

Second Edition

VOX Guide | Citizen Governance & Civic Participation

How to become a.... **School Governor, Magistrate, Councillor and other Governance and Civic roles in the Wakefield District**



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Contents



- Wakefield College**
p4 Board of Governors
- School Governors Services**
p5 Wakefield District School Governors



- Wakefield & District Housing**
p6 Focus Groups
Service Review Groups
- p7 Local Management Committees
Wakefield & District Housing Board



- Wakefield Council**
p8 Local Councillors
- p9 Overview and Scrutiny Panel
- Wakefield Together**
Neighbourhood Management Boards
- Parish & Town Councils**
p10 Parish & Town Councillors



- Department of Health**
p12 LINks
- South West Yorkshire Mental Health Trust**
p14 Members' Council



- HM Courts Services**
p16 Magistrates
- West Yorkshire Police**
p17 Special Constables
- West Yorkshire Criminal Justice Board**
Wakefield District Youth Offending Team
- HM Prison Service**
p18 Independent Monitoring Board

'One of the key ways that citizens are able to influence public services is through involvement in their governance and scrutiny.'

Department for Communities and Local Government

As a local citizen you can get involved in a number of governance roles in which you can help to improve services, make decisions and support your local community. These roles range from becoming a school governor to sitting on the Independent Monitoring Board of HM Prison Service.

In this guide we've provided information on the roles that are available in the Wakefield District at the moment. You'll find out a little more about what each role involves and how to go about getting involved.

You don't necessarily have to have any experience to take on these roles, just a desire to improve your community or an interest in the services involved.

The government believes that one of the key ways that citizens are able to influence public services is through involvement in their governance and scrutiny and recent estimates have put the current number of citizens formally involved in governance roles at more than 450,000 people. Most of these people involved in citizen governance roles agree that they can influence decisions affecting the local area.

If you would like further information on the featured roles or those not included in this booklet, or support in applying for any governance role please contact VOX on 01977 691922 or email info@voxnet.org.uk



Wakefield College Corporation Board of Governors

Expressions of interest are invited from people who are interested in and committed to education and training and can offer their time and commitment to the development of this large and successful further education college. Interested candidates would need to secure a nomination from a community organisation.

Nils Elgar, Clerk to the Corporation, Wakefield College, Margaret Street, Wakefield WF1 2DH
Telephone: 01924 789208
Email: n.elgar@wakefield.ac.uk
Switchboard: 01924 789789
Minicom Number: 01924 789270
General Enquiries: info@wakefield.ac.uk

Being a Governor is a voluntary role, unpaid but highly rewarding. Out of pocket expenses, such as travel or child care can be reimbursed. It involves attending board and committee meetings, as well as attending College functions and keeping up to date with College affairs.

School Governor Services Wakefield District School Governors

Being a governor means being part of a team of up to 21 governors, including the head teacher. No individual governor has the power to make decisions or take action because that power belongs to the governing body as a whole. The governing body must also work in partnership with the head teacher as he/she is responsible for the day-to-day management of the school. The governing body meets at least once a term to discuss the running of the school. This would include standards of learning at the school, the use of resources and the overall direction and planning of the school. There are also committees of governors which also meet each term to discuss aspects of the school (e.g. curriculum, behaviour,

finance) in more detail. Some governors are also appointed to link with particular subjects (e.g. Literacy, Numeracy or Special Educational Needs) or particular year groups.

Wakefield Local Authority supplies the following services to school governors and governing bodies:

- Clerking Service
- Training and Development
- Information and Advice
- Governor Recruitment Support

The clerking and training services are available to governing bodies on a subscription basis. The information and advice service and governor recruitment service are available free of charge.

School Governor Services, Family Services, Wakefield MDC, County Hall, Wakefield WF1 2QL

Governor Recruitment Support Telephone: 01924 305540/01924 305637

Training & Development Telephone: 01924 305655

Information & Advice Telephone: 01924 305640

Email: governor.support@wakefield.gov.uk

Information for anyone thinking of becoming a School Governor can be found at: www.wakefield.gov.uk > Education > Schools - Wakefield LEA > Governors > Becoming a School Governor



Wakefield and District Housing Focus Groups

Focus Groups consist of no more than 10 tenants who are invited to take part in an informal discussion on specific issues. The facilitator, usually a member of staff, cannot take part in the discussion but they will take notes and ask specific questions to get everyone involved.

Individuals are not identified in any notes and all personal details are kept confidential. If you would like to find out more about Focus Groups or are interested in taking part in one please email tenants@wdh.co.uk

Service Review Groups

This is an opportunity for you to influence the service delivered by WDH. You can help assess policies and service standards or get involved in testing new services.

The service areas covered include:

- Repairs and maintenance
- Cash collection and service charges

- Housing for older people
- Allocations
- Estate management
- Tenant participation and customer care

If you are interested in becoming part of a Service Review Group you can email tenants@wdh.co.uk

Local Management Committees

There are five Local Management Committees (LMCs), each representing one of the management areas of WDH. The key role for LMCs is to provide local solutions to local issues. They are accountable to the Board for the local housing services within their respective areas. They have an important role in considering spending priorities, including the scheduling of improvement programmes within their areas. LMCs have responsibility for listening and

feeding back opinions to the Board from the Area Housing Forums, Challenge Days, Service Review Groups and user panels. To encourage local people to become involved in the LMCs, all independent and tenant vacancies are advertised locally and in specialist BME press in order to attract all sections of our communities. If you are interested in applying to join one of the LMCs you can email

lmcmembership@wdh.co.uk

Wakefield & District Housing Board

The Board of Wakefield and District Housing is responsible for, and makes decisions about, the policies and strategic direction of the organisation. Its members are five tenants, five nominees from Wakefield Metropolitan District Council and five independents, chosen for their particular experience and/or expertise. Tenant Board Members are elected annually over three years, on a rotational basis, and will serve no more than three years without

re-election. Nominations to fill Board vacancies are sought from Local Management Committee tenant representatives and any vacancies created are then advertised locally and in specialist black and minority ethnic press in order to attract all sections of our communities. If you are interested in finding out more about becoming a member of the Board, you can email

boardmembers@wdh.co.uk

Wakefield & District Housing Local Management Committees and Board WDH Engagement & Partnerships Team, Wakefield and District Housing, Merefield House, Whistler Drive, Castleford WF10 5HX Telephone: 01977 724688, www.wdh.co.uk



Wakefield Council Local Councillors

To qualify as a candidate for elections to a local authority a person must be at least 21 years old on both polling day and on the day of nomination and must be a British citizen, a citizen of the Republic of Ireland, a Commonwealth citizen or a citizen of another member state of the European Union.

Any person wishing to stand as a candidate will need to complete the following paperwork:

- Nomination Paper
- Consent to Nomination
- Appointment of Election Agent

A prospective candidate must meet one of four qualifications:

If you wish to receive a set of nomination papers please contact the Electoral Services Office, Room 312, County Hall, Wakefield WF1 2QW, Telephone: 01924 305023, Email: elections@wakefield.gov.uk
Visit The Electoral Commission website for a comprehensive guide for candidates at local elections at www.electoralcommission.org.uk

- be a registered elector for the local authority area
- have lived in that area for the previous 12 months
- occupied, as owner or tenant, any land or premises in that area for the previous 12 months
- have had their principal or only place of work in that area for the previous 12 months

Details of factors which would stop you from standing are shown on the nomination forms.

If you are a candidate for a registered political party you will also need to submit:

- Certificate of Authorisation
- Request to use the Party Emblem

Overview and Scrutiny Panel

The Overview and Scrutiny service's role is to work alongside councillors to support the successful delivery of Wakefield's Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement. They help to improve the performance of the Council and its partners by challenging how services are provided and look at

improvements in the future. Overview and Scrutiny can help to achieve better services by challenging the performance of local public services and by playing a significant role in helping to develop and implement service improvements and key strategies and plans on behalf of the people of Wakefield

**Overview & Scrutiny Office, Rooms 47- 49, County Hall, Wakefield, WF1 2QW , Telephone: 01924 305957
Email: scrutinycontact@wakefield.gov.uk**

Wakefield Together Wakefield District Partnership Neighbourhood Management Boards

The Boards consist of up to 15 people. Residents of the area will make up over half the board, with up to three District Ward Councillors and up to four independent representatives from stakeholders with a key strategic interest in the area. Board members will play a major role in overseeing the Neighbourhood Management process and aim to influence and improve outcomes for local people, improve services in the area, listen to and represent

the views of residents and service providers. Whilst the Board does not have responsibility for a delegated budget it will be expected to put forward ideas and proposals on required actions and services in the area through the development of a Local Action Plan and suggest how resources may be better allocated. Meetings will be no more than two hours long and will normally meet no less than every two months.

**Agbrigg and Belle Vue: Shez Iqbal, Telephone: 01924 303309,
Email: siqbal@wakefield.gov.uk
Kinsley and Fitzwilliam: Elaine Edwards, Telephone: 01977 722388,
Email: eedwards@wakefield.gov.uk
Airedale and Ferry Fryston, Graham Haslam, Telephone: 01977 722160,
Email: neighbourhood@wdh.co.uk**



Parish & Town Councils

Parish & Town Councillors

Parish and Town councils in England are the first tier of local government. They are responsible for a range of local services and facilities including: allotments, cemeteries, community centres, footpaths, public clocks, public conveniences, recreation facilities and war memorials amongst others. A full list of the powers and duties of Parish Councils can be found at the National Association of Local Councils website: www.nalc.gov.uk

Parish councils are statutory bodies. The term of office of parish/town councillors is four years and elections are normally

held at the same time as the district council elections in that year.

Since February 2008 local councils have been able to create new town and parish councils without seeking approval from the Government and local people are able to petition their Council with recommendations to change the way their community is governed. In response, councils now have the power to review these recommendations and take decisions on the way forward without seeking the approval of the Secretary of State as was previously required. In November 2008 Communities

Secretary Hazel Blears outlined new plans to encourage more town and parish councils to be set up so that more decision making powers are devolved to local people and said she particularly wanted to see more set up in urban areas. The new plans include over £750,000 to be allocated to the National Association of Local Councils for a range of national projects.

In Wakefield District we have 30 parishes, but the City of Wakefield and Castleford, Horbury, Knottingley, Ossett, Outwood, Pontefract, Stanley and Wrenthorpe are currently unparished. Of the 30 parishes, 24 have parish or town councils. The other parishes, which are normally the smaller parish areas, will hold an annual parish meeting of electors for the parish but do not have an elected parish council.

Parish and Town Councils in Wakefield District

Ackworth
Badsworth
Criggleshole
Crofton
Darrington
East Hardwick
Featherstone
Havercroft-with Cold Hiendley
Hemsworth
Normanton
Nostell
Notton
Ryhill
Sharlston
Sitlington
South Elmsall
South Hiendley
South Kirkby & Moorthorpe
Thorpe Audlin
Upton & North Elmsall
Walton
Warmfield-cum-Heath
West Bretton
Woolley

For contact details for parishes within the District visit:
www.wakefield.gov.uk/CouncilAndDemocracy/ParishCouncils/default.htm

Other useful links for Parish and Town Councils:
The National Association of Local Councils website: www.nalc.gov.uk
Telephone: 020 7637 1865
The Society of Local Council Clerks website: www.slcc.co.uk
Telephone: 01823 253646



Department of Health Wakefield District LINK

Wakefield District LINK provides everyone in the community, from individuals to voluntary groups, with the chance to say what they think about local health and social care services; what's working and what's not; give people the chance to influence how services are planned and run; and feedback people's views to services so that things can be improved. The LINK is open for anyone to take part; individuals, carers, service users, community leaders, patients' representatives; groups such as charities, faith groups, tenant organisations, youth councils, BME (Black, and Minority Ethnic) organisations and business federations.

