

Board Development

Healthskills has been working with NHS Boards since the mid 1990s, supporting their [strategy development, organisational transition and performance development needs](#). In particular we have worked with Boards to:

- Drive their journey to Foundation Trust status
- Design their strategic and organisational development plans to support World Class Commissioning
- Review functions and performance of the Board as new provider organisations and social enterprises
- Develop behaviours that strengthen Board challenge
- Push for higher organisational performance through focused strategic leadership
- Develop system governance as organisations develop different partnership arrangements, such as GP collaboratives

Our added value

Strategic teams have been asking for our help for over 16 years and we can apply excellent facilitation skills, [building credibility quickly](#). But what else do we bring?

- We work with Boards from Acute trusts, Primary Care Trusts, Community Provider Services and social enterprises and bring [experience](#) of working across all NHS and care sectors and the DH over a number of years. This breadth and depth of experience is noted and appreciated by clients
- We do not avoid the [brutal truths](#) - we are proud of developing open and

transparent relationships with our clients, providing full and honest feedback

- We ensure our delivery and products are up to date and of the [highest quality](#), benchmarking our services against our competitors, collecting client feedback and ensuring fit with policy and regulator direction
- We bring a range of [partners](#) with us to support our work - we have worked in partnership with the Audit Commission, Capsticks solicitors, CASS business school - and are happy to widen our network to include other providers our clients may already be working with
- We establish success measures at the start of our contract and continually address progress against these measures to ensure we are delivering the [outcomes our clients need](#)
- We continually review our prices against the market average and our clients tell us our services are priced very competitively

How do we work with Boards?

Our focus is help Boards understand what they do and how they do it.

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

Jeffrey Sonnenfeld

‘What makes Great Boards Great’ Harvard Business Review Sept 2002

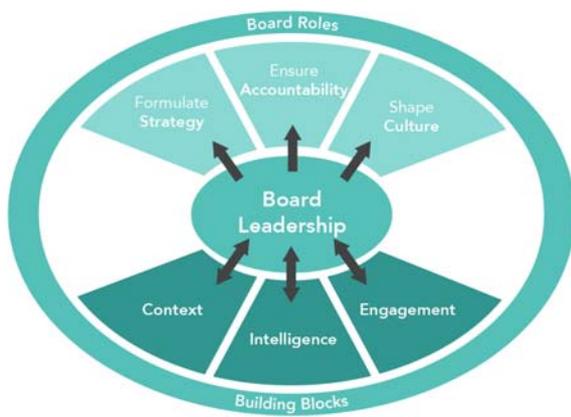
To help us review Board roles we use two models.

Bob Garratt is widely recognised in commercial and public sectors as a [leading edge thinker](#) on Board functions. His model

of the Learning Board¹ is used by a range of organisations, including Monitor, to understand their function.

We work with Bob to deliver the FT NED and Company Secretary programmes at CASS Business School, City University.

We also use the NHS National Leadership Council's [Healthy Board model](#) to underpin our reviews and development planning with Boards.



The combination of commercial and NHS focused models enables us to apply the best of both worlds to our clients needs.

Each client's needs are different so as a first step we undertake some [diagnostic work](#) to fully understand and establish those needs. We ensure that this diagnostic stage is developmental in itself. This stage could include:

- Semi structured interview with Board members
- Self assessment and/or 360° assessment of capabilities using our comprehensive Board competency model
- Observation of the Board in action at various meetings
- Review with the Chair and Chief Executive
- Stakeholder feedback

We would then work with the Board in a [co-design workshop](#) to understand the feedback and to design the future development programme.

Elements of the programme could include work with the whole Board, NEDs or EDs as a specific group or with individuals. Recognising the limited time Board members have for development activities, we ensure that the delivery creates high impact. Some learning requires traditional seminar style delivery, which we ensure is engaging and of immediate value. We also use a range of other delivery mechanisms to deliver the greatest learning in the time invested.

Client feedback has been [universally positive](#) about these approaches. They include but are not limited to:

- Strategy lock ins that enable Boards to update and interpret policy to local circumstances
- Organisational raids - that enable Boards to explore specific challenges from another organisation's perspective
- Board to Board challenges and other simulations
- Scenario planning sessions
- Buddy Boards to learn from those who have been or are in similar circumstances
- Executive coaching from credible, experienced commercial and public sector coaches

To find out more about our approach to Board Development contact Ann Hepworth on [0800 652 3322](#)

¹ Garratt B., (2010) 3rd edition *The fish Rot from the head The crisis in our boardrooms: developing the crucial skills of the competent director* Profile Books

