National Leaders of Governance Study

Research brief

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Introduction

Background

This research brief summarises the results of a study commissioned by the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) on the National Leaders of Governance initiative.[1]

National Leaders of Governance (NLGs) are experienced chairs of governors (COG) who support chairs of governors in other schools. The initiative began in 2012 and is one element of the government's plan to give schools a central role in developing a self-improving and sustainable school-led system.

The aims of this study were to ascertain:

- What are the benefits of NLGs to chairs and their schools
- What works well about deployments
- What are the barriers/what hasn't worked
- Whether NLG support extends and develops beyond the deployment

Methodology

The National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) commissioned BMG Research to undertake analysis of two sets of data collected by NCTL on the national leaders of governance initiative. One dataset ('Impact') comprised feedback from NLGs, who undertook online evaluations via an online survey between 16 October 2013 and 24 November 2013. A second dataset ('Deployment') comprised evaluations returned online or on paper by supported schools (headteachers and chairs of governors), primarily between the 11 and 26 November 2013, but also including a small number of later returns (early 2014). Deployments were completed between June 2012 and February 2014.

A large number of questions contained in the datasets were free text questions, therefore a coding frame was developed by BMG and the comments analysed qualitatively, to look for key themes and the range of opinions.

267 deployments were evaluated by NLGs (from 134 individual NLGs) and 79 evaluations were completed by supported chairs and headteachers.

NLG respondents were asked to complete multiple evaluations where they completed multiple deployments (one evaluation per deployment) - see appendix 1 for the full

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[1] The full report is published alongside this brief.

questionnaire. For this reason most of the questions in this report are reported at a deployment level rather than a respondent level.

Where the question was only asked once irrespective of the number of deployments undertaken (e.g. 'What do you consider to be the barriers to securing deployments?') the sample base is respondents rather than deployments.

Results

Supported schools

Feedback suggested that NLGs were usually deployed to provide advice, support or mentoring for a chair, to review or develop governance, and/or to act on a school receiving a low Ofsted grade or entering special measures (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Supported: purpose of deployment
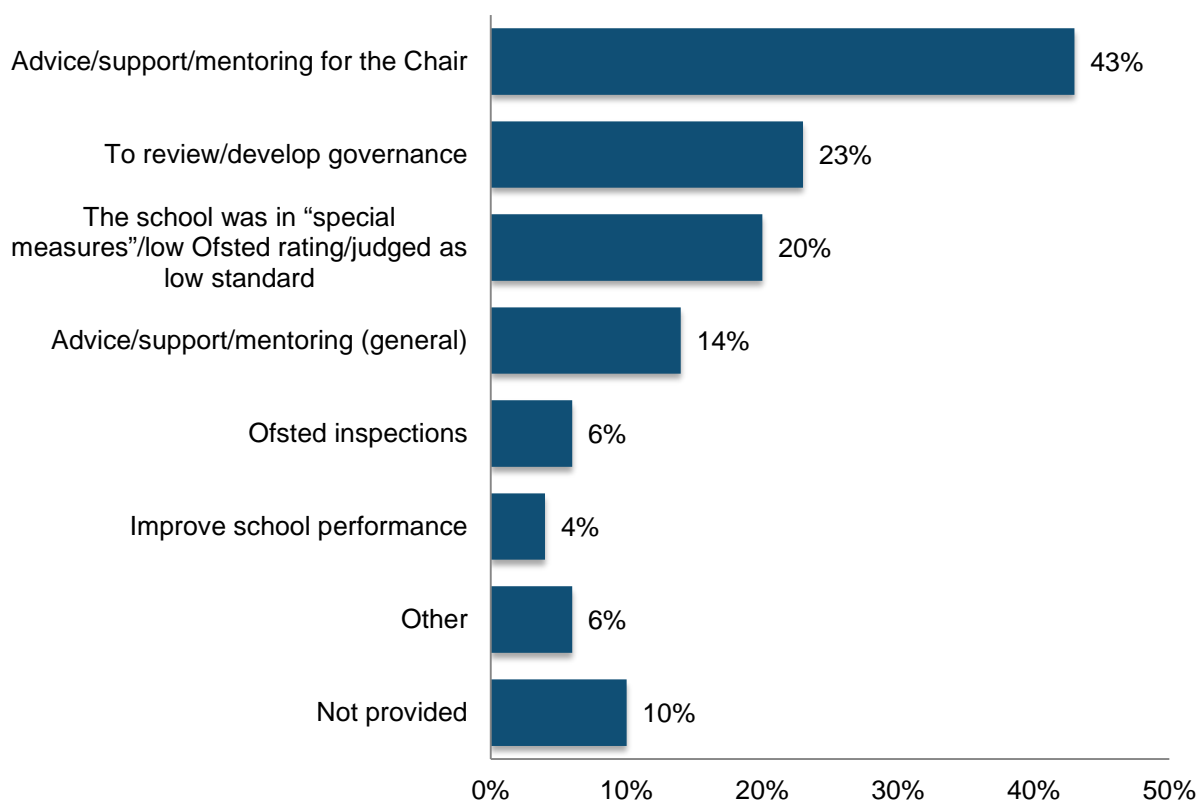
Sample base: All (79)