The LINK allows a person to get involved in ways that suit them. This could be by answering a

survey or representing the community when a health or social care service is being discussed with service providers.

To get involved with the LINK a person needs to register to be contacted about taking part in activities at a chosen level. The ways in which a person can get involved in the LINK are as a:

LINK Participant

This is a person, group or organisation that wants to influence the bigger picture through the roles of the LINK, even though they may not be in a position to participate on a regular basis.

A participant may be interested in a single issue, may take an active role in specific pieces of work that relate to their areas of

interest, or they may take a less active role by answering surveys or providing information or a view on behalf of an interest group.

LINK Member - Core Group

This is a person or group that makes a commitment to take part on a regular basis in the development and implementation of the roles of the LINK and to provide information to and collect information from a local community or a specific group within that community.

LINK Council Member

The Wakefield District LINK Council's roles and responsibilities are to:

- ensure that equality and human rights principles are integral to the LINK work
- on a six monthly basis, carry out a review of and make recommendations on the governance arrangements of the Wakefield District LINK
- promote the Wakefield District LINK and be the final arbiter of membership decisions
- report on its activities to local community and stakeholders,

including producing an annual report to the Department of Health

- agree the overall priorities and work plan of the Wakefield District LINK in consultation with wider LINK participants working with stakeholder groups and other networks to avoid any duplication of effort
- sign off formal report resulting from Wakefield District LINK activities
- decide where and when, how and by whom the Wakefield District LINK's powers should be used, for example to enter and view specified health and social care premises and refer matters to Local Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committees
- manage the resources of the Wakefield District LINK, including its financial resources
- agree, review and make recommendations on the role of the host organisation through a Service Level Agreement

Wakefield District Local Involvement Network, Shaw Trust, 3rd Floor, Bullring House, 23 Northgate, Wakefield WF1 3BJ

Telephone: 01924 374188

Email: celia.bateson@shaw-trust.org.uk or safeen.hussain@shaw-trust.org.uk



South West Yorkshire Mental Health Trust Members' Council

South West Yorkshire Mental Health are a specialist Trust providing mental health and learning disability services to the people of Calderdale, Kirklees and Wakefield. They also provide some specialist services to the whole of Yorkshire and the Humber.

There are a number of different roles available:

Members

Members are service users, carers, staff and local people who have a real interest in influencing how services are developed in the future.

Members elect representatives to sit on the Members' Council. Members receive information from the Trust and decide how much or how little they want to be involved.

Members' Council

Foundation Trusts have a Members' Council, which is made up of elected representatives of members and also nominated members from key local partner organisations.

The role of the Members' Council is to make sure that the Board of Directors, which retains responsibility for the day to day running of the Trust, is accountable to the local community. They also oversee the running of the Trust and help shape future strategy. The Trust Chair presides over the

Members' Council. The Council will operate in shadow form until the Trust are authorised as a Foundation Trust.

Board of Directors

The Trust Board of Directors is made up of executive and non-executive directors, who are responsible for:

- Developing the strategy, taking into account the views of members and the Members' Council
- The day to day running of the Trust
- Implementation of the strategy and delivery of the corporate objectives
- Meeting national standards and performance targets
- Reporting to members through the Members' Council

**South West Yorkshire Mental Health Trust, FT Membership Office,
Fieldhead, Ouchthorpe Lane, Wakefield WF1 3SP
Telephone: Fieldhead (Wakefield): 01924 327000
Email: membership@swyt.nhs.uk**



HM Courts Services Magistrates

There are two Benches of Magistrates in the Wakefield District - Pontefract and Wakefield. Magistrates are recruited from the local community and are required to be available for a minimum of 26 half days a year and for full day sittings. The Magistrates' Courts deal with more than 95% of all criminal cases which are heard at courts.

