



Specialists in School Governance

Professional School Governance  
Support, Advice and Clerking Services

**Service Level Agreement from 2016-17**

**Academies, Free Schools and  
Local Governing Boards of Multi Academy Trusts**

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## **To Subscribe to Services:**

### **The school will be required to provide the following documentation;**

- Copy of the funding agreement including all annexes and up to date Articles of Association if amendments have been made since incorporation,
- Copy of certificate of incorporation

In the case of a local governing board of a multi academy trust the following must **also** be provided;

- Scheme of Delegation
- A copy of any Supplementary Agreement

# Background

## Cooper Barton Ltd - About Us

### Our Purpose

Our purpose is to support governing boards to be as effective as possible in carrying out their core purpose - to enable all children and young people in their care to achieve the best possible education. Acknowledging that our customers are publicly funded, our philosophy is to provide professional services which deliver best value.

Our experience tells us that what governors need is the right support, at the right time, delivered in the right way. We understand that governors, including principals, need access to high quality, accurate information when it's convenient to them, and support to enable them to harness modern technology to improve communication and use their time to best effect.

### Our Vision

To use our expertise in school governance to provide governing boards with high quality advice, consultancy, clerking support and training services which are independent, responsive and sustainable. Our aim is to redirect resources from printing and postage costs to electronic methods of communication. Working in partnership with GovernorHub, we provide a simple web-based, secure communications system for governing boards that sign up to our service.

To provide a professional, higher status clerking service. We support the aims of the National Governors' Association 'Clerking Matters' 2016 campaign and are members of its Clerks' Advisory Group. Our aims are to:

- increase the understanding of the importance of the clerk's role and what can be expected of a well-trained clerk
- provide governing boards with good clerks
- provide induction training and continuing professional development for clerks
- ensure that clerks are appropriately paid to reflect the job they do

### Who we are

Tracy Barton and Patricia Cooper have together over 40 years' experience in school governance. They have spent several years working in local authority Governor Support providing clerking services, training and advice to governing bodies. For more details please visit our website [www.cbgovernance.co.uk](http://www.cbgovernance.co.uk)

## **Benefits of using Cooper Barton Ltd**

### **Experience and Knowledge:**

- Senior staff have substantial governance knowledge and experience as former local authority governor support officers and managers
- A wide range of experience as school governors over many years, in a number of roles including Chair/Vice-Chair
- Corporate members and contributors to various regional and national governance organisations

### **Access to GovernorHub included in annual clerking subscription:**

- Shorter lead times for the provision of governing board information
- School access to governing board membership and contact details maintained by the clerk
- Secure method of communication with and between governors
- Support for governors in managing electronic documentation and communication

### **Quality Assurance:**

- Clerks' and tutors' training provided on a termly basis
- Access to the National Clerks' Development Programme
- Performance management undertaken through observations, professional discussions, and scrutiny of agenda, minutes and course evaluations

### **Contact Details**

For help, advice and further information please contact us:

**Website:** [www.cbgovernance.co.uk](http://www.cbgovernance.co.uk)

**Email:** [info@cbgovernance.co.uk](mailto:info@cbgovernance.co.uk)

**Phone:** 01772 876 826

**Address:** Cooper Barton Ltd, 3 Cutt Close, Leyland, PR26 8NJ

## Professional Advice and Clerking Services

### Standard

- Clerking of 3 termly governing board meetings per academic year including the option of an additional governing board business<sup>1</sup> meeting early in the autumn term.
- Advice for Chair/Principal/Governors
- Subscription to GovernorHub

### Premium

- Clerking of 3 termly governing board meetings per academic year including the option of an additional governing board business<sup>1</sup> meeting early in the autumn term.
- Advice for Chair/Principal/Governors
- Subscription to GovernorHub
- Clerking of working committees (number to be identified on subscription form)

### Specialist

Clerking provision for the following hearings as and when required. The governing board must subscribe to standard or premium service to access specialist clerking services, unless otherwise negotiated:

- Pupil Discipline
- Pay Appeals
- Complaint Appeals
- Personnel (Attendance, Discipline, Grievance, Dismissal, Staff Appeals etc.)

### General Information

As part of the clerking service provided by Cooper Barton Ltd schools are automatically subscribed to GovernorHub. GovernorHub is a web-based resource, purpose built for school governors. As well as providing constitution and membership details accessible by both governors and the school, the system provides various other functions.

Governing board and committee meeting documents are provided electronically via GovernorHub. For further information please visit [www.governorhub.com](http://www.governorhub.com)

For any queries or questions regarding the services provided, including GovernorHub, please visit our website at [www.cbgovernance.co.uk](http://www.cbgovernance.co.uk) or contact us. Details are provided on page 4.

