

# St Helens District Sports Council

Codes of Governance  
and  
Statement of Best Practice

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## *What is the Code of Governance?*

- The Code sets out a statement of best practice in the governance of St Helens District Sports Council
- Approved by a range of national voluntary and community sector support organizations
- Endorsed by the Charity Commission
- Launched in July 2005 by the newly formed national Governance Hub (a partnership of voluntary and community sector organizations)

# *What is governance?*

- Governance is defined in the Code as:
  - “the systems and processes concerned with ensuring the overall direction, effectiveness, supervision and accountability of an organization” (Cornforth, 2003)
- Trustees take ultimate responsibility for governance but all in the organization contribute to
  - ensuring our organization is well governed
  - effectively and properly run

## *How does the code work?*

- **The Code** is divided into seven main principles, each with supporting principles and specific details
- Example:
  - **Area D:** called “The high performance Trustees”
  - **Main principle D:** “The Trustees should have clear responsibilities and functions, and should compose and organize itself to discharge them effectively”
  - **Supporting principle 5:** “Trustees should ensure that they receive the necessary induction, training and ongoing support needed to discharge their duties”

- **Detailed statement: D15:** “all new Trustees should undergo a full induction, in which they receive all the information and support they need to carry out their new role, and can meet key staff, users and beneficiaries, and other stakeholders”
- The Code includes a summary version of the Code - with the principles only - and an accompanying document called *Learning to Fly* designed for The DSC
- There is a practical toolkit accompanying the Code, including methods of assessment and review and practical exercises

## *Some principles in using the Code?*

- The Code is **not** mandatory - the Governance Hub want to encourage The DSC to use the Code as a tool to develop good governance
- We are invited to state our compliance with either with the full Code or the principles of the Code
- The Code has been adapted to our own circumstances
- The code was adopted in principle at a Trustee meeting on the 25<sup>th</sup> August 2006,

## *How can we use the Code?*

- To conduct a review of our organization's governance,
- using the suggested methods in the toolkit. For example,
- we could carry out:
  - a detailed review comparing our governance to the Code's best practice
  - a review or self-assessment based on the summary principles of the Code
  - a review using *Learning to Fly*

- To gain a greater understanding of good governance
- in our organization, using the suggested exercises in
- the toolkit - for example
- holding induction or refresher workshops on trustee roles and responsibilities
- a discussion about the boundaries between governance and management
- planning Trustee recruitment

## *Who are the trustees?*

- Full voting members of the governing body
- Entrusted with the assets (money, property, equipment) of the organization
- Operate within a formal set of rules (sometimes called a constitution)
- In a charitable company, company directors and trustees are the same people
- Trustees often delegate day to day tasks to staff or volunteers

## *What are the duties of trustees?*

- Comply with the governing document
- Duty of care – act reasonably and prudently according to our own expertise
- Comply with charity and company law as appropriate
- Protect the charity's property
- Act in the best interests of beneficiaries and avoid conflicts of interest
- Act collectively
- Seek advice where we do not have the expertise to take a decision
- Not financially benefit unless authorized

## *The Essential Roles of the Board*

- Set and maintain vision, mission and values
- Develop strategy
- Establish and monitor policies
- Ensure compliance with the governing document
- Ensure accountability
- Ensure compliance with the law
- Maintain proper fiscal oversight
- Respect the role of staff / volunteers
- Maintain effective Trustee performance
- Promote the organization
- Where staff are employed:
  - Set up employment procedures

## *What do you contribute as a trustee?*

- **Advisory** – providing expert advice and knowledge to help the organization make decisions and carry out its work
- **Regulatory** – keeping a close eye on how the organization complies with its legal and other requirements
- **Democratic** – taking particular interest in different stakeholders, to help give the organization direction and ensure they're brought into the governance debate
- **Educational** – stimulating debate, learning and sharing of expertise
- **Participatory** – seeking and supporting the voices of users of its services in decision-making

- **Networking** – being an ambassador, promoting the organization and bringing in important contacts
- **Involving** – motivating and developing board members
- **Visionary** – bringing passion to the mission of the organization and inspiring others to be motivated
- **Leaders** – steering the organization in the right direction
- **Supporters** – providing support to the staff and volunteers in the organization