewing and monitoring strategic plans. The levels of involvement were generally very high, except for involvement in detailed development and writing or development of impact measures.

5. Survey of Clerks to Governors

5.1 Profile of respondents

Valid responses were received from Clerks to Governors of 81 colleges by the closing date (24/6/2012). Just over 70% of responding clerks were women and just over one in five respondents were also employed by the College in another role as well. One in seven responding Clerks work as an independent external contractor and one in five is Clerk to more than one governing body.

Just over 1/3 (37%) have been Clerks at the college where they completed the questionnaire for less than three years, while 22% have been in the role for more than 10 years, with the remaining 41% between three and 10 years.

Responses were received from a fairly representative sample of FE, sixth form and specialist colleges across all the English regions and London.

5.2 Composition of governing bodies

The average size of the governing bodies represented by respondents was 18 of which, on average, 13 were independent members. There averaged one vacancy per governing body at the time of the survey. Based on clerks' overall responses, there were just under 11 male governors and just over 6 female governors per governing body – so there generally appear to be almost twice as many male governors as female ones on the college Boards represented by this survey.

For the colleges represented, it was interesting to note that there were only half as many female Chairs of Governors as there were female Principals/Chief Executives.

These data also indicate that just 20% of Chairs of Governors were women, although this is in fact higher than national data currently suggests at only 17%.

Over the past 12 months, more male governors (147 from 74 college boards) have left

than have female members (88 from 70 college boards) and 12 male Chairs have left as compared with 3 female Chairs.

5.3. Operational considerations

Clerks were asked how many meetings in the past year were held by the full governing body and by eight nominated committees/working groups. All respondents reported having meetings of the full governing body (averaging 5.46 meetings), an audit committee and a search committee. The majority also had a remuneration committee, a finance/general purpose committee and a standards/quality/performance committee.

Only about a quarter of the colleges had committees related to self-assessment, students or employment policy, although the latter is often dealt with in Finance and General Purposes Committees. Self-assessment appears to be a very low priority – meeting less often than Remuneration Committees. Indeed, of the 21 colleges reporting they have a self-assessment committee, only 14 have met at least once over the past 12 months.

As a follow-up, clerks were asked to provide a list of all other committees convened by their governing bodies and to indicate the number of times each had met over the past year. An additional 39 committees and/or ad hoc working groups were submitted. The majority of these related to estates property management and capital development projects, meeting between 2 and 5 times per year.

Committees were almost three times more likely to be chaired by male governors than female governors. Men predominantly chaired the finance/general purpose, audit, search, remuneration and employment policy committees with more women chairing only the standards/quality/performance committees.

Timing of meetings: The majority (over 60%) of both full governors' meetings and of committees were held in the early evening (5:30 - 7:00pm) on weekdays, although this varied within governing bodies to some extent, with the second most popular time being weekday afternoons between 2:30 and 5:00pm. A quarter of respondents reported holding committee meetings on weekday mornings and about 7% noted that meetings of the full governing body were held at that time too. Very few committee or full governor meetings were held after 7:00pm on weekdays and even fewer on weekends.

Duration of meetings: Almost 2/3 of meetings of the full governing body were between two and three hours duration with 30% between one and two hours long. There were just five instances of meetings of 3 - 4 hours. Committee meetings were generally shorter with 80% of them lasting one to two hours.

Participation of governors in ad hoc committees and working groups: Clerks were asked about the participation of governors in college working groups and committees and were presented with a list of possible options. Almost 60% of Clerks reported that they attended an Equality and Diversity group, with Health & Safety and Safeguarding committees operating in more than a third of the responding colleges.

5.4 Governor development

Perhaps, not surprisingly, virtually all Clerks (96%) considered that development and training opportunities over the past year had been tailored either 'reasonably well' or 'extremely/very well' for their governors overall, and similarly for themselves. It is worth noting though that almost 20% considered that training/development was either: 'not

very well' or 'very poorly' tailored to meet the needs of the Chairperson and almost a quarter gave similar poor ratings for the tailoring to meet male and female governors as discrete groups.

They offered a large range of suggestions of additional training and development needs of their governing bodies. The most frequently mentioned were updating on changing government policy and FE and funding changes. Several mentioned the need for more training related to inspection frameworks, legal requirements, Human Resources policy and financial matters.

5.5 Perceptions of effectiveness

Overall, more than 75% of Clerks considered their governing body had been 'extremely' or 'quite highly' effective at:

- Auditing the college's performance*
- Working collaboratively with the principal/ CEO and the rest of the SMT*
- Working collaboratively together
- Embedding Equality of Opportunity
- Influencing the college's overall culture*

(* in agreement with Governors' survey responses)

Areas where less than 50% of Clerks considered their governing body to be quite effective or better included:

- Community involvement
- Increasing the levels and range of professional development opportunities for college staff

Governing bodies' effectiveness at assessing their own impact on the college's welfare was considered only 'moderate' or 'limited' by over 40% of respondents.

