

A series of teal silhouettes of human figures holding hands in a line, set against a light blue background with larger, fainter silhouettes of people in the background.

# NHS Board Development Programme

Brochure 2010



*begin with the end in mind*



“ It’s not rules and regulations. It’s the way people work together ”

‘What Makes Great Boards Great’

Jeffrey Sonnenfeld, Harvard Business Review Sept 2002

## NHS Board Development Programme

### Our approach

The way people work together is the foundation of Healthskills’ work with NHS Boards. Systems and processes of governance are important of course, but the best processes in the world will not ensure great Board performance. It’s the Board’s behaviours and values that really make the difference. Levels of trust, the ability to challenge appropriately and to make and keep to sound decisions, the balance of individual and corporate responsibility are all elements that make or break great Boards.

### The Board Role

The role of Boards is to maximise value for their shareholders. In the NHS this raises questions. Who are

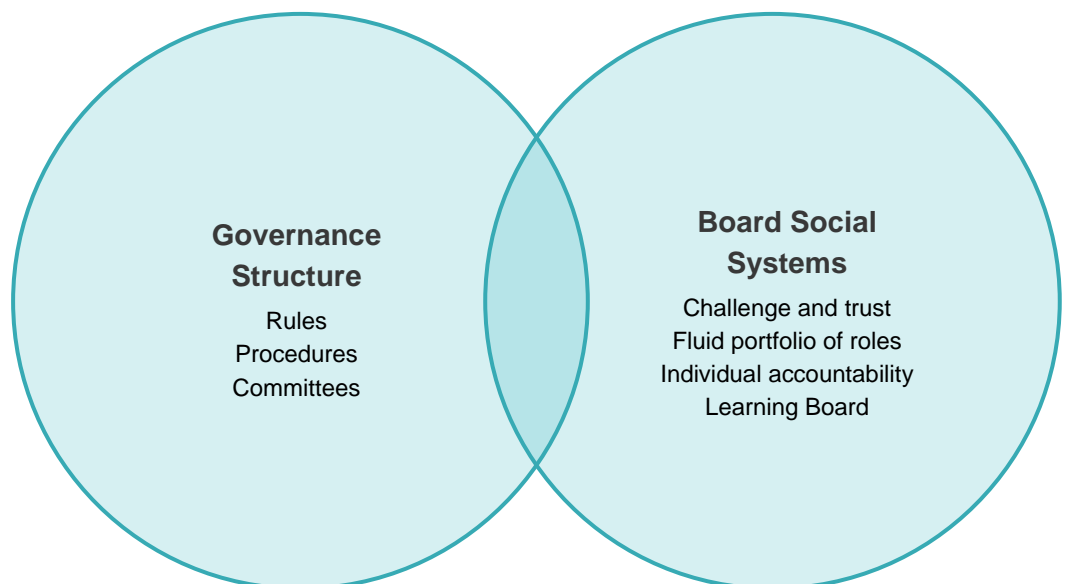
our shareholders? Are they different from our customers? What do they value?

Corporate Governance is “the appropriate Board structure, processes and values to cope with the rapidly changing demands of both shareholders and stakeholders in and around their enterprises” (Bob Garratt ‘Thin on Top’ 2006) In the NHS, emphasis is placed on the structures and processes that are part of the story that enables NHS organisations to comply with requirements. Enron, Xerox and Marconi all had the right systems and processes in place but this didn’t prevent financial mismanagement, strategic incompetence, and ultimately the arrest of top executives. Structures and processes are not enough:

#### Who would benefit from the programme?

- High Performing Boards, keen to develop further
- Aspirant foundation trusts
- Commissioning and provider organisations

For further discussion about the use of the Framework and the Board Development Programme in your organisation, please contact our programme manager  
Lucie Gilbert  
on 0800 652 3322  
or email  
lucie.gilbert@healthskills.co.uk



performance relies on a Board's behaviour and values too.

We have developed a programme designed to take NHS Boards from compliance to performance. It is based on the Board Competency Framework and a brief description is given here.

