

Chorus Education Trust
Terms of Reference for Trust Board Committees
2025-26



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Context

The Full Board of Trustees operates under the Articles of Association, Funding Agreements and various other legal documentation set by and contractually with the DfE, which delegate responsibility to the Trustees as a whole body.

This document produced by the Board of Trustees sets the Terms of Reference under which the various board sub committees operate.

There is also a separate document setting out the Local Governing Body (LGB) Terms of Reference, under which the school Local Governing Body and their sub committees operate.

All the Terms of Reference are reviewed and checked by the Board annually in the summer term for the following academic year. They link closely to the Schemes of Delegation.

Terms of Reference of the Quality of Education Committee

1. Authority

The Quality of Education Committee is a committee of the Board of Trustees and is authorised to make recommendations on items within its Terms of Reference or specifically delegated to it by its Board of Directors.

It is authorised to request any information it requires from any employee, external auditor or internal auditor.

The Quality of Education Committee is authorised to request any outside legal or independent professional advice it considers necessary, normally in consultation with the Accounting Officer. However, the Quality of Education Committee may not incur expenditure without approval of the Board of Trustees.

2. Role

The role of the Quality of Education Committee is to scrutinise and maintain oversight of the Trust Schools' performance indicators in relation to curriculum, teaching and learning, and educational outcomes.

The Committee shall report to the Board of Trustees on a termly basis and make whatever recommendations to them that it deems appropriate within the context of its terms of reference. The Quality of Education Committee has no executive powers or operational responsibilities.

3. Duties

The Quality of Education Committee has duties in the following areas:

- To monitor the impact of Objective 2 of the Chorus Improvement Plan.
- To ensure that the Intent of the curriculum is ambitious, explicit and informs planning.
- To monitor the quality of teaching to ensure that the implementation of the curriculum has impact.
- To monitor educational results and achievement against agreed KPI targets, including agreeing planned strategies to raise standards for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and SEND students and monitoring progress and impact.
- To ensure that children and young people are prepared effectively for the next stages of their learning journeys.
- To monitor implementation of any post OFSTED action plans.

4. Administration

- The Quality of Education Committee will meet at least twice per year
- The Quality of Education Committee will consist of at least three members. The quorum for Quality of Education Committee meeting is two.
- CET staff may attend Quality of Education Committee meetings but will not have voting rights.
- The Chair and Vice Chair will be elected by the whole Board of Trustees from Chorus Education Trust Trustees and will serve for one year. No Chair or Vice Chair may serve for more than two consecutive years without the approval of the Board of Trustees.

- Draft agendas will be agreed in advance by the Chair and submitted with any supporting papers and the minutes of previous meetings to Chorus Trust services one week prior to the meeting.
- Agendas and all relevant papers should be circulated to each member at least five working days prior to the date of the meeting.
- Clerking services will be provided by the Executive Assistant.
- Minutes of meetings shall be circulated promptly to all members of the Committee for information and reviewed and signed at the next Quality of Education Committee meeting.
- The Quality of Education Committee will review these terms of reference on an annual basis and self - assess its performance against these terms of reference. Any training and development requirements should be reported to the Chorus Education Trust Board.

Terms of Reference of the ABS (Attendance, Behaviour & Safeguarding) Committee

1. Authority

The ABS Committee is a committee of the Board of Trustees and is authorised to make recommendations on items within its Terms of Reference or specifically delegated to it by its Board of Directors.

It is authorised to request any information it requires from any employee, external auditor or internal auditor.

The ABS Committee is authorised to request any outside legal or independent professional advice it considers necessary, normally in consultation with the Accounting Officer. However, the ABS Committee may not incur expenditure without approval of the Board of Trustees.

2. Role

The role of the ABS Committee is to scrutinise and maintain oversight of the Trust Schools' performance indicators in relation inclusion, behaviour, attitudes to learning, attendance and safeguarding.

The Committee shall report to the Board of Trustees on a termly basis and make whatever recommendations to them that it deems appropriate within the context of its terms of reference. The ABS Committee has no executive powers or operational responsibilities.

3. Duties

The ABS Committee has duties in the following areas:

- To monitor the impact of Objective 3 of the Chorus Improvement Plan
- The Chair of the Committee is the designated Child Protection and Safeguarding representative
- To approve the Trust's Child Protection and Safeguarding policies and monitor implementation.
- To ensure that the schools are safe and secure environments by overseeing the development and implementation of Trust policies on anti-bullying, discrimination, pupil behaviour and substance misuse.
- To ensure that the schools are compliant with safeguarding regulations.
- To monitor and scrutinise the numbers of fixed term suspensions and permanent exclusions.
- To scrutinise performance indicators relevant to the welfare, support and management of young people in the schools e.g attendance, fixed term suspensions and permanent exclusions.
- To monitor implementation of any post OFSTED action plans.

4. Administration

- The ABS Committee will meet at least once per term.
- The ABS Committee will consist of at least three members. The quorum for the ABS Committee meeting is three
- CET staff may attend ABS Committee meetings but will not have voting rights.

- The Chair and Vice Chair will be elected by the whole Board of Trustees from Chorus Education Trust Trustees and will serve for one year. No Chair or Vice Chair may serve for more than two consecutive years without the approval of the Board of Trustees.
- Draft agendas will be agreed in advance by the Chair and submitted with any supporting papers and the minutes of previous meetings to Chorus Trust services one week prior to the meeting.
- Agendas and all relevant papers should be circulated to each member at least five working days prior to the date of the meeting.
- Clerking services will be provided by the Executive Assistant.
- Minutes of meetings shall be circulated promptly to all members of the Committee for information and reviewed and signed at the next ABS Committee meeting.
- The ABS Committee will review these terms of reference on an annual basis and self - assess its performance against these terms of reference. Any training and development requirements should be reported to the Chorus Education Trust Board.

Terms of Reference of the Audit and Risk Committee

1. Authority

The Audit and Risk Committee is a committee of the Board of Trustees and is authorised to make recommendations on items within its Terms of Reference or specifically delegated to it by its Board of Directors.

It is authorised to investigate any activity within its terms of reference or specifically delegated to it by the Board. It is authorised to request any information it requires from any governor, employee, external auditor, internal auditor or other assurance provider.

The Audit and Risk Committee is authorised to request any outside legal or independent professional advice it considers necessary, normally in consultation with the Accounting Officer. However, the Audit and Risk Committee may not incur expenditure without approval of the Board of Trustees.

2. Role

The role of the Audit and Risk Committee is to advise the Board and Accounting Officer (the CEO) regarding the adequacy and effectiveness of the Trust's internal controls, risk management, governance and value for money systems and frameworks. The Committee also advises the Board regarding the appointment of auditors and planned audit approach, as well as considering reports from the internal and external auditors and other bodies, ensuring actions are taken where required.

The Committee will meet 3 times per year and shall report to the Board of Trustees on a termly basis, or more frequently if required, and make whatever recommendations to them that it deems appropriate within the context of its terms of reference.

The Audit and Risk Committee has no executive powers or operational responsibilities.

3. Duties

The Audit and Risk Committee has duties in the following areas:

- Advise the Board and Accounting Officer on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Trust's governance, risk management, internal control and value for money systems and frameworks.
- Produce an annual report in respect of the above.
- Advise the Board on the appointment, re-appointment, dismissal and remuneration of the external auditor.
- Advise the Board on the need for and, where appropriate, the appointment, reappointment, dismissal and remuneration of an internal auditor or other assurance provider.
- Advise the Board on an appropriate programme of work to be delivered by independent assurance providers. This programme of work should be derived from the Audit & Risk Committee's regard of the key risks faced by the Trust, the assurance framework in place and its duty to report to the Board, as detailed above. It will include specialist additional ad hoc reports commissioned as deemed necessary by the committee on key risk areas identified eg H&S.
- Ensure that where a full internal audit (internal scrutiny) service is commissioned the service provider complies with the standards set by the Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors. This will mean the internal audit provider must conform to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

- Review the external auditor's annual planning document and approve the planned audit approach.
- Receive reports (assignment reports, annual reports, management letters etc) from the external auditor, internal auditor and other bodies (for example the ESFA) and consider any issues raised, the associated management response and action plans. Where deemed appropriate, reports should be referred to the Board or other committee for information or action.
- Regularly monitor outstanding audit recommendations from whatever source and ensure any delays in respect of agreed implementation dates are reasonable.
- Establish and monitor KPIs with regard to the performance of the external auditor, internal auditor or other assurance provider.
- Review the Trust's fraud response plan and ensure that all allegations of fraud or irregularity are managed and investigated appropriately.
- Consider any additional services delivered by the external auditor, internal auditor or other assurance provider and ensure appropriate independence is maintained.
- Ensure appropriate co-operation and co-ordination of the work of the external auditor and internal auditor.
- Meet with the external auditor and internal auditor or other assurance provider without management present, when required, either at their request or the request of the Committee.
- Ensure that controls are in place regarding the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and that compliance is monitored across the Trust.
- Receive an annual review of insurance cover, claims and issues arising, ensuring the provision is adequate to cover the risk.
- To appoint from its members a designated Health and Safety representative
- Receive reports at least once a year relating to Community Interest Companies established by the Trust and any Trust subsidiaries.
- To monitor policies in relation to Data Protection, Freedom of Information, IT and Data Security and Storage, Whistleblowing, Anti-fraud/Anti-Bribery, the Fraud Response Plan and related matters and to agree changes as necessary, having the authority to approve them on behalf of the Board.

4. Administration

- The Committee will meet at least once per term.
- The Audit and Risk Committee will consist of a minimum of three Trustees.
- Additionally, up to two external co-opted members with particular expertise may also be appointed who are not members of the Board. At least one of the members should have relevant financial experience.
- The quorum for the Audit and Risk Committee meeting is three. In addition, at least 50% of those members present are required to be Board members (as opposed to co-optees)
- The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee will be appointed by the Board. If the Chair is absent from a meeting, the members shall choose another member, who is also a member of the Board, to act as Chair for that meeting.

- The Accounting Officer, Chief Operating Officer and Chief Financial Officer and other members of the Trust's staff may be invited to attend but will have no voting rights.
- Clerking services will be provided by the Executive Assistant.
- Draft agendas will be agreed in advance by the Chair and submitted with any supporting papers and the minutes of previous meetings to Chorus Trust services one week prior to the meeting.
- Agendas and all relevant papers should be circulated to each member at least five working days prior to the date of the meeting.
- Minutes of meetings shall be circulated promptly to all members of the Committee for information and reviewed and signed at the next Audit and Risk Committee meeting.
- The Audit and Risk Committee will review these terms of reference on an annual basis and self - assess its performance against these terms of reference. Any training and development requirements should be reported to the Chorus Education Trust Board.
- The Board must not add to these Terms of Reference any responsibilities that require the Audit and Risk Committee to adopt an executive role, or its members to offer professional advice to the Board. The Committee should seek formal professional opinions from the internal audit service, financial statements auditor or other professional advisers to the Board. Advice should only be given in Committee members' capacity as Directors and co-optees and only within their terms of reference.

Terms of Reference of the Finance and Resources Committee

5. Authority

The Finance and Resources Committee is a committee of the Board of Trustees and is authorised to make recommendations on items within its Terms of Reference or specifically delegated to it by its Board of Directors.

It is authorised to request any information it requires from any employee, external auditor or internal auditor.

The Finance and Resources Committee is authorised to request any outside legal or independent professional advice it considers necessary, normally in consultation with the Accounting Officer. However, the Resources Committee may not incur expenditure without approval of the Board of Trustees.

6. Role

The role of the Finance and Resources Committee is to ensure sound management of the Trust's finances and resources, including planning, monitoring, probity and value for money. The Committee advises the Board regarding the year-end accounts, strategic matters with financial implications and other key matters. It also reports to the Board any decisions taken in accordance with the Schemes of Delegation and delegated powers, including in respect of the Academies' assets and depreciation. This includes matters relating to remuneration and pay progression, except in respect of the CEO, whose pay and performance is overseen by the CEO Appraisal Panel who make a recommendation on pay to this Committee.

The Committee will meet a minimum of 3 times per year (usually 4) and shall report to the Board of Trustees on a termly basis, or more frequently if required, and make whatever recommendations to them that it deems appropriate within the context of its terms of reference.

The Finance and Resources Committee has no executive powers or operational responsibilities.

7. Duties

The Finance and Resources Committee has duties in the following areas:

- To monitor the impact of the Chorus Business Operations Improvement Plan/Report.
- To have the authority to **approve the same level of expenditure (revenue and capital) and contracts as the Board**, ie, where total expenditure per item exceeds £250,000 by exception, in order to increase the Board's/Committee's ability to approve expenditure in a timely manner. The Board will be informed retrospectively. *The F&R Committee to also be informed retrospectively of expenditure between £25k (primary) and £50k (secondary) and £250,000.*
- Subject to the detailed requirements of the Academies Handbook, Funding Agreement and the Trust's Financial Regulations, the Committee shall consider and advise the Board on the following specific matters:
 - The annual 3 year budget forecasts for the Trust and its Academies.
 - The annual financial accounts of the Trust, considering advice as required.
 - The Trust's management accounts, cash flow forecasts and reserves.
 - Monitoring of any budget re-forecasts on an ongoing basis.

- Monitoring of the revenue finances of the Trust and its Academies and advising the Board on progress towards achieving its financial objectives.
- Efficiency/Value For Money; requiring an annual report to be provided to the Committee in advance of the confirmation of compliance with VFM requirements in the Annual Report & Accounts
- Monitoring of policies relating to finance, staffing and other human resources issues, buildings, capitalisation, depreciation, treasury management, investments, fraud, borrowing and publicity & marketing, approving these on behalf of the Board with the following exceptions: Reserves Policy, Investments Policy and Pay Policy - each of which is required to be approved by the Trust Board.
- Strategic matters with financial implications concerning sponsorship of Academies.
- The Trust's Finance Policy, to be reviewed at the first meeting of each new academic year, ideally at the same meeting that the updated Academies Handbook is considered.
- Any relevant legal and contractual documentation, operating within the Articles of Association, the Schemes of Delegation, Funding Agreement and Financial Regulations.
- The review and monitoring of the level of reserves, the Reserves Policy and approving loans from reserves on behalf of the Board, unless the Board meets prior to the Committee meeting.
- Reviewing procurement activity which required Board approval (ie, exceeding £250,000), incorporating reference to the performance of major outsourced contracts at a strategic level.
- Monitoring the deployment of non-financial resources, including personnel and property, with a view to advising the Board on the effectiveness of such resources.
 - To receive Trust wide facilities, ICT, Health and Safety and Estates reports and monitor the impact on education and learning.
 - Estates matters, receiving reports at each meeting, details of the acquisition of land and buildings, deployment of property etc and considering an Annual Report regarding Estates/Asset Management Strategy.
- Overseeing the pay and conditions of service of employees of the Trust.
 - To advise the Trust Board on the remuneration and conditions of service of the Headteachers, the Executive Leadership team, including those of the Chief Executive