The role is a voluntary one and many employers allow staff time

Application forms can be obtained by writing to Ray Goodman at Wakefield/Pontefract Magistrates' Courts, The Court House, Cliff Parade, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF1 2TW
Telephone: Wakefield 01924 231101, Pontefract 01977 691608,
Email: raymond.goodman@hmcourts-service.gsi.gov.uk.
www.magistrateswestyorks.org.uk

off with pay to sit as a Magistrate. If, however, there is a loss of earnings, an allowance is available. Travel and subsistence can also be claimed. No legal training is necessary. There is a programme of practical training, much of which takes place outside working hours.

Magistrates sit on a Bench of three and there is always a qualified legal adviser in court to guide on law and procedure.

West Yorkshire Police Special Constables

One of the ways volunteers can join West Yorkshire Police is as a Special Constable. Specials are required to give 16 hours a month to policing and carry out a variety of tasks, including crime prevention, high visibility policing in local neighbourhoods, taking part in arrest operations

along with regular officers and liaising with the general public, victims and witnesses. Volunteers can also join the Force in a non-operational role by helping to staff the community contact points or as a Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator.

For further information you can visit www.westyorkshire.police.uk/section-item.asp?sid=13&iid=324 and fill in an online enquiry form. You can also access a **Special Constable Web Log where you can read the online diary of a Special Constable**
Telephone:01924 292293

West Yorkshire Criminal Justice Board Wakefield District Offending Team

Training and support is provided for volunteers working with the Youth Offending Service and no formal qualifications are required. Volunteers can undertake a variety of roles for example, Community Panel Members agree a programme of activities with young people subject to a Referral order and then meet on a regular basis to review how the young person is getting on.

Appropriate Adults are required to be present when young people are being interviewed by police, when they are subject to identification parades, and when their own parents are not able to attend. Mentors assist young people integrate back into society after custody and encourage new positive experiences such as education, training or employment, life skills and recreation.

For further information contact Stephen Crofts, 01924 304155
Email: wakefield-yot@wakefield.gov.uk
www.wakefield-yot.org.uk

HM Prison Service Independent Monitoring Board

There are currently over 1800 IMB members attached to prisons and immigration removal centres throughout England and Wales, and vacancies arise on a regular basis.

Being an IMB member can be challenging, rewarding, fascinating and extremely worthwhile. As well as the opportunity to participate in one of the most unusual and valuable types of voluntary service, members have the opportunity to meet and work with many people from diverse backgrounds and walks of life.

You will be invited to attend initial and ongoing training courses, and will also receive on-the-job training by experienced members of your local board. The first

How to apply can be found at:
www.imb.gov.uk/becoming-member/how-to-apply.html
HMP Wakefield, 5 Love Lane, Wakefield WF2 9AG
Telephone: 01924 246000
HMP & YOI New Hall, Dial Wood, Flockton, Wakefield WF4 4XX
Telephone: 01924 803 000

year in post is a probationary period in which board members receive induction training.

As a board member there is an opportunity to develop a wide range of personal skills whilst making a positive contribution to the people who are detained, and ensuring that they are treated fairly and with respect.

Serving as a board member is recognised as a public duty, and as such employers are obliged to allow employees "reasonable" time off from their employment to perform their duties as a board member.

Few forms of voluntary service are more unusual or more important, and although the work is often challenging it is always rewarding.

Being a magistrate is an interesting, challenging and rewarding way to contribute something back into my community.

"It is an exciting and challenging position and increases my knowledge of how the system is working and how we may make it better."

"If you can sit there and you can make a difference to somebody's life, and it has made a difference to another person's life then you feel satisfied."

"It all depends if the nerve in that person is touched... if something's sensitive to yourself, then you'll get up and do something about it."

"I think it's because you start to feel concerned about something. You can be angry about something and think well if I don't do something about this, what's the point in me moaning on?"

"There's a sense of satisfaction to know that you can have influence on something, that you have had that influence."

This guide was produced by VOX Community Empowerment Network

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