### The Development Programme

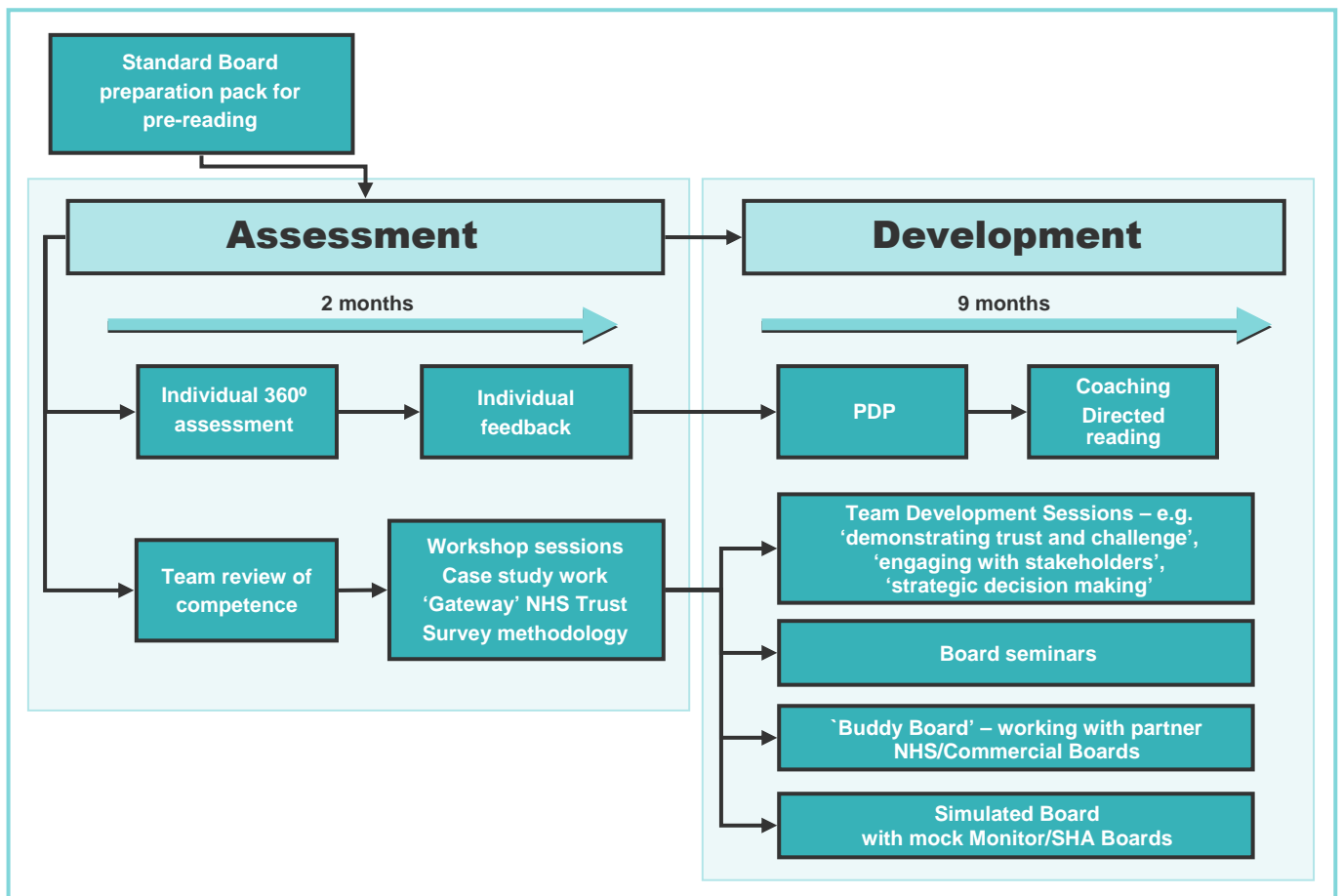
The Healthskills' Board Development Programme is divided into two stages:

- Diagnostic
- Development

Both stages use our new competency framework to provide Boards with a clear direction.

The role of the NHS Board is under increasing scrutiny. New Corporate Manslaughter laws, changing EU legislation and greater environmental challenges through 'Our Health, Our Future' all put Board performance in the spotlight.

PCT Boards will need to demonstrate their engagement in, and understanding of, strategic commissioning decisions as a key element of the World Class Commissioning assurance framework. Aspirant Foundation Trust Boards must demonstrate not only the right governance structure but the ability to share a portfolio of roles, challenge appropriately and demonstrate the right leadership capabilities – **13 per cent of Foundation Trust applications**





**Competence** is defined as a standardised requirement for an individual or group to properly perform a specific job - the characteristics which drive outstanding performance.

**have been deferred by Monitor because of gaps in Board capabilities.**

The Healthskills Development Programme addresses these requirements and work with Boards so that they can honestly assess their current performance and design a tailored development process for both teams and individuals.

We bring together a team of individuals with complementary skills and experiences who have worked with NHS Boards for over 10 years.

### ***The Board Competency Framework***

The Framework is based on a set of competencies for NHS Boards aspiring to be high performing Boards driving a successful organisation.

Developed specifically for NHS Boards, from a range of NHS and industry references a key reference point for the Framework is the work of Bob Garratt. Garratt has written extensively on Board performance – ‘The Fish Rots from the Head’, ‘Thin on Top’. His work is held in high regard in both the private and public sector. Monitor use his “Learning Board Model” in their documentation.