Gender differences: Further analysis of the data by gender of the Chair indicate that there some quite major differences between high effectiveness ratings allocated to women and men Chairs in a number of key areas.

Female chairs were rated at least 9% higher than their male counterparts on the following factors (actual % difference in brackets):

- Influencing the college's overall culture (+10)
- Increasing the levels and range of professional development opportunities for college staff (+26)
- Providing the college's learners with excellent learning support (+9)
- Assessing its own impact on the college's welfare (+14)

Male chairs were rated at least 9% higher than female chairs on:

- Auditing the college's performance (+10)
- Working collaboratively with the Principal/CEO (+9)

5.6 Prioritised time allocation

Overall, more than 80% of Clerks thought their governing bodies allocated 'substantial' or 'very substantial' business time to considering matters related to:

- Strategic planning (90%)
- Quality assurance (89%)
- Student performance (86%)
- Teaching and learning (83%)
- Financial audit (83%)

At least 20% of all Clerks considered that only 'fairly limited' or even less business time was allocated to:

- Professional development of college staff (47.5%)
- Recruitment of staff and senior post holders (40%)
- Marketing strategy (27.5%)
- Remuneration (24%)
- Community engagement (21%)

Gender differences: Again there appear to be major differences in the way Clerks viewed the time allocations to different aspects of governing bodies chaired by men or women. No statistical testing has been performed and the data needs to be treated with caution as the numbers of female Chairs is so low. However, governing bodies with women chairs were judged to spend considerably more time than those chaired by men only on:

- Professional development of college staff (+17%)
- Recruitment of students(+17%)

Governing bodies chaired by men were reported to spend considerably more time on matters related to:

- Teaching and learning (20%)
- Capital planning (20%)
- Safeguarding (17.5%).

6. Key messages and aspects for further investigation

The ratio of female to male governors appears to have increased only marginally over the past 10 years from around 30% and the proportion of female to male Chairs of Boards is particularly low.

The age profile of governors seems to be getting older with almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of the survey respondents aged 50+ although the age profile overall needs confirmation.

There appear to be some distinctive differences in the leadership and management styles adopted by female Chairs of college Boards and follow-up interviews might seek to ascertain whether such differences are substantive and the extent to which they are more or less effective than approaches more generally adopted by their male counterparts. Areas of particular interest include:

- Tendency of female Chairs to meet more frequently with the college's Principal/Chief Executive;
- Tendency of female Chairs to meet more frequently with other governors individually and in groups on corporation business;
- The identification and addressing of different priorities from male Chairs by female ones;
- The appropriateness and quality of development opportunities for Chairs.

Far fewer women than men appear to chair committees and working groups with the exception of standards/quality/performance committees. This needs further investigation to confirm our data and, if so, to investigate reasons.

Recruitment of new governors seems to lack an Equal Opportunities approach and the majority of governors seem to be 'invited on' by existing governors. Further investigation of current governor recruitment policies and practices seems warranted.

Self-assessment by governing bodies of their own performance appears to be a very low priority, affecting recruitment as well as performance. Critical review which looks for systematic self-improvement, rather than simply meeting the requirements of inspection, appears not to be built into governance practice in all colleges and this hampers the development of the professional capacity of Boards. This is an aspect that needs fuller examination.

Governors appear to be little involved in developing impact measures for the college's overall strategy, despite feeling highly involved in strategic planning and monitoring. Female governors in particular are more critical of Boards' effectiveness in assessing their own performance and their impact on the colleges they serve. Further investigation of this would be productive.

Female governors appear to have more difficulty maintaining regular attendance at meetings of the governing body and this may be a factor in limiting the number of women prepared to participate as Chairs or members of committees. The timing of such meetings may exclude participation of a substantial proportion of current and prospective female governors and needs further investigation.

Training and development opportunities tailored to meet needs of female governors do not appear to have been given much consideration. A better understanding of how to utilise the expertise and experience of all governors needs to be acquired. The scope of such training at present seems somewhat narrow and superficial. Consideration should be given to whether gender specific training would be appropriate and beneficial.

7. Appendices

7.1 Appendix 1: Governor survey questionnaire



Appendix 1 -
Survey of Governanc

7.2 Appendix 2: Clerk to the Governing Body's survey questionnaire



Appendix 2 -
Survey of Clerks to

7.3 Appendix 3: Data charts: Clerks to Governors / Governors Surveys



Appendix 3 - Data
charts - Governor: