

Governance professional perspectives

Charting progress and potential in an evolving landscape

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A research study by the
National Governance Association



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“The National Association of School and College Clerks (NASCC) welcomes the NGA’s report highlighting the vital role of governance professionals. However, the profession urgently needs salaried pay structures that reflect the strategic expertise required, particularly as advancements in AI streamline administrative tasks. Strategic and operational leaders must recognise that while technology enhances efficiency, it cannot replace the specialist knowledge essential for effective governance.

Investing in fair remuneration and career pathways is critical to retaining skilled professionals who underpin the success of schools and trusts. NASCC remains committed to advocating for these necessary changes.”

Sharon Warmington, Founder - National Association of School and College Clerks (NASCC)

“We are pleased to see this report highlighting the integral work of the governance professional, and (as Emma Balchin points out so well) how ‘indispensable’ they are to the communities that they serve. Both the Academy Trust Governance Guide and Academy Trust Governance Code make clear that a skilled and knowledgeable governance professional is a core pillar of an effective governance structure. It is a role that often interacts with, and becomes the confidante of, those who are working at all levels across a school or trust – from senior leadership to support staff on the ground.

Governance professionals provide expert advice and support to volunteers making complex decisions, and in doing so they are fundamental to the stewardship of the culture, values and purpose that the board sets. They are too often, though, left isolated in roles that are misunderstood and undervalued. It is encouraging to see progress being made in relation to remuneration and professional development, but there is still a long way to go. At Trust Governance Professionals, we will continue to advocate and champion this vital role and are exceptionally glad of the work of our sector partners and reports like this in support of that mission.”

Lizzie Oliver, Director - Trust Governance Professionals (TGP) Ltd

Foreword

School and trust governance forms the cornerstone of our education system, and the role of the governance professional is at the very heart of effective governance. It is a role that is still sometimes undervalued, still sometimes underappreciated, but one that no governing board can do without.

The role of the governance professional has evolved significantly over the past decade, with NGA's Clerking Matters campaign playing a pivotal role in driving this change. Launched in 2013, our longstanding campaign aimed to champion and provide guidance to those supporting governance, highlighting the importance and impact of the role when understood and carried out effectively.

Over the years, the profession has experienced fluctuating support from government, with the introduction and subsequent archiving of the Clerking Competency Framework. The framework offered legitimacy and clear guidance for governance professionals, and despite its withdrawal, practice did not regress. The profession's growth and expertise had considerably outpaced the framework. Governance professionals set themselves higher standards and embraced the broader and varied responsibilities that accompany supporting differing legal school and trust structures.

Significant milestones include the introduction of funded training through the Leading Governance development programmes in 2017, which inspired NGA to develop a Level 3 accredited qualification. Although funding was withdrawn in 2020, the programme remains a popular self-funded choice, reflecting the sector's commitment to professional development. Similarly, the implementation of the career framework has provided much-needed clarity on the variety of roles and routes for progression.

Comparing the latest survey findings with those from 2021, governance professional careers have seen notable advancements. These include better remuneration, more defined routes into and advancement within the career structure, increased availability of, and participation in qualifications and training, and much needed and deserved professional recognition. Despite these achievements, challenges remain. Efforts must continue to position the role as a viable and accessible career, recognised and understood by all stakeholders in governance and education.

The journey so far demonstrates the resilience and adaptability of governance professionals, and with sustained advocacy and support, NGA looks forward to supporting the continued growth and recognition of the role as an indispensable component of effective educational governance.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge that NGA is not alone in championing this voice. We are joined by groups and organisations across the sector that advocate for governance professionals, amplifying their collective voice and ensuring their perspectives are represented. We extend our gratitude to all those who strive to make these voices heard and secure a critical and well-deserved seat at any governance table in order to maximise 'good governance' and positively impact children and young people.

Emma Balchin, NGA's Chief Executive

Introduction

This report explores the changing landscape of the governance professional role over the last three years, highlighting the progress made in some areas and the further work required in others.

NGA has undertaken regular surveys of governance professionals since 2013, when the Clerking Matters campaign was launched to raise the status and profile and improve the pay, conditions and continuing professional development (CPD) of all governance professionals.

In 2021, NGA carried out an extensive survey of governance professionals' pay and employment conditions which highlighted the diverse nature of this vital, yet often undervalued role. The findings of this research resulted in NGA producing the career pathway which, nearly four years later, is used widely across the sector as an established model to differentiate the various roles of the governance professional, recommend pay scales and associated qualifications and experience.

This year's report continues that work, highlighting key findings on pay, working conditions, career progression, and the evolving role of governance professional in schools and trusts.

Methodology

This report's findings are based on a self-selecting, online survey. The survey was circulated primarily through NGA's communication channels and was conducted between 20 June and 5 August 2024. Over 500 people engaged with the survey. The total number of responses varies across the survey depending on question requirements and/or variables such as region and school type.

While the survey is completely anonymous, respondents were required to share the type and number of trusts or schools they worked in, the length of time they have been a governance professional and their hourly rate of pay. Any personal identifying information has been removed.

Respondent characteristics

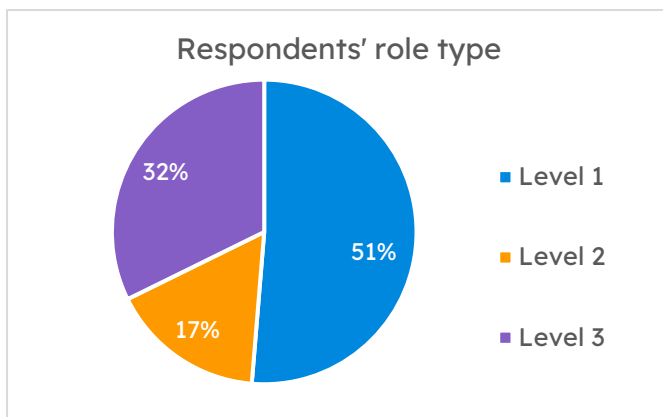


Figure 1: Respondents' role type (level 1: clerking, level 2: governance coordinator, level 3: lead governance professional)

Governance professional levels

The [career pathway for governance professionals](#) groups different types of roles according to three levels.

Consult the pathway to find out more about the different levels, relevant job titles, as well as typical skills, qualifications and individual requirements.

Many respondents work for more than one governing board, as well as more than one board type. Those working with LA maintained schools support an average of four governing bodies whereas those working in MATs support three local governing bodies on average. Those serving MAT and SAT trustee boards mostly only supported one board. The total number of schools represented by those responding to the survey was over 3000.