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<sup>1</sup> Business meeting covers: election of chair and vice-chair; review of governing board membership, skills audit outcome and governor recruitment processes; committee structure, membership and appointment of clerk; appointment of governors with particular responsibilities; approval of School Improvement Plan and updated School Self Evaluation; approval of governing board training and development plan; determination of future admission arrangements where appropriate.

## Independent Clerks' Support Services

### **Core Support:**

#### Documents:

- Termly extended core agenda
- Supporting agenda information
- Draft minutes
- Clerk's guidance notes

#### Briefings and Training:

- Termly agenda briefing and combined training session (half day per term)

#### Advice:

- Professional advice and support for the clerk via email and telephone

### **General Information**

Termly documents provided in electronic format

Termly agenda briefing and training session may be delivered from various locations on a termly rotation basis

Training to include current topics, and subjects as requested by clerks of subscribing governing boards

### **GovernorHub**

This service does not include subscription to GovernorHub.

## Service Standards

### General

- All work will be carried out in a competent and professional manner
- Services will be provided by experienced and/or suitably qualified individuals
- The governing board will be consulted from time to time on service performance.

### Standard and Premium Clerking Services

- On subscription a senior member of staff will arrange an initial diagnostic meeting with the chair and principal to discuss the board's current arrangements and recommend any 'quick wins' to improve the board's functioning
- Agendas will be prepared in consultation with the principal and chair of governors/committee chair and circulated within the legislative timescales
- For governing board and working committees draft minutes will be provided to the principal and chair for initial approval within 20 school days of the meeting

Following approval the draft minutes will be made available to view via GovernorHub

- Service provision will be reviewed annually to ensure agendas and minutes are in line with legal requirements and reflect best practice.

### Specialist Clerking Services

- Meetings will be arranged in consultation with appropriate parties and in accordance with the relevant procedures
- Meeting packs will be provided in hard copy format; copying and posting of packs will be undertaken by the clerk from the school premises
- The final agreed outcome letter will be provided to both parties following the panel's decision
- Draft minutes will be provided to the chair of the panel for approval, following which a copy will be retained for reference

As information relating to panel meetings will be of a confidential nature this will only be provided to those directly involved in the panel meeting.

## Client Obligations

### Standard, Premium and Specialist Clerking Services

- The company delivers the clerking service through GovernorHub, as such all governors are expected to have an active email address. In the event that an existing governor does not have an active email address the governing board will be required to consider what arrangements it can make to accommodate the governor(s) concerned.
- Negotiation and confirmation of agenda and documents with the chair and Principal to be completed within agreed timescales to enable these to be circulated within the statutory deadlines;
- The principal's written reports and other documentation generated by the school to be provided in accordance with agreed timescales to enable them to be circulated with the agenda within the statutory deadlines;

If principals or governing boards are unable to meet these requirements it will be the school's responsibility to circulate any additional documentation ahead of the meeting.

- Draft minutes to be approved by the chair and checked by the principal for factual accuracy within the agreed timescales;
- Clerks to be provided with reasonable working conditions including an adult size chair and a table at an appropriate height for writing/typing and a room layout conducive to an effective meeting;
- Effective chairing of meetings to enable the clerk to clearly minute governors' decisions and actions
- Instructions by telephone to be confirmed in writing by email upon request.

### Independent Clerks Support Services

- The governing board should ensure that their clerk understands the importance of attending the termly agenda briefings and training sessions.
- The governing board should ensure that their clerk has appropriate time allocated to enable them to attend the termly agenda briefings and training sessions.
- If the clerk has an additional role in school, in order for them to carry out their role effectively, the governing board should ensure that a separate employment contract is in place reflecting the clerk's role and their accountability to the governing board.



## Payment Terms and Duration

### Agreement Duration

- Annual agreement period from 1 September to 31 August. In-year subscriptions charged on a pro-rata basis.
- Agreement is on a 'rolling contract' basis with notice for change required by 30 April for the following academic year (September), unless otherwise negotiated.
- Any service provided is for the subscribing governing board and school only and cannot be used by any other non-subscribing school or governing board.

### Payment Terms

- Annual charges will be made at the start of each contractual period
- Charges for committee and specialist meetings will be invoiced on a monthly basis in arrears
- Invoices are payable 30 days from date of invoice

### Insurance

- Public Liability: £1,000,000
- Professional Indemnity: £2,000,000

## Concerns, Complaints, Comments

If you have any concerns, complaints or comments regarding the services provided please contact either;

- Tracy Barton [tbarton@cbgovernance.co.uk](mailto:tbarton@cbgovernance.co.uk) or
- Patricia Cooper [pcooper@cbgovernance.co.uk](mailto:pcooper@cbgovernance.co.uk)

**For further information and service charges please contact us. Details are provided on page 4.**