

## Preparing to become a NED

### What do I need to know?

---

Serving as a non-executive director is a rewarding, challenging way to contribute to an organisation's success. You provide diverse and fresh insights. You should be comfortable in offering challenge at Board level, be politically astute, creative, and focused on quality (Odgers and Berndtson)

#### **But how do you become a non-executive director (NED)?**

The Seacole Group is the national network for NEDs from Black, Asian and other minoritised communities serving on boards in the NHS and wider health system. Their mission is to strengthen representation, voice and effectiveness of NEDs from Black, Asian, and minoritized communities on Boards.

They offer the following advice for aspirant NEDs:

1. Network and let people know you're looking for a NED role. You may want to consider an unpaid role first to 'cut your teeth' as it were. Do not underestimate the skills you can build up in readiness for a NED role from being a school governor or charity trustee
2. Consider signing up to a shadowing programme e.g. [NEXt Director Scheme](#) run by NHS England or the [Insight Programme](#) led by GatensbySanderson
3. Study or attend a NED [governance course](#) with a body such as the Chartered Governance Institute.
4. Use your connections to identify someone who has experience of working at Board level. Ask them to share insights into the working of a board, advise you on your effort, and provide access to networks of directors as well as personal referrals
5. Develop your skills in seeking assurance and holding organisations to account. Be authentic and curious.
6. Leave your 'Imposter Syndrome' at the door and be proud of the "outsider" perspective you bring. The most successful boards have a high level of cognitive diversity. You will bring to the Board a unique skill set; combining professional and lived experience that no one else will.

7. You are there to offer fresh perspectives, not to rubber stamp existing thinking so be courageous in sharing your insights and because challenging status quo is hard, be compassionate to yourself
8. Why not apply to the Seacole Group [mentoring programme](#)? This programme supports aspirant and existing NEDs and Chairs.
9. Subscribe to the Seacole Group mailing list to keep up to date with the latest NED roles on the [jobs board](#) and events/activities that will support your NED journey.
10. Be clear about WHY you want to be NED and why that particular organisation.
11. In addition to the application process, all candidates will be subjected to pass what is called the **“fit and proper person regulation”**. The regulation requires NHS trusts to check all executive and non-executive directors (or equivalent roles) are suitable and fit to do the role.
12. Be willing to uphold the **Seven Principles of Public Life** (known as the Nolan Principles). These apply to anyone who works as a public office-holder. All public office-holders are both servants of the public and stewards of public resources.

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>Selflessness</b>   | Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.  |
| <b>Integrity</b>      | Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships |
| <b>Objectivity</b>    | Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.   |
| <b>Accountability</b> | Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this   |
| <b>Openness</b>       | Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing  |
| <b>Honesty</b>        | Holders of public office should be truthful  |
| <b>Leadership</b>     | Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs  |