Governing board type	No.	%
Local authority maintained	266	49%
Single academy trust	257	48%
Multi academy trust	117	22%
Local academy committee	285	53%

Table 1: Types of governing board supported by respondents

Key findings

- There is significant opportunity for pay progression within the profession.** 21% of respondents working in level 1 (clerking) roles are paid £20 or more per hour compared to 70% of those working in a level 3 (lead governance professional) role.
- Satisfaction with remuneration has increased.** 58% of governance professionals are satisfied or very satisfied with their remuneration, compared to 46% in 2021.
- The take up of clerking-specific qualifications has increased,** with 74% of respondents having completed or started NGA’s Level 3 Certificate in Clerking (the most commonly pursued qualification), compared to 41% holding a clerking qualification in 2021.
- There has been an increase in governance professionals reporting they receive appraisals** (67% in 2024, compared to 48% in 2021). However, only 20% of appraisals included discussions on pay and remuneration.
- More governance professionals reported an intention to leave the profession,** with 18% of respondents indicating that they did not plan to stay in the profession; a considerable increase from 2021 of just 4%. Key reasons were lack of career progression, high workload, and low remuneration.
- Governance professionals reported the same challenges in their schools/trusts as highlighted by governors and trustees in our annual governance survey,** demonstrating a shared understanding of the key issues impacting schools and trusts. The top challenges reported were ‘balancing the budget’, ‘support for pupils with SEND’ and ‘pupil attendance’.

Working conditions

Employment status and pay were a key focus of the 2021 survey, and NGA aims to monitor this data over time in order to identify trends in the shifting landscape of working conditions for what is a particularly diverse role.

Pay and remuneration

When compared to the 2021 governance professional survey, findings reveal significant progress in the pay scales of governance professionals, though regional disparities and organisational differences persist.

Most governance professionals are now paid between £13 and £25 per hour, with only 18% earning less than £13 per hour. This marks an improvement from 2021, where 54% were paid below this threshold.

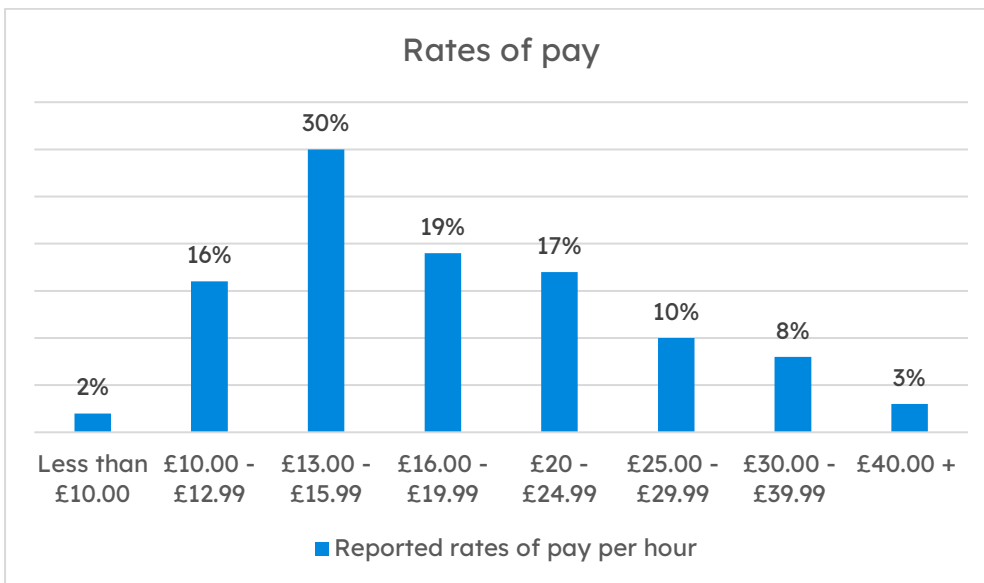


Figure 2: reported rates of pay

While 58% of governance professionals are satisfied with their pay, 27% expressed dissatisfaction, highlighting a persistent concern about fair compensation for the responsibilities they undertake.

Pay variations

The data shows pay increasing in line with career progression overall, however, there are also clear examples where this is not the case. Although 70% of lead governance professionals (level 3) report that they are paid £20 an hour or more, 21% are paid less than £16 per hour.

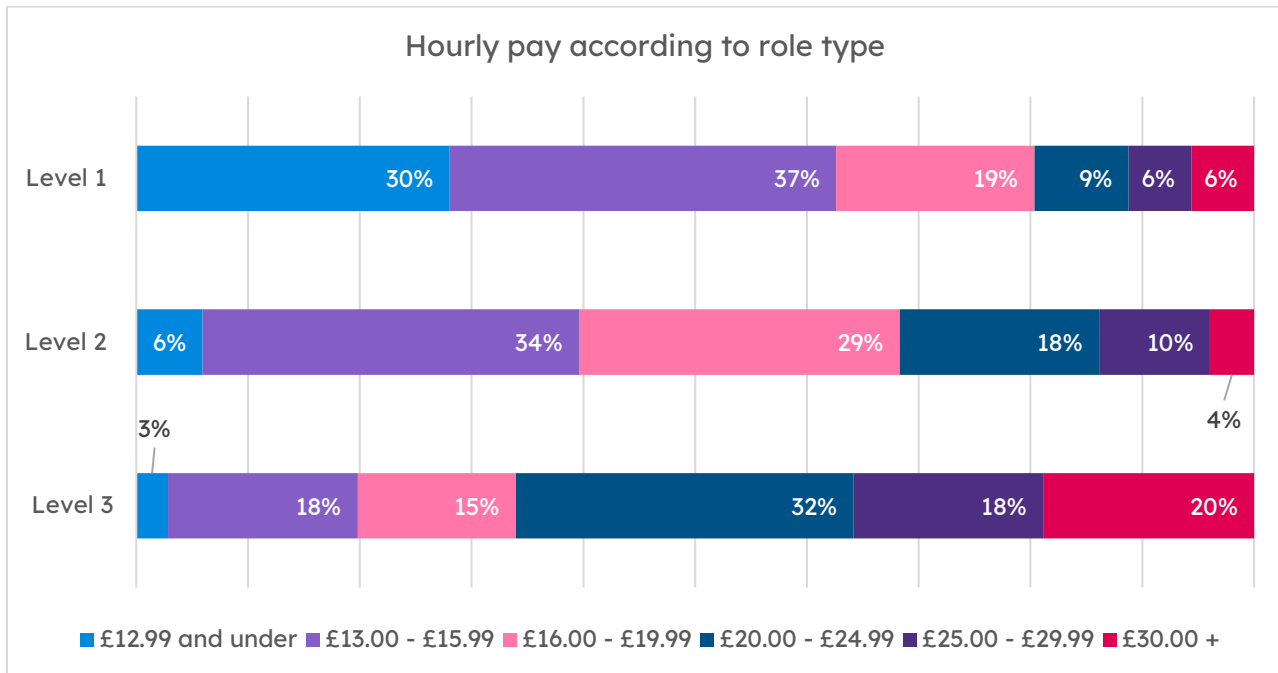


Figure 3: Distribution of pay across governance professional levels

Those employed as clerks (level 1) also reported considerable disparities in pay. Although the majority reported being paid less than £16 per hour, 21% said they were paid at a similar salary bracket to lead governance professionals (level 3 roles).

These findings underline the apparent inequities in remuneration and the importance of undertaking pay benchmarking that takes into account different levels of responsibility.

Governance professional levels

NGA research has found that most roles fall under:

1. **Clerking level:** a role which provides direct support to board meetings and associated tasks, plus advice and support on statutory procedure and practice.
2. **Governance coordinator level:** a role which, as well as the duties of a clerk, involves additional responsibilities relating to the delivery of a governance support service, including line management of clerks.
3. **Lead governance professional level:** a role which provides strategic leadership of services that support governance across schools with higher levels of complexity and direct accountability.

Types of employment

Governance professionals were found to be employed in various capacities which influence both their pay and working conditions. In maintained schools, 53% are earning less than £16.00 per hour, compared with 45% in SATs, 32% in MATs and 42% in academy committees.

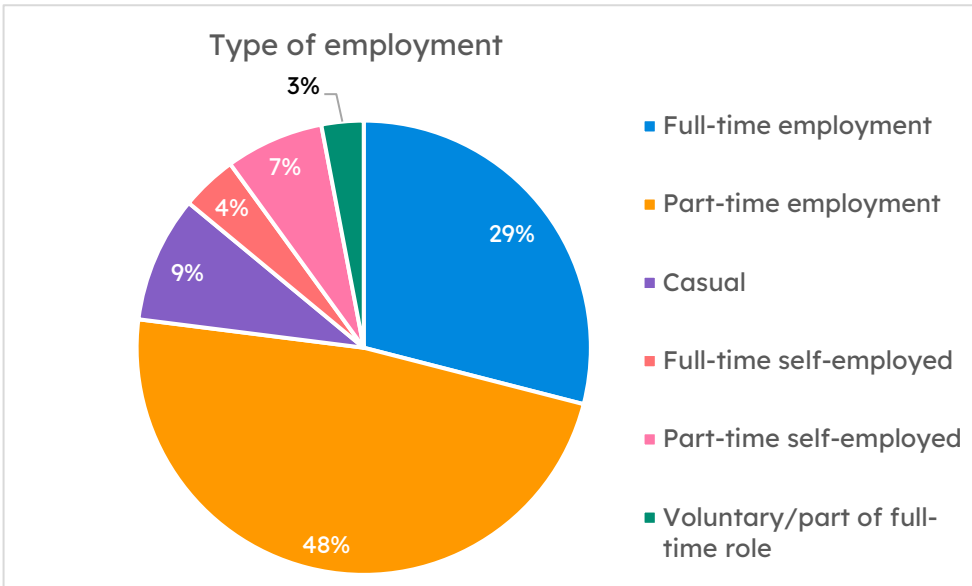


Figure 4: Respondents' employment type

Just under half reported they work part-time (48%), while 29% are employed full-time. 63% of governance professionals are directly employed by their schools or trusts, a 6% increase from 2021.

Conversely, local authority (LA) employment has declined, with only 21% of professionals now employed by these bodies. Since our last survey in 2021, the number working freelance increased by 3% and those employed by an independent clerking service by 1%.

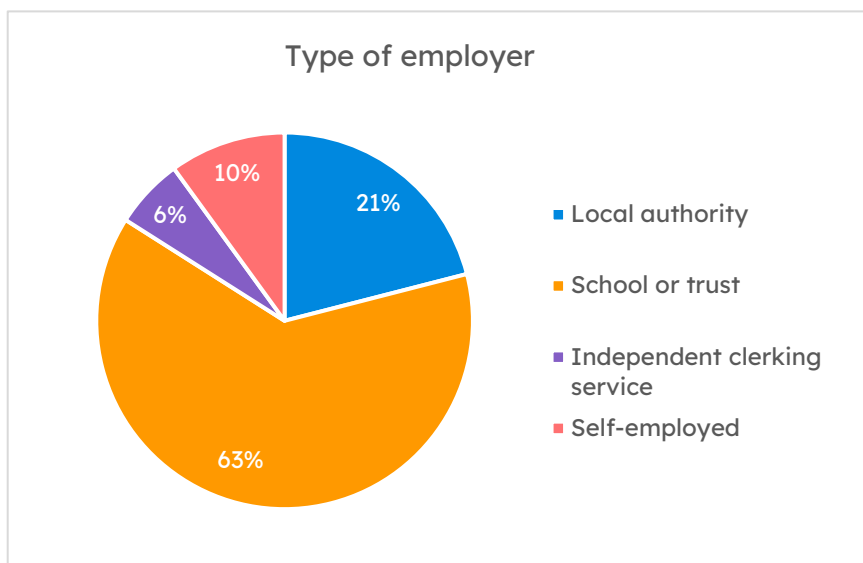


Figure 5: Respondents' employer

Multiple roles

In addition to their role as a governance professional, 61% of respondents also hold another role within their school or trust. The nature of these roles varied considerably, but we primarily saw respondents working in administration, finance and human resources.

19% of respondents stated they work full time hours across a number of schools and trusts, and 20% reported their governance professional role was full time in only one setting.

“The remuneration for my role is wrapped up with my main role as PA to Head and Leadership Group, so payment for the role as governance professional is unknown. I am also part of the LA’s governance hub so minute meetings for other schools. The LA pays me £25 an hour for this, which I feel is fair.”

Key insights

Although we are encouraged by the increase in pay when compared to the data gathered three years ago, further work remains to ensure a continued rise, particularly for those in the lowest-paid positions. Remuneration must reflect the value and expertise governance professionals bring to our schools and trusts.

Where we see governance professionals employed by schools and trusts in dual roles, NGA advocate strongly for clearly defined job descriptions, appropriate differentiation in line management, and appraisal processes. Conflicts of interest between roles should also be avoided; for example, where the governance professional is also employed as a school business manager, clerking a meeting where financial practice is being scrutinised would be inappropriate. Such conflicts can be mitigated against with robust procedures and reporting and proper declarations of interest.

When we analyse pay variations by level of role we must consider a number of factors. Firstly, a difference in regional data is to be expected (with those employed in London reporting the highest salaries), and secondly the adoption of the levels themselves. Although the career pathway lays out the responsibilities for each of the three levels, it is appreciated that each school and trust may interpret these differently and therefore such disparities must be considered with a level of caution.

However, the need for more consistent remuneration is undeniable as so many respondents commented on their pay not being equitable to their level of responsibility. NGA encourages robust and independent pay benchmarking within schools and trusts, particularly for such a distinct role as the governance professional.

Development, progression and retention

Effective induction and CPD are crucial for governance professionals to excel in their roles. However, many respondents felt that their role lacks clear pathways for advancement, and some have not seen their pay or responsibilities increase after completing qualifications.

Induction

86% of respondents received an induction which covered the basics of school governance, yet fewer than half received comprehensive training on school structures or navigating key documents.

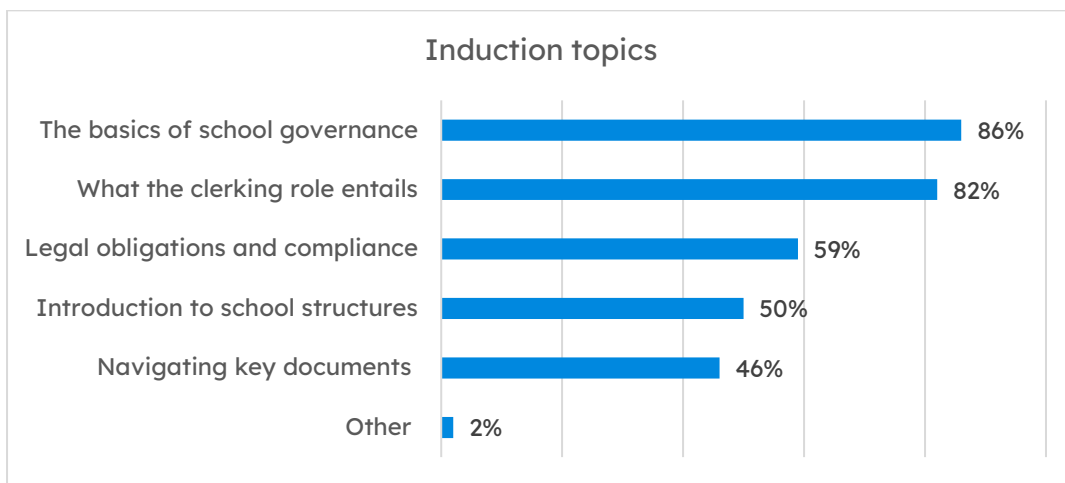


Figure 6: Topics covered during respondents' induction training

“When I started in 2013 the role was just preparing agendas and typing up minutes, so that was what was covered. Since then, the responsibilities have grown to include arranging panels for hearings, attending hearings and lots of associated paperwork, [and] so I have attended extra training for these.”

Access to training

Online webinars (89%) and e-learning modules (83%) are the most accessed CPD opportunities, indicating a shift toward flexible, remote learning formats. Encouragingly, 23% also volunteer as governors or trustees; a role which clearly contributes to their own professional development.

Satisfaction with access to training opportunities is relatively high, with 70% of respondents expressing they were highly satisfied or satisfied with training and CPD opportunities, compared to 63% in 2021. However, 30% are dissatisfied with opportunities for career progression, reflecting a need for clearer development pathways.

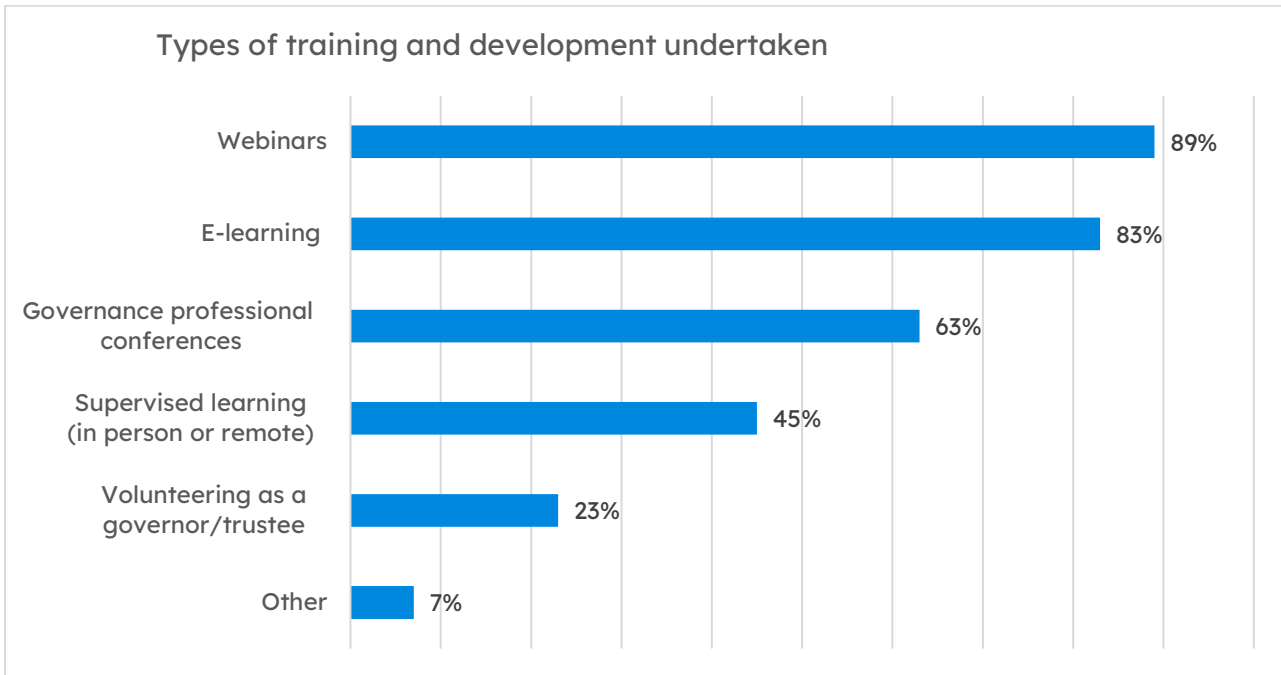


Figure 7: Training and development accessed by respondents

The amount of training accessed by governance professionals has increased compared to 2021 when 75% accessed webinars (89% in 2024), 59% accessed e-learning modules (83% in 2024) and 50% accessed governance professional specific conferences (63% in 2024).

Training for panels

Feedback shows that the majority of governance professionals provide support for panels, however training for this high-stakes aspect of the role remains limited, with only 57% receiving training for exclusions and 49% for complaints.

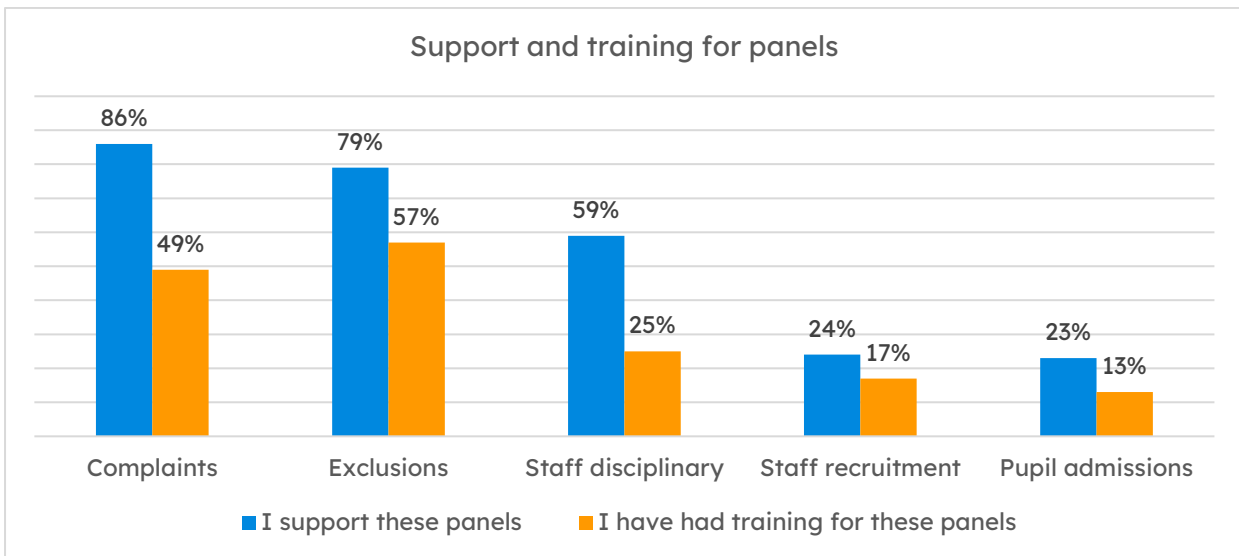


Figure 8: Respondents who receive panel training vs those who support panels

Training for emerging technologies

The findings show that governance professionals generally feel confident in carrying out their roles, with 76% of respondents feeling very confident in administering governance processes, 77% expressing confidence in building and maintaining professional relationships with the board and 76% very confident in keeping accurate records.

However, there are areas where professionals feel less well equipped, particularly in relation to new technologies. Only 9% feel confident in using artificial intelligence (AI) to improve efficiency, suggesting a gap in training for emerging digital tools.

Training providers

The most common training providers were external organisations like NGA (61%) and other third parties (44%) as well as schools and trusts (44%). However, only 23% of governance professionals accessed LA training (with 35% of those surveyed stating that they work for a maintained school), highlighting a shift towards external or school and trust-based training.

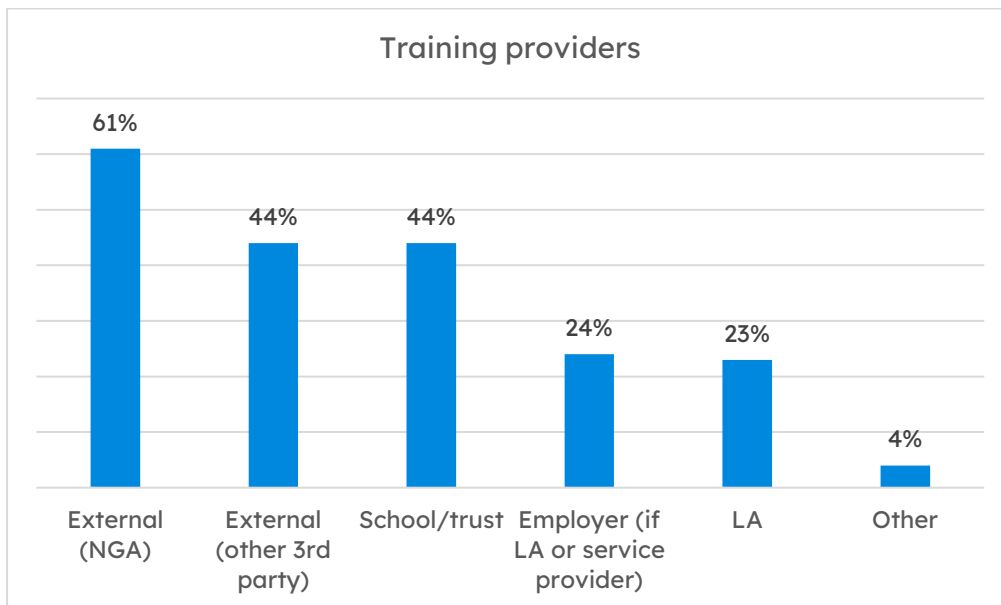


Figure 9: Types of training provider used by respondents

“I organise my own training and will sign up to anything relevant that I find from whatever source available.”

“... use of social media forums and other networking opportunities which are free”

“Regular attendance at Clerks’ briefings held through the LA governance team”

“I look out for free governance training from lawyers & accountants”

Networking

Governance professionals reported they access support and networking through a variety of channels:

- **NGA and other events** – 69% of respondents attend events organised by NGA and other organisations such as the Chartered Governance Institute (CGI) and the Confederation of School Trusts (CST).
- **Internal networking** – 43% connect with other governance professionals within their own organisations, such as in LAs or MATs.
- **Social media** – a small percentage (4%) use social media for networking, highlighting a possible opportunity to expand online platforms for governance professionals.

These networking opportunities are vital for sharing best practices, supporting professional development, and building a sense of community among governance professionals.

Qualifications and career progression

The take up of clerking-specific qualifications has increased, with 74% of respondents having completed or started NGA’s Level 3 Certificate in Clerking (the most commonly pursued qualification), compared to 41% holding a clerking qualification in 2021. There were also 30% of respondents who had completed a Level 4 or higher qualification. However, it was reported that these qualifications did not always lead to improved pay or responsibilities and noted barriers to obtaining qualifications including time constraints and cost.

Only 19% of professionals reported career progression resulting from completing accredited qualifications, suggesting a gap between qualification attainment and career advancement.

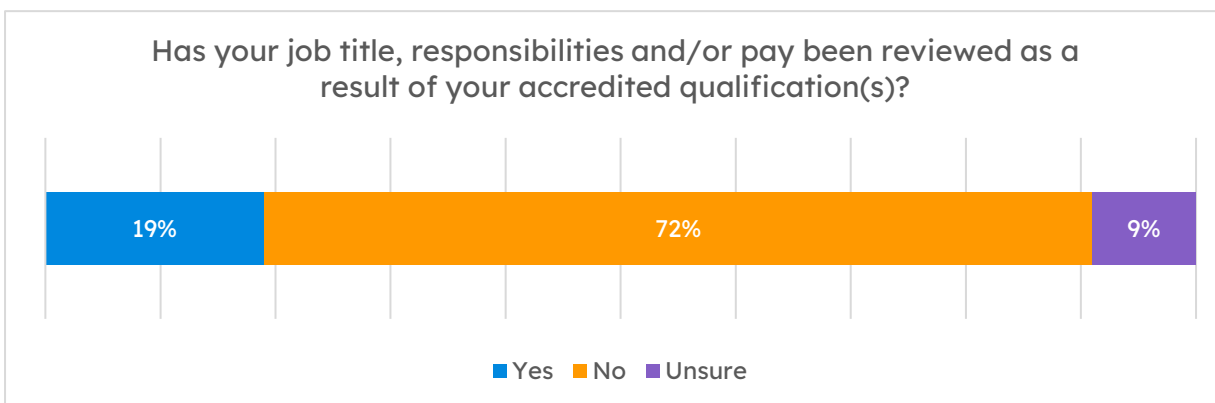


Figure 10: Career progression as a result of accredited qualifications

“My employer (trust) has recognised a job title change since gaining an accredited qualification but have not been forthcoming with a pay rise to reflect this as yet. It is frustrating that governance professionals in general have to fight for what they are worth. I feel that Clerking/Governance is an area which is not understood by enough people within education and so they are not keen on paying or recognising the importance and worth of these individuals.”

Where respondents had chosen **not** to undertake an accredited qualification, a significant proportion (39%) reported a perception that completing further qualifications does not lead to career progression or increased earnings.

Funding qualifications

The funding of qualifications has been an issue for governance professionals for a long time, both in the cost of the course itself, and the governance professional’s time to attend sessions and complete directed study. 2024 findings, when compared to 2021, see a potentially concerning reduction of 4% in those having their qualifications fully funded by their employer and an increase of 3% of those having to fully fund their own training.

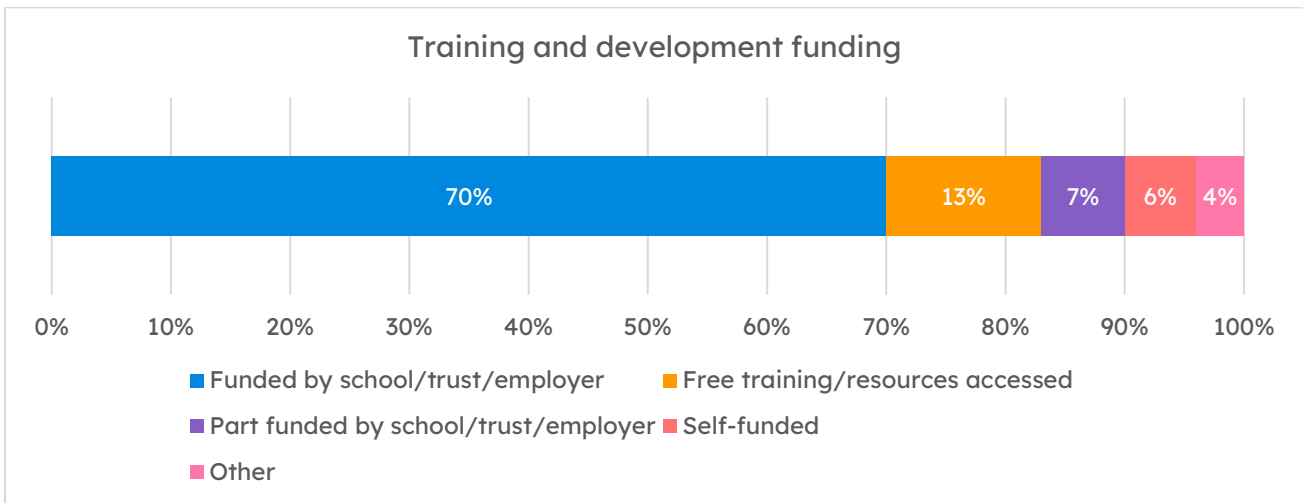


Figure 11: Sources of funding for training and development

Appraisals

Since we last asked in 2021, there has been an increase in the number of governance professionals reporting they receive appraisals, yet 33% of respondents still say they are missing out on this important management tool. The number of chairs or vice chairs conducting governance professionals’ appraisals has slightly declined, from 21% in 2021 to 19% in 2024, while appraisals conducted by senior executive leaders have increased from 13% in 2021 to 23% in 2024.

When appraisals are conducted, they primarily focus on objectives and performance (89%), followed by professional development (70%). However, only 20% of appraisals included discussions on pay and remuneration, and 31% on the accuracy of the current job description.

“My line manager is the trust’s Head of Operations, and she does my PM [performance management] review - we have asked the Chair to be involved in my PM, but she never engages.”

“It’s a very weak appraisal process and has no impact on outcomes. We have no development plan for our service, therefore don’t need objectives and targets ... What a shame, what a loss! For the schools and the children.”

“The Chair conducts the appraisal, but the school determines my remuneration and hours. They justify my package according to their budget and perception of the role, not based on what the Chair reports back.”

Retention

When asked, governance professionals cited a lack of career progression, high workload, and low remuneration as the main reasons they were considering leaving the profession.

Many expressed frustrations over the limited recognition of their qualifications and their wider contributions to school governance. This is despite 88% of respondents reporting that they are satisfied with their relationship with the leadership team, and 86% feeling that the board has confidence in their advice.

18% of respondents indicated that they did not plan to stay in the profession for long which is a considerable increase from 2021 of just 4%. Only 54% confirmed their intention to remain in the profession; a reduction from 61% in 2021.

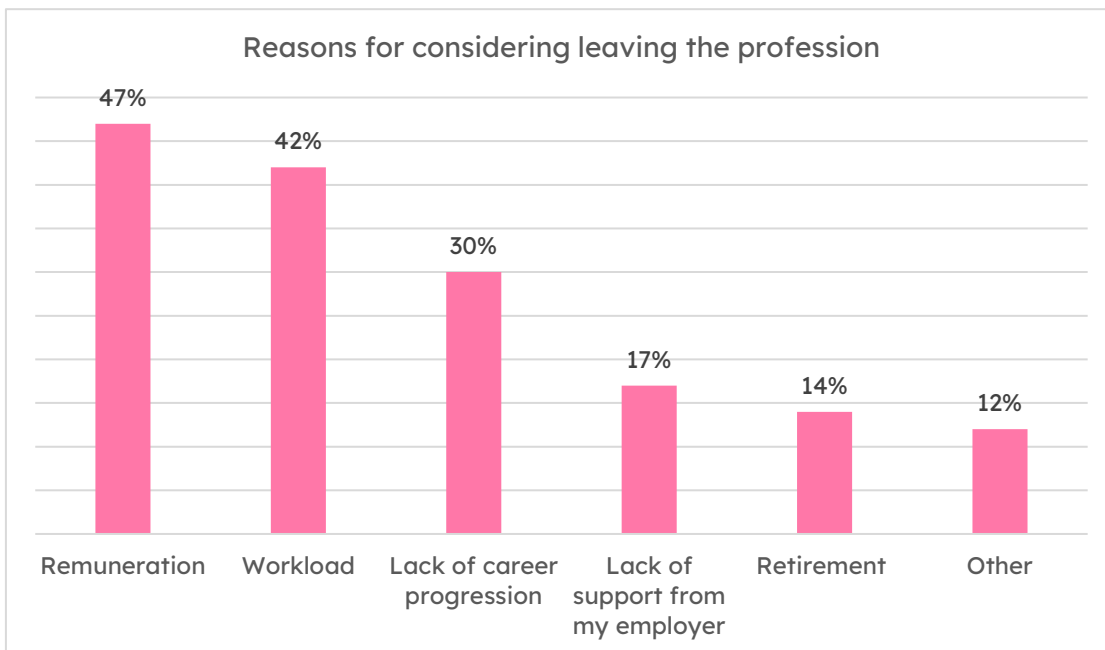


Figure 12: Reported reasons for considering leaving the profession

“The profession is evolving, and I want to be part of that and embrace the opportunities. I consider it worth pursuing while enjoying the role in the meantime.”

“I would have liked to [stay in the profession], but the lack of training and support and the inability to complete training within working hours makes it likely that I will have to step away.”

“Due to the low pay and poor conditions, plus often unsociable hours... I am considering moving to being fully freelance, so I can charge a fairer rate for the quality of my work and not be so disappointed that the clerks are some of the most poorly treated staff in the organisation.”

“I would like to use my experience and continue, but I’m not sure I can afford to continue in the role long term due to the number of hours it takes to do the job compared with those paid for.”

Routes into the profession

Governance professionals come from a wide range of backgrounds. This year’s findings show that most governance professionals had previous experience in administrative, secretarial, or legal roles; a significant number had no prior links to governance or education.

Previous job roles cited by respondents:



Barriers to entering the profession

Governance professionals reported several barriers when entering the profession:

- **Pay** – 64% of respondents viewed pay as a significant barrier, highlighting the need for better compensation structures to attract and retain qualified professionals.
- **Lack of information** – 57% believed that a lack of clear information about what the role entails is a challenge, suggesting a need for more comprehensive role descriptions and guidance for prospective governance professionals.
- **Working conditions and hours** – nearly half (47%) cited working conditions and hours as a barrier, with many commenting on the difficulty of managing a demanding workload, particularly for those with dual roles in their school or trust, and especially when evening meetings are required.



Key insights

The pathway for any career must, at the heart of it, acknowledge the need for continued professional development, and that this CPD must be recognised, appreciated and rewarded. We find from the results of the survey that governance professionals take their own CPD seriously, attending both accredited and non-accredited training, as well as other informal routes to develop their skills and knowledge base.

According to these results, there are a considerable number of employers who are not recognising these achievements, or financially compensating governance professionals for their efforts.

Having a comprehensive and robust induction process sets out expectations and instils a culture of ongoing CPD. Providing funding (both monetary and time) for training would support with both recruitment and retention.

Training for panels should be a pre-requisite; not only in building the confidence of governance professionals themselves, but ultimately improving processes, reducing complaints and appeals, and ensuring a better experience for pupils, families and staff.

A meaningful appraisal process is at the heart of highlighting development needs, acknowledging development undertaken, and ensuring that governance professionals are rewarded accordingly.

The number of professionals considering leaving the sector is a concern; recruitment of knowledgeable and experienced individuals in this field already being a significant challenge for many schools and trusts. The backgrounds of those entering the profession however are worthy of note; targeted recruitment from these sectors may provide an opportunity not yet fully explored.

Professional practice

NGA’s annual governance survey (AGS) is in its 14th year and is open to all those who govern. This year’s governance professional survey featured a selection of questions from the AGS to test whether the experience of governance professionals correlates with governors and trustees. We also explored a key area of work for governance professionals within MATs; that of communication between tiers of governance.

Top challenges for schools and trusts

The survey included questions for governance professionals about the challenges and key issues facing their schools or trusts. The goal was to assess their awareness of these challenges and other topical issues impacting their organisations.

Top challenges	Governance professionals	Governors and trustees
Balancing the budget	68%	60%
Support for pupils with special educational needs	39%	37%
Pupil attendance	36%	32%

Figure 13: Top challenges in schools and trusts cited by respondents

The top three challenges reported by governance professionals mirrored those reported by governors and trustees in NGA’s 2024 AGS.