The competency set is a foundation for:

- Setting the standard of expectations of high performance; setting the tone at the top of the organisation
- Assessing the Board's performance against those standards on a regular basis

- Benchmarking current and future performance to map improvement

The competence set has a number of applications:

- Personal development
- Board development
- Leadership profiling for recruitment and selection
- Performance management

The Framework has been used with high performing Boards, keen to develop further, with aspirant Foundation Trusts and is applicable to both commissioning and provider organisations.

### **The Competency Set focuses on six key areas:**

- Strategic leadership
- Governance
- Strategic decision making
- Maximising Board performance
- Constructive challenge
- Demonstrating trust

Each key area has a range of demonstrators – activities Board members need to demonstrate as evidence of competence. Each area is also linked to a set of personal attributes Board members should be demonstrating to deliver those activities.

## Using the Model

### Board Development

Healthskills has designed a range of Board assessment tools using the competency framework to provide a fully rounded picture of current performance.

The tools include:

**WORKSHOP SESSIONS** - We work with the whole Board to explore its current performance against the competencies, using a combination of case studies. We have created 'Gateway NHS Trust' to develop a Board story and using dialogue we create a current picture. Dialogue is important; it is often the first time a Board has discussed the importance of for example 'demonstrating trust' what this means to them as an organisation and how they behave when they truly demonstrate trust.

**WEB SURVEYS** - The on-line surveys completed by Board members are used to develop a picture of what each of the competencies mean to the Board and the organisation in question, developing descriptors of acceptable and high performance specific to that organisation. Questions are based on real-life examples which highlight where the Board has and has not demonstrated a particular competence. A range of web surveys are available that can be completed by members of staff across the organisation asking how it feels to work in the organisation. This intelligence provides a useful counterpoint to the Board survey.

For example, the Board may feel it delegates appropriately with trust but middle managers may not feel involved in strategic developments and feel disenfranchised. We would then pose questions about how good that delegation is and how internal stakeholders are involved in key decisions.

**INDIVIDUAL 360° FEEDBACK TOOLS** – The use of peer review tools is becoming more common among Boards interested in formally assessing their individual directors. Using this competency set, individuals can be measured on the attributes they demonstrate in each key area.

As the Board regularly assesses itself against each competence it can develop a picture of the current level of competence, where it is now versus the desired level of competence; where it wants to be. This gap defines the priority of development activity.

Previous workshop sessions have included:

- Developing Your Service Development Strategy
- Demonstrating Trust and Challenge
- The Legal Framework for NHS Boards
- Contracting
- Strategic Workforce Planning
- Shifting Organisational Culture
- Key Lessons from Foundation Trusts
- "MBA in a Day" – the key business and market analysis models for NHS Boards

### **Board Development Sessions**

Our Development Sessions are tailored to meet the needs of each client, based on the findings from the diagnostic stage of the programme. In the past, sessions have not only addressed governance and legal issues but transformational change needs. For example, what tone does and organisation need to set at the top to support culture change?

Our alliance with other organisations, also means that we can suggest other quality programmes that complement the tailor made work we undertake with clients.

### **TESTIMONIALS**

“The Healthskills team have brought fresh thinking and challenge to the Board, supporting our development journey to Foundation Trust.

The team bring a level of specialist understanding of NHS ‘front-line’ issues that is refreshing. This is balanced with a solid business knowledge base that builds credibility with the Non Executive Directors. I value the responsiveness of the team, all of whom want to listen and understand our unique issues, working with us to create a solution that meets our specific needs. What is really great is that they always build in fun as well as hard work!!”

*Geraint Davies*  
**Director of Corporate Affairs &  
 Service Development**  
**South East Coast Ambulance Service**

“Anne (Tofts) and her team have provided consultancy change management support to NHS organisations that I have led over the last 10 years. Her early work with the Board and Executive Director Team of Bradford South and West PCT contributed to the PCT becoming nationally acclaimed as leading edge including reaching the final of the Primary Care Organisation of the year awards in 2005.

“Anne is currently working with NHS East Midlands to support the clinician and local engagement processes that have resulted in our exciting Our NHS, Our Future vision “From Evidence to Excellence”. Anne brings a detailed understanding of NHS strategy and policy, an ability to quickly gain the trust and confidence of clinicians and senior managers, and an aptitude to challenge individual behaviours and thinking achieving tangible and innovative change on the ground.”

*Dr Barbara Hakin OBE*  
**Chief Executive**  
**NHS East Midlands**





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2-14 The Crescent, King Street, Leicester LE1 6RX  
t. 0800 652 3322 e. [info@healthskills.co.uk](mailto:info@healthskills.co.uk) [www.healthskills.co.uk](http://www.healthskills.co.uk)