

# get it right on... **Accountability**

There are many reasons why your organisation should commit to achieving greater levels of accountability, transparency and consultation.

## **Greater effectiveness**

It will help to make your organisation more responsive to your stakeholders. Better governance is also likely to introduce new perspectives and ideas.

## **Greater respect**

While good governance processes are often not monitored by external laws or regulations, having accountability, transparency and consultation process in place will win you the trust and respect of those who take good governance seriously – in particular, funders and other key stakeholders.

## **Greater trust**

Community support is vital for the continued existence and success of any organisation. Showing good governance will leave you more likely to receive public trust for your work.

## **How can my Board become more ACCOUNTABLE?**

Here are some practical measures that your Board can put in place to ensure your organisation becomes more accountable:

- Undertake an independent financial examination/audit at least once a year and act promptly to resolve any concerns that are raised.
- Avoid conflicts of interest and deal with them promptly and properly if they do arise.
- Ensure all Board members understand their roles and responsibilities.
- Ensure all Board members understand the range and breadth of laws affecting your organisation and your Board.
- Keep good records of all Board decisions and actions.
- Have a complaints procedure for interested parties to voice any concerns they may have.
- Instigate a whistleblowing process to ensure internal problems are dealt with.
- Ensure the organisation has procedures in place to deal with media inquiries - never say "no comment".
- Regularly send funders and other stakeholders updates on funded projects
- Have clear policies/procedures to ensure decisions are and can be seen to be consistent.

## **How can my Board become more TRANSPARENT?**

Here are some practical measures you can put in place to ensure your organisation becomes more transparent.

- Publish a regular newsletter or webpages providing updates about the organisation.
- Compile and publish an annual report - send it to members, donors, funders, service users, etc. and ensure it is available to others on request.

- Put in place a "register of interests" detailing all the personal and business interests of current Board members – particularly those that could lead to a potential or real conflict of interest.
- Respond to requests for information. Be prompt and polite.

### **How can my Board become more CONSULTATIVE?**

Here are some practical measures you can put in place to ensure your organisation becomes more consultative:

- Put in place a diversity strategy to ensure that the views of your stakeholders are adequately represented on the Board.
- Establish a communications strategy to ensure that Board decisions are explained and widely known.
- Involve stakeholders when key decisions are being contemplated or a change in direction is being considered. Do this by:
  - Holding members' meetings or public meetings to allow the Board to explain its current thinking and to provide the opportunity for feedback.
  - Carry out a survey of members to ascertain their views.
- Commit to carrying out an annual survey of stakeholders to find out how they think the organisation is performing in key areas. Publish the results of the survey in your newsletter and on your website. Ensure you include the bad parts – but outline how you plan to address any perceived problems.

West Dunbartonshire CVS produces a range of resources covering different issues of interest to community and voluntary organisations. Please contact us if you would like one-to-one support or advice on any issue.

# GIRO