“There are many factors here that link in together, for example, the rise in challenging behaviour from pupils (and parents) meaning staff recruitment and [retention] is a significant challenge. Add that to the cost-of-living crisis and support staff being able to find work in other sectors that pay more than support roles in schools. Pupil numbers are also falling, putting additional pressure on school budgets, staffing and financial and curriculum planning going forwards ...”

Financial outlook

The survey findings continue to raise alarm over the ability of boards to balance income and expenditure, with 40% of governance professionals stating their boards are unable to balance income and expenditure without drawing on surplus or resorting to licensed deficits. These concerns are further highlighted in respondents’ views on the medium-to long-term financial positions of their schools and trusts.



Views on financial outlook in the school/trust	Governance professionals	Governors and trustees
<i>We are financially sustainable with current levels of funding and income</i>	16%	19%
<i>We are financially sustainable with efficiency savings and drawing on unspent funds</i>	44%	40%
<i>We are financially unsustainable without significant changes</i>	33%	34%
<i>Don't know</i>	7%	7%

Figure 14: Financial outlook in the school/trust

Similarly, the survey highlights the persistent challenges surrounding provision for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in England. Respondents reported difficulty in accessing funding, the increased strain on LAs and the difficulty in obtaining Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans as the top issues in relation to pupils with SEND.

“...The appalling lack of support and funded resources for specialist student support e.g. SEND and other health issues means that schools are being 'blamed' for not providing sufficient support. Social media hatred is writ large, resulting in staff feeling more like leaving teaching. Schools are having to deal with the attendance and behaviour issues first, and no matter what they do, as a result, it's reducing schools' ability to improve outcomes.”

Volunteer recruitment

Concerns with the difficulty of recruiting new governing board members also remain consistent between those governing and governance professionals and further highlights the continued challenge of recruiting volunteers. 74% of respondents agreed that they find it difficult to recruit and only 11% disagreed. This is compared to 76% of those governing that agreed in the AGS.

We find it difficult to recruit governors/trustees to the governing board	Governance professionals	Governors and trustees
Strongly agree	41%	33%
Agree	33%	43%
Neither agree nor disagree	15%	4%
Disagree	10%	13%
Strongly disagree	1%	6%
Don't know	N/A	1%

Figure 15: Respondent views on recruiting governors/trustees

MAT communication channels

Structured communication is essential for ensuring that local governance aligns with the strategic priorities of the trust board. Governance professionals working in MATs reported various methods to facilitate communication between the local tier and the trust board:

Communication method	%
Providing opportunities for local tier agenda items to be fed back to the trust board	72%
Organising chairs' forums	66%
Organising annual governance conferences	46%
Developing governance newsletters	37%
Producing local governance reports	38%
Other	8%

Figure 16: Top communication methods reported by respondents

“Link governor meetings where the lead trustee for the area leads a meeting between link governors from across the trust.”

“Chairs invited to observe [trust board] meetings.”

“We hold Trust Days three times a year when Governors are invited to attend.”

Key insights

The similarities across answers to the questions posed from the annual governance survey highlights the breadth of knowledge that governance professionals have on the issues facing their schools and trusts.

These findings demonstrate how well they know the settings they work in, and the depth of understanding they have of the sector as a whole, all of which underpins their role as the ‘professionals’ that make an invaluable contribution to board efficiency, effectiveness, productivity and compliance in schools and trusts across England.

Conclusion

This report reveals the evolving role of governance professionals in schools and trusts. While progress has been made in pay and access to training, challenges remain, particularly in relation to career progression, pay disparities, and the recognition of qualifications.

Governance professionals are critical to the effective functioning of schools and trusts, and addressing these challenges will ensure their continued engagement and development, as well as retention within the profession itself.

Key recommendations

1. **Address pay disparities according to role** – leaders should ensure pay is robustly benchmarked to not only recognise and reward the skills and experience governance professionals bring to their schools and trusts, but to address the wider recruitment and retention challenges within the sector.
2. **Enhance training and development** – schools, trusts, and training providers should expand access to comprehensive induction programmes and ensure training is aligned with the evolving demands of governance and emerging areas like AI and digital tools.
3. **Formalise career progression pathways** – to retain talent, NGA’s career pathway should be used by employers to help them recognise governance professionals’ qualifications and contributions.
4. **Improve role clarity** – ensure that the governance professional role is clearly defined and differentiated from other administrative positions. This will help to address workload issues and ensure that governance professionals can focus on their core responsibilities.
5. **Improve appraisal systems** – boards and school leaders should ensure regular, meaningful appraisals that include discussions on professional development, workload, and remuneration.

By addressing these areas, governance professionals will be better supported, leading to more effective governance in schools and trusts and ultimately increased outcomes for our children and young people.

A final note.

As chair of a multi academy trust myself, I know I couldn't carry out my role without our governance professional. Like so many of you, she ensures our board is effective, manages and reduces trustee workload, ensures we are compliant, constantly strives for efficiencies, keeps us working strategically, interjects with consideration if we go off track, and is always available for advice and guidance.

You are the backbone of the governance system.

Your contributions need applauding. Your voice heard. Your role, celebrated. NGA strives to support you, and much of the findings of this research will drive our work for the coming year. We will continue to work on your behalf, developing further guidance and resources, providing networking opportunities for you to learn from one another, and professional development services to support you and your boards.

Once more, a huge thanks for all you do.

Charlotte Harding, NGA's Director of Professional Development

Further reading

- [Governance professionals: 2021 and beyond](#)
- [Putting a price on effective clerking](#)
- [The role of the local tier in MATs](#)
- [MAT governance: the future is local](#)

Training and development

- [Leading Governance: Clerking essentials](#)
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About us

NGA is the national membership association for governors, trustees and governance professionals in England's state schools and trusts.

We empower those in school and trust governance with valuable resources, expert support and e-learning to shape stronger governance. Together, we're raising standards and ensuring every pupil can thrive today – and tomorrow.



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Development for Clerks



Level 3 Certificate in the Clerking of School and Academy Governing Boards

Accredited by the Chartered Governance Institute, this qualification develops the knowledge and skills needed for high-quality clerking. Designed for governance professionals with at least three months' experience and currently working in any school or trust setting.

- Master key elements of effective governance
- Navigate structures, compliance, and communication
- Demonstrate the skills and behaviours of an effective clerk
- Plan and record meetings, managing the board's annual business
- Provide clear advice and handle complex governance situations

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