Users of NLG support appeared happy with the support they received. The majority described their needs as being met, described themselves as satisfied or very satisfied and were willing to recommend the NLG (more than 9 in 10 of valid respondents in each case).

Users valued in particular the appropriate experience and knowledge of the NLG, the advice and support the NLG provides and the ability to contact discuss, and talk things through with the NLG.

The most widely quoted impact by some margin was help in understanding roles and requirements and greater confidence, followed by helpful feedback/reviews and the governing body operating better (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Supported: What was the outcome/impact?

Category	Percentage
Helped to understand role(s)/requirements and felt more confident	37%
Helpful feedback/reviews	14%
Governing body operating better	13%
Received positive comments (incl. in inspections/reports)	9%
Achieved our desired outcome	9%
School was taken out of "special measures"	5%
Successful Ofsted	4%
Other	30%
Not provided	10%
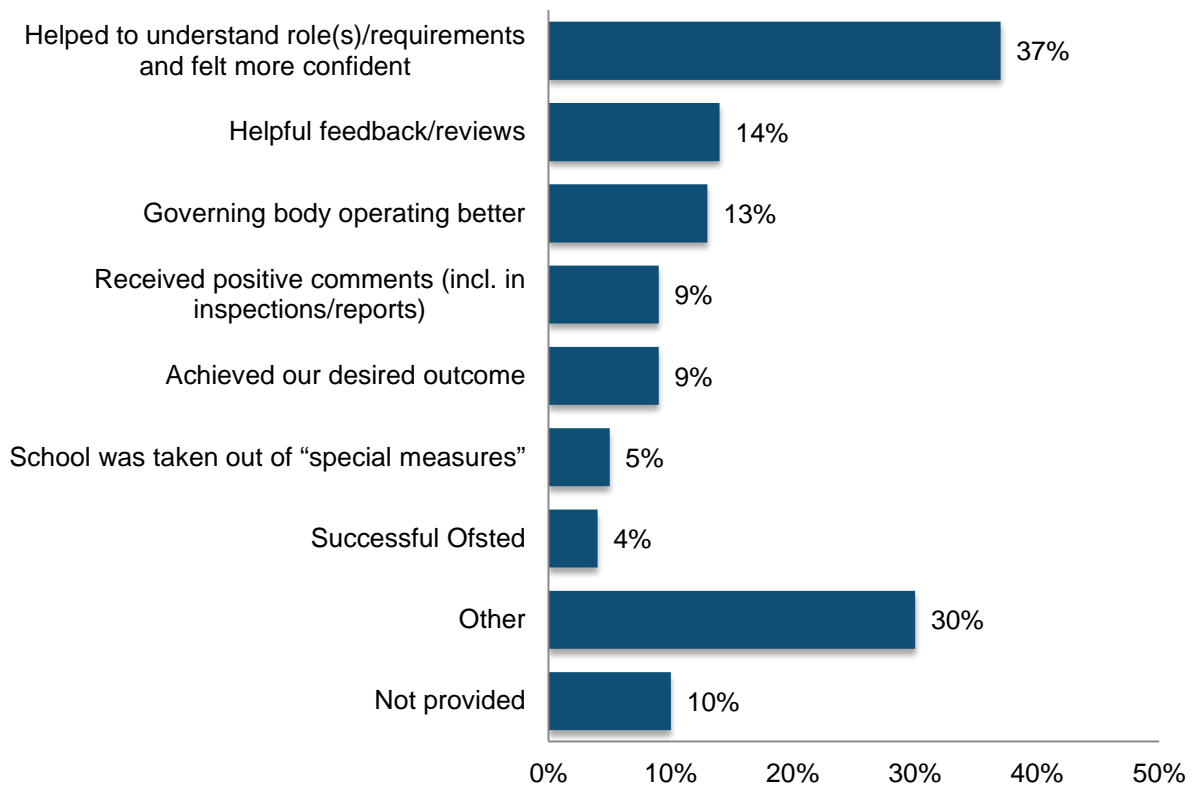
Base sample: All responses (79)

Only 1 in 5 supported respondents gave some response on anything further they would have liked included in the support, a group of just 15 respondents, with no discernible themes emerging. In contrast, when asked for further comments, 2 in 3 did so and the majority used this opportunity to express their appreciation for the service, its value and its helpfulness. Only one discernible theme emerged here that was negative (mentioned by 5% of supported respondents as a whole, or 4 respondents) and this was 'would have preferred/needed someone with similar experience'. Given that appropriate experience and knowledge is also the most valued aspect of the NLG service (mentioned by 29% of the sample, or 23 respondents), it suggests that matching the NLG to the school in some way (whether with similar or contrasting experience or knowledge) is seen as a vital component of the service and a component which those supported have generally been satisfied with, in deployments to date.

NLGs

NLGs who completed evaluations have undertaken a mean of 2 deployments each. At the extremes this included 16% who have done none and 15% who have done 4 or more. In between, 30% completed one deployment, 22% two and 13% three.

NLGs testified to the impact of their deployments on the leadership and management of the schools that they were deployed in. Many different types of impact were mentioned,

the most common being greater confidence, school performance or Ofsted rating, and better challenge to the headteacher/senior leadership team (SLT) (each mentioned by 1 in 10 deployments).

In about 7 in 10 of deployments, NLGs confirmed that they have seen improvements in the chair and 6 in 10 confirm that they have seen improvements in the governing body. In about 7 in 10 cases, further improvements were anticipated in the chair and likewise around 7 in 10 anticipated further improvements in the governing body.

Increased confidence was the most mentioned type of improvement in respect of the chair, followed by greater clarity/understanding of role/responsibilities, and improvement in challenging and keeping the school leadership accountable (Figure 3). NLGs anticipated further improvements from chairs in the form of continued development, understanding and knowledge of the role, followed by greater confidence and improving effective challenge.

Figure 3: NLGs: What improvements have you seen in the chair you support?
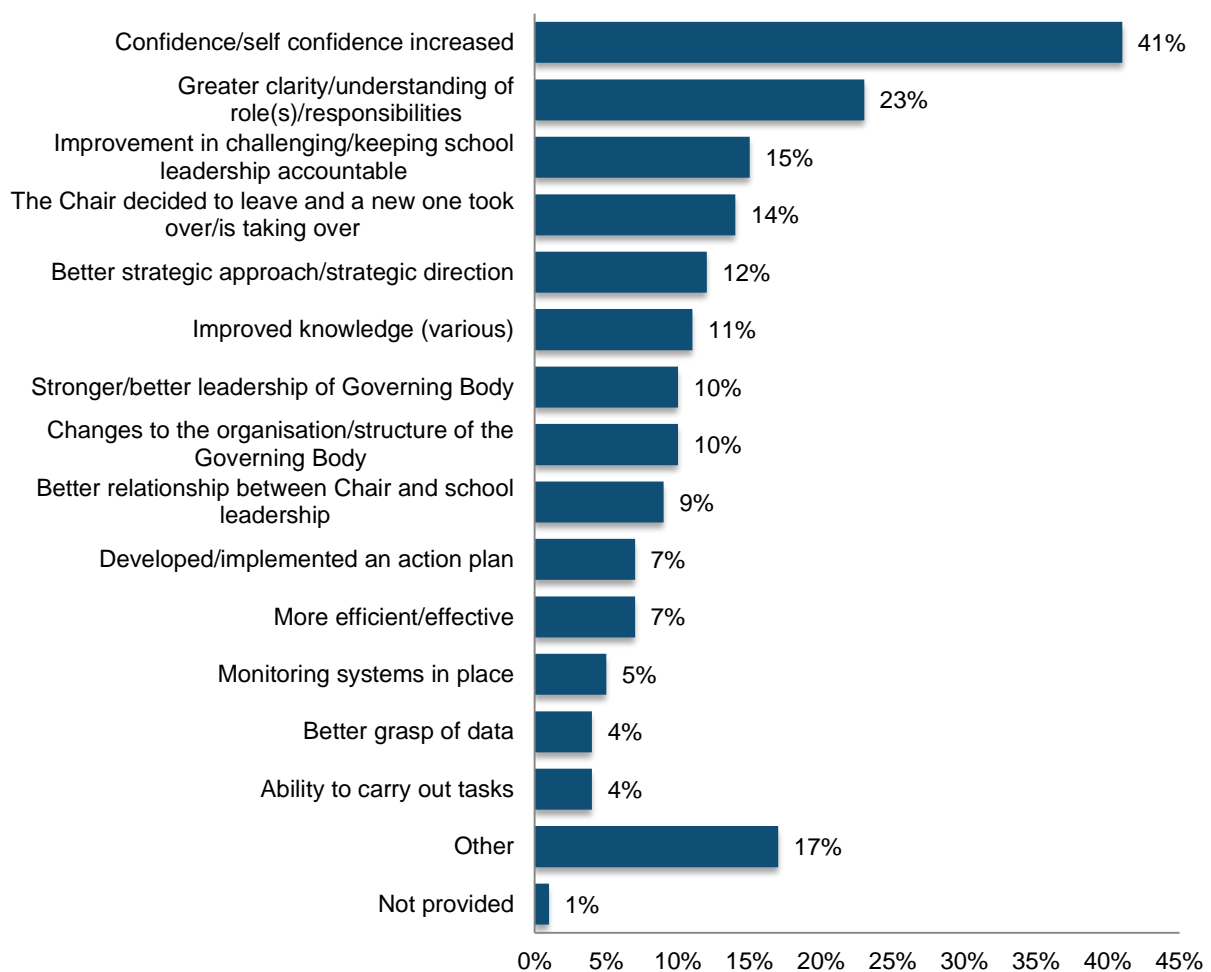
Sample base: All deployments where an improvement is noted (190)

In respect of the governing body, the most mentioned type of improvement already noted was increased awareness/understanding of roles and responsibilities, followed by clearer/better focus and being better able to challenge/hold to account. NLGs anticipate dfurther improvements from governing bodies in the form of improving challenge to the head/SLT, increased understanding of roles/responsibilities, and better school performance/Ofsted grades going forwards.

In the minority of deployments where improvements have not been noted in the chair, the main reason was that the deployment is at too early a stage, followed by the chair stepping down or being new. However, lack of engagement was also mentioned here.
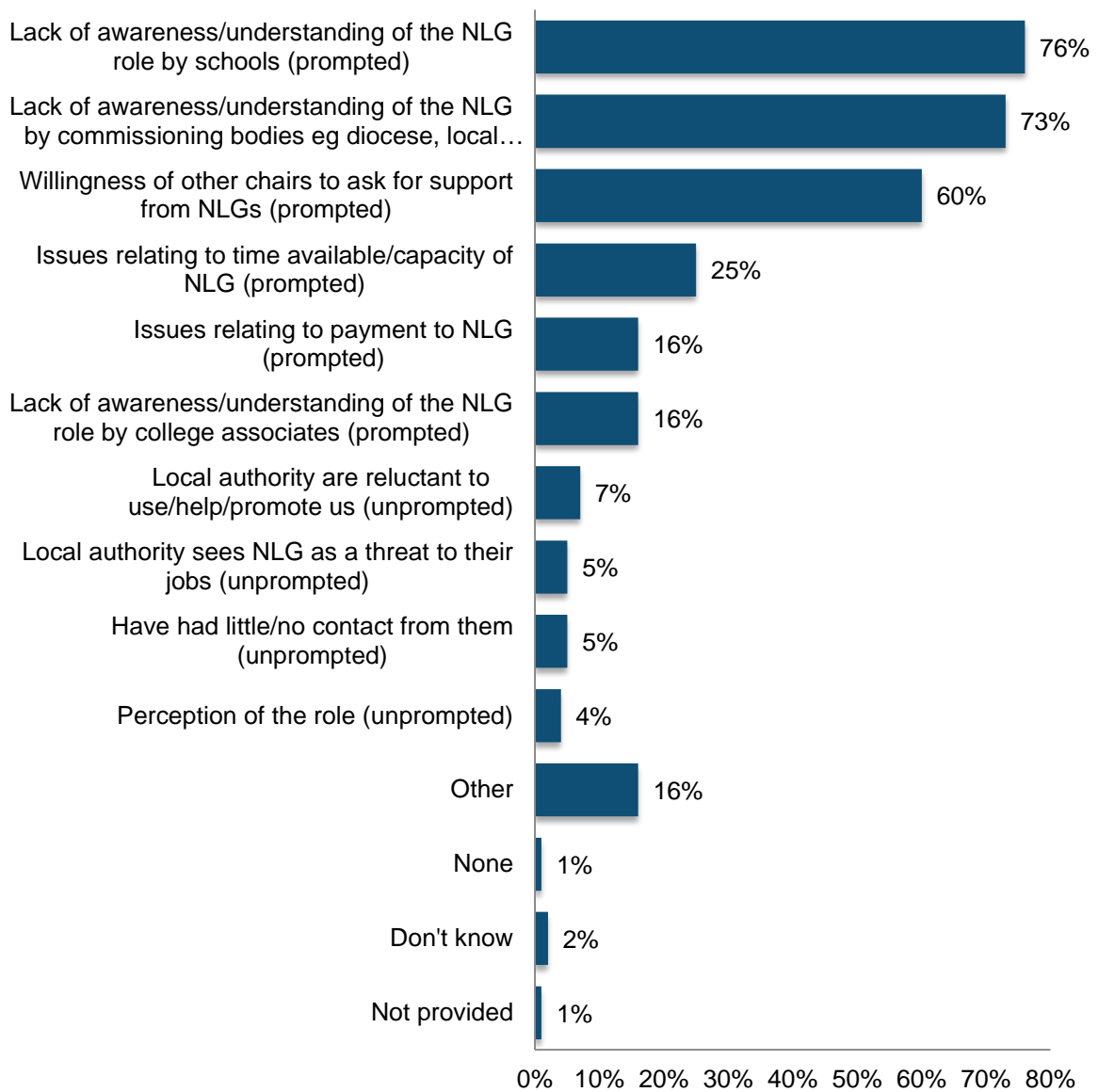
Nearly 8 in 10 NLGs stated that they continued to monitor the progress of the governing body/ies they have been or were supporting. This was most usually done through regular review meetings followed by keeping in contact with the chair or headteacher, email support/monitoring and checking on data e.g. Ofsted reports.

Asked about any challenges encountered, 1 in 5 of deployments were considered not to have met with challenge, and more than 1 in 10 provided no response. Others identified one or more challenges including resistance/reluctance to change (6%), differences with the head/SLT (5%) and poor communication (5%).

Considering barriers to securing deployments, NLGs considered the most notable barrier to be lack of awareness or understanding of the NLG role by schools, closely followed by lack of awareness or understanding of the NLG by commissioning bodies, such as the diocese, local authority, or multi-academy trusts (Figure 4). This suggests that awareness-raising should be a key priority in helping to secure deployments going forwards.

While the positive impact of deployments undertaken is anticipated to help promote the NLG programme, NLGs' feedback suggest that some chairs remain reluctant to ask for help, and so further work to remove any potential stigma could be of benefit.

Figure 4: NLGs: What, if any, do you think are the barriers in securing deployments?

Barrier	Percentage
Lack of awareness/understanding of the NLG role by schools (prompted)	76%
Lack of awareness/understanding of the NLG by commissioning bodies eg diocese, local…	73%
Willingness of other chairs to ask for support from NLGs (prompted)	60%
Issues relating to time available/capacity of NLG (prompted)	25%
Issues relating to payment to NLG (prompted)	16%
Lack of awareness/understanding of the NLG role by college associates (prompted)	16%
Local authority are reluctant to use/help/promote us (unprompted)	7%
Local authority sees NLG as a threat to their jobs (unprompted)	5%
Have had little/no contact from them (unprompted)	5%
Perception of the role (unprompted)	4%
Other	16%
None	1%
Don't know	2%
Not provided	1%

Sample base: All NLGs (134)

Appendix 1: Questionnaires

NLG deployment evaluation questionnaire: completed by supported headteachers and chairs of governors

Evaluation of National Leader of Governance Deployment

National Leaders of Governance (NLGs) are highly effective Chairs of governors who use their skills and experience to support Chairs in other schools.

Your name has been provided as the key contact for an NLG deployment.

We would be very grateful if you could provide feedback, so that we can use to improve the support NLG can provide to Chairs of governors.

Your Details

Your name:

Your school/ organisation:

Your LA:

Your email address:

Your phone number:

NLG Support

NLG name:

Please indicate the NLG service received

A school review of governance/ Deployment (coaching and mentoring support)

Would you recommend the NLG?

Yes / No

Purpose of deployment:

Do you feel the NLG support has met your needs?

Yes / No

Overall, how satisfied are you with the NLG support?

Very Satisfied / Satisfied / Not satisfied / Not at all satisfied

What was the outcome/ impact?

What particular aspects of the NLG support did you find most useful?

Is there anything further you would have liked to have seen included by the NLG?

Is there anything further you would like to say about the NLG support?

Tenure as Chair of Governor:

less than 1 year / 1 - 2 years / 3+ years

Finally, how long do you intend to continue serving as a Chair?

less than 1 year / 1 - 2 years / 3+ years / I am no longer a serving Chair / Other (please comment)

Review of governance

What aspects of the review did you find most useful?

Is there anything further you would have liked to have seen included in the review?

What difference has the review made to the effectiveness of your governing body?

Overall, how satisfied are you with the review?

Very Satisfied / Satisfied / Not satisfied / Not at all satisfied

Any other comments?

NLG Impact Evaluation Questionnaire: Completed by National Leaders of Governance

National Leaders of Governance Survey

The importance of good governance in schools is widely recognised, as Lord Nash said in a recent speech, "... we know from Ofsted, that where schools are weak, governance is, often, also often found wanting. The regulator found that, in around 40% of schools, governance is not as strong as it should be...".

The National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) would like to gather evidence from existing National Leaders of Governance (NLGs) on the impact of the work NLGs have undertaken and what additional support NLGs think would support their work in the future.

Thank you for agreeing to complete this survey. The questionnaire should take no more than 15 minutes to complete.

The survey is completely confidential. Names of deployment schools are requested only to allow us to analyse the data and your comments will not be linked to the schools in any way.

If you have any queries regarding this survey or if you experience any issues while completing it, please email college.consultations@education.gsi.gov.uk

To start the questionnaire, please click next below.

The test survey will remain open until 8am on 11 November 2013.

Deployment

1.   **Have you been deployed since you were designated as an NLG?**
         Yes   [Go to Q2]
         No   [Go to Q102]

Impact of NLG Support

[Ask if Q1=yes]
2.   **How many deployments have you completed?**
                1
                2
                3
                4
                5
                6
                7
                8

         We would now like to ask you a series of questions about the impact your

deployment(s) have had on the schools you are currently supporting or have supported. The questions will be repeated for each of your deployment(s).

You do not have to enter the deployment(s) in any particular order but it will help us analyse the data more effectively if you enter the name of the school for each deployment. We recognise that each deployment may have been different with different impacts, so we are asking for feedback about each deployment. The school name will not be used in the final report and any comments you make will not be linked to a particular school.

[Ask if Q1=yes]
Impact of NLG support - deployment 1

3.   **Please give the name of the school for our analysis.**

4.   **Since starting to support the Chair at this school, have you seen any improvements to the chair's leadership and management of their governing body?**
> *Yes*   [Go to Q5]
> *No*   [Go to Q6]

[Ask if Q4 = yes]
5.   **What improvements have you seen in the Chair you support?**

[Ask if Q4 = no]
6.   **Why do you think there has not been any improvement?**

7.   **Do you anticipate any longer term improvements in the Chair?**
> *Yes*   [Go to Q8]
> *No*   [Go to Q9]

[Ask if Q7 = yes]
8.   **What longer term improvements do you expect to see in the chair you are supporting?**

9.   **Have you seen any improvements in the governing body since you started the support?**
> *Yes*   [Go to Q10]
> *No*   [Go to Q11]

[Ask if Q9 = yes]
10.   **What improvements have you seen in how the governing body works since you started the support?**

11.   **Do you anticipate any longer term improvements in the governing body you are supporting?**
> *Yes*   [Go to Q12]
> *No*   [Go to Q13]

[Ask if Q11 = yes]
12.   **What longer term improvements do you expect to see in the governing body that you are supporting?**

13. **What, if any, impact do you think your deployment has had on the leadership and management and performance of the school?**

14. **What, if any, challenges did you encounter during this deployment?**

[If Q2 = 2, go to Q15]
[If Q2 = 1, go to Q99]

Impact of NLG Support - deployment 2

15. **Please give the name of the school for our analysis.**

16. **Since starting to support the Chair at this school, have you seen any improvements to the leadership and management of their governing body?**
    Yes [Go to Q17]
    No [Go to Q18]

[Ask if Q16 = yes]
17. **What improvements have you seen in the Chair you support?**

[Ask if Q16 = no]
18. **Why do you think there has not been any improvement?**

19. **Do you anticipate any longer term improvements in the Chair?**
    Yes [Go to Q20]
    No [Go to Q21]

[Ask if Q19 = yes]
20. **What longer term improvements do you expect to see in the chair you are supporting?**

21. **Have you seen any improvements in the governing body since you started the support?**
    Yes [Go to Q22]
    No [Go to Q23]

[Ask if Q21 = yes]
22. **What improvements have you seen in how the governing body works since you started the support?**

23. **Do you anticipate any longer term improvements in the governing body you are supporting?**
    Yes [Go to Q24]
    No [Go to Q25]
[Ask if Q23 = yes]
24. **What longer term improvements do you expect to see in the governing body that you are supporting?**

25. **What, if any, impact do you think your deployment has had on the leadership and management of the school?**

26.   **What, if any, challenges did you encounter during this deployment?**

[If Q2 = 3, go to Q27]
[If Q2 = 2, go to Q99]

Impact of NLG Support - deployment 3

27.   **Please give the name of the school for our analysis.**

28.   **Since starting to support the Chair at this school, have you seen any improvements to the leadership and management of their governing body?**
          Yes   [Go to Q29]
          No   [Go to Q30]

[Ask if Q28 = yes]
29.   **What improvements have you seen in the Chair you support?**

[Ask if Q28 = no]
30.   **Why do you think there has not been any improvement?**

31.   **Do you anticipate any longer term improvements in the Chair?**
          Yes   [Go to Q32]
          No   [Go to Q33]

[Ask if Q31 = yes]
32.   **What longer term improvements do you expect to see in the chair you are supporting?**

33.   **Have you seen any improvements in how the governing body works since you started the support?**
          Yes   [Go to Q34]
          No   [Go to Q35]

[Ask if Q33 = yes]
34.   **What improvements have you seen in the governing body since you started the support?**

35.   **Do you anticipate any longer term improvements in the governing body you are supporting?**
          Yes   [Go to Q36]
          No   [Go to Q37]

[Ask if Q35 = yes]
36.   **What longer term improvements do you expect to see in the governing body that you are supporting?**

37.   **What, if any, impact do you think your deployment has had on the leadership and management of the school?**

38.   **What, if any, challenges did you encounter during this deployment?**

[If Q2=4, go to Q39]
[If Q2=3, go to Q99]

Impact of NLG Support - deployment 4

39. **Please give the name of the school for our analysis.**

40. **Since starting to support the Chair at this school, have you seen any improvements to the leadership and management of their governing body?**
    Yes [Go to Q41]
    No [Go to Q42]

[Ask if Q40 = yes]
41. **What improvements have you seen in the Chair you support?**

[Ask if Q40 = no]
42. **Why do you think there has not been any improvement?**

43. **Do you anticipate any longer term improvements in the Chair?**
    Yes [Go to Q44]
    No [Go to Q45]

[Ask if Q43 = yes]
44. **What longer term improvements do you expect to see in the chair you are supporting?**

45. **Have you seen any improvements in how the governing body works since you started the support?**
    Yes [Go to Q46]
    No [Go to Q47]

[Ask if Q45 = yes]
46. **What improvements have you seen in the governing body since you started the support?**

47. **Do you anticipate any longer term improvements in the governing body you are supporting?**
    Yes [Go to Q48]
    No [Go to Q49]

[Ask if Q47 = yes]
48. **What longer term improvements do you expect to see in the governing body that you are supporting?**

49. **What, if any, impact do you think your deployment has had on the leadership and management of the school?**

50. **What, if any, challenges did you encounter during this deployment?**

[If Q2=5, go to Q51]
[If Q2=4, go to Q99]

Impact of NLG Support - deployment 5

51.   **Please give the name of the school for our analysis.**

52.   **Since starting to support the Chair at this school, have you seen any improvements to the leadership and management of their governing body?**
      Yes   [Go to Q53]
      No   [Go to Q54]

[Ask if Q52 = yes]
53.   **What improvements have you seen in the Chair you support?**

[Ask if Q52 = no]
54.   **Why do you think there has not been any improvement?**

55.   **Do you anticipate any longer term improvements in the Chair?**
      Yes   [Go to Q56]
      No   [Go to Q57]

[Ask if Q55 = yes]
56.   **What longer term improvements do you expect to see in the chair you are supporting?**

57.   **Have you seen any improvements in how the governing body works since you started the support?**
      Yes   [Go to Q58]
      No   [Go to Q59]

[Ask if Q57= yes]
58.   **What improvements have you seen in the governing body since you started the support?**

59.   **Do you anticipate any longer term improvements in the governing body you are supporting?**
      Yes   [Go to Q60]
      No   [Go to Q61]

[Ask if Q59 = yes]
60.   **What longer term improvements do you expect to see in the governing body that you are supporting?**

61.   **What, if any, impact do you think your deployment has had on the leadership and management of the school?**

62.   **What, if any, challenges did you encounter during this deployment?**

[If Q2=6, go to Q63]
[If Q2=5, go to Q99]

Impact of NLG Support - deployment 6

63.   **Please give the name of the school for our analysis.**

64.   **Since starting to support the Chair at this school, have you seen any improvements to the leadership and management of their governing body?**
   Yes [Go to Q65]
   No [Go to Q66]

[Ask if Q59 = yes]
65.   **What improvements have you seen in the Chair you support?**

[Ask if Q65 = no]
66.   **Why do you think there has not been any improvement?**

67.   **Do you anticipate any longer term improvements in the Chair?**
   Yes [Go to Q68]
   No [Go to Q69]

[Ask if Q67 = yes]
68.   **What longer term improvements do you expect to see in the chair you are supporting?**

69.   **Have you seen any improvements in how the governing body works since you started the support?**
   Yes [Go to Q70]
   No [Go to Q71]

[Ask if Q69 = yes]
70.   **What improvements have you seen in the governing body since you started the support?**

71.   **Do you anticipate any longer term improvements in the governing body you are supporting?**
   Yes [Go to Q72]
   No [Go to Q73]

72.   **What longer term improvements do you expect to see in the governing body that you are supporting?**

73.   **What, if any, impact do you think your deployment has had on the leadership and management of the school?**

74.   **What, if any, challenges did you encounter during this deployment?**

[If Q2=7, got to Q75]
[If Q2=6, got to Q99

Impact of NLG Support - deployment 7

75.   **Please give the name of the school for our analysis.**

76.   **Since starting to support the Chair at this school, have you seen any improvements to the leadership and management of their governing body?**

[Ask if Q76 = yes]
77. **What improvements have you seen in the Chair you support?**

[Ask if Q76 = no]
78. **Why do you think there has not been any improvement?**

79. Do you anticipate any longer term improvements in the Chair?

[Ask if Q79 = yes]
80. **What longer term improvements do you expect to see in the chair you are supporting?**

81. **Have you seen any improvements in how the governing body works since you started the support?**
[Ask if Q81 = yes]
82. **What improvements have you seen in the governing body since you started the support?**

83. **Do you anticipate any longer term improvements in the governing body you are supporting?**
[Ask if Q83 = yes]
84. **What longer term improvements do you expect to see in the governing body that you are supporting?**
85. **What, if any, impact do you think your deployment has had on the leadership and management of the school?**

86. **What, if any, challenges did you encounter during this deployment?**

[If Q2=8, go to Q87]
[If Q2=7, go to Q99]

Impact of NLG Support - deployment 8

87. **Please give the name of the school for our analysis.**

88. **Since starting to support the Chair at this school, have you seen any improvements to the leadership and management of their governing body?**

[Ask if Q88 = yes]
89. **What improvements have you seen in the Chair you support?**

[Ask if Q88 = no]
90. **Why do you think there has not been any improvement?**

91. **Do you anticipate any longer term improvements in the Chair?**
        Yes   [Go to Q92]
        No   [Go to Q93]

[Ask if Q92 = yes]
92. **What longer term improvements do you expect to see in the chair you are supporting?**

93. **Have you seen any improvements in how the governing body works since you started the support?**
        Yes   [Go to Q94]
        No   [Go to Q95]

[Ask if Q93 = yes]
94. **What improvements have you seen in the governing body since you started the support?**

95. **Do you anticipate any longer term improvements in the governing body you are supporting?**
        Yes   [Go to Q96]
        No   [Go to 97]

[Ask if Q95 = yes]
96. **What longer term improvements do you expect to see in the governing body that you are supporting?**

97. **What, if any, impact do you think your deployment has had on the leadership and management of the school?**

98. **What, if any, challenges did you encounter during this deployment?**

Impact of NLG Support

The following questions relate to all of your deployments

99. **Are you monitoring the progress of the governing body/ies that you have or are supporting?**
        Yes   [Go to Q100]
        No   [Go to Q101]

[Ask if Q99 = yes]
100. **How are you monitoring the progress of the governing body/ies that you have supported?**

101. **What, if any, impact have your NLG deployment(s) had on your own school?**

Deployment

102. **What, if any, do you think are the barriers in securing deployments? Please tick all that apply**
- *Issues relating to time available/capacity of NLG*
- *Lack of awareness/understanding of the NLG by commissioning bodies (eg diocese, local authority, multi-academy trusts etc)*
- *Issues relating to payment to NLG*
- *Lack of awareness/understanding of the NLG role by schools*
- *Willingness of other chairs to ask for support from NLGs*
- *Lack of awareness/understanding of the NLG role by college associates*

102. **Other barriers or additional comments**

Review of governance

103. **Please list any reviews of governance you have undertaken, excluding those undertaken in pilot.**

Please include the name of the school and the date you started the review.

Case studies

104. We are looking to develop some case studies of NLG work as part of this evaluation. To develop the case studies we are looking for NLGs who would be prepared to be interviewed. The interviews will take approximately 30 minutes and are planned to take place during November 2013.

   Would you be willing to take part in this work?
   Yes   [Go to Q105]
   No   [Go to Q108]

[Ask if Q104 = yes]

Case studies

Thank you for offering to help with the case studies, please leave your contact details below and a member of the research team will be in touch in further details.

105. **Name**

106. **Contact e-mail**

107. **Telephone number**

Thank you

This is the end of the questionnaire.

108. **To help us monitor response rates, please enter your name below. Your**

name will not be used in any way during the analysis but providing your name will mean that you won't receive reminders about completing survey.

If you haven't already updated your deployment details with the NLG team, please email chair.ofgovernors@education.gsi.gov.uk.

Please click submit below to send your responses.

Thank you for your time, your feedback is important.

National College for
Teaching & Leadership