

**Non-executive director**

**Role and responsibilities**

**Role of the Little Thinkers board**

The Little Thinkers board plays a key role in shaping the strategy, vision and purpose of the organisation. It holds the organisation to account for the delivery of strategy and ensures value for money. It is also responsible for ensuring that risks to the organisation and the public are managed and mitigated effectively. Led by an independent chair and composed of a mixture of both executive and independent non-executive members, the board has a collective responsibility for the performance of the organisation.

The purpose of the board is to govern effectively, and in so doing build child, parent, carer, public and stakeholder confidence that the development and welfare of children in its care is in safe hands. This fundamental accountability to the public and stakeholders is delivered by building confidence:

* In the quality of child development and welfare support provided.
* That resources are invested in a way that delivers optimal outcomes for children.
* That public money is spent in a way that is fair, efficient, effective and economic.

**Roles and responsibilities of the Non-Executive Director**

Non-executive directors will work alongside other non-executive and executive directors as an equal member of the board. They share responsibility with the other directors for the decisions made by the board and for success of the organisation in transforming life chances for children in our care. Non-executives use their skills and personal experience as a member of their community to:

**Formulate plans and strategy**

* Bringing independence, external perspectives, skills, and challenge to strategy development

**Ensure accountability**

* Holding the executive to account for the delivery of strategy
* Providing purposeful, constructive scrutiny and challenge
* Chairing or participating as a member of key committees that support accountability
* Being accountable individually and collectively for the effectiveness of the board

**Shape culture and capability**

* Actively supporting and promoting the culture for the organisation which is reflected in their own behaviour
* Providing visible leadership in developing the culture so that staff believe NEDs provide a safe point of access to the board for raising concerns
* Ensuring the directors of the board are ‘fit and proper’ for the role and champion an open, honest and transparent culture within the organisation

**Context**

* Mentoring less experienced NEDs where relevant

**Process, structures and intelligence**

* Satisfying themselves of the integrity of reporting mechanisms, and financial and quality intelligence including getting out and about, observing and talking to stakeholders
* Providing analysis and constructive challenge to information on organisational and operational performance

**Engagement**

* Ensuring that the board acts in best interests of the children in its care
* Being available to staff if there are unresolved concerns
* Showing commitment to working with key partners

**In particular, the responsibilities of Non-executive directors are to:**

* Commit to working to, and encouraging within Little Thinkers, the highest standards of probity, integrity and governance and contribute to ensuring that the organisation’s internal governance arrangements conform with best practice and statutory requirements
* Provide independent judgement and advice on issues of strategy, vision, performance, resources and standards of conduct and constructively challenge, influence and help the executive board develop proposals on such strategies to enable the organisation to fulfil its leadership responsibilities
* Ensure that children, parents and staff are treated with dignity and respect at all times, and that the child is central to the organisation’s decision making
* Ensure that the board sets challenging objectives for improving its performance across the range of its functions
* Structure the performance of management in meeting agreed goals and objectives
* In accordance with agreed board procedures, monitor the performance and conduct of management in meeting agreed goals and objectives and statutory responsibilities, including the preparation of annual reports and annual accounts and other statutory duties
* Ensure that financial information is accurate and that financial controls and risk management systems are robust and defensible and that the Board is kept fully informed through timely and relevant information
* Accept accountability to the Department for Education and Ofsted for the delivery of the organisation’s objectives and ensure that the Board acts in the best interests of children in its care
* Contribute to the determination of appropriate levels of remuneration for executive directors
* As a member of board committees, appoint, remove, support, encourage and where appropriate "mentor" senior managers
* Bring independent judgement and experience from outside the organisation and apply this to the benefit of Little Thinkers, its stakeholders and its wider community
* Assist fellow directors in providing entrepreneurial leadership to the trust within a framework of prudent and effective controls, which enables risk to be assessed and managed
* Assist fellow directors in setting Little Thinkers’ values and standards and ensure that its obligations to its stakeholders and the wider community are understood and fairly balanced at all times
* Ensure that the organisation values diversity in its workforce and demonstrates equality of opportunity in its treatment of staff and in all aspects of its business
* Engage positively and collaboratively in board discussion of agenda items and act as an ambassador for Little Thinkers in engagement with stakeholders including the local community, dealing with the media when appropriate

**The NED will:**

* Keep informed of updates across the sector and additional statutory requirements
* Offer challenge, support and insight into their respective areas
* Provide the board with updates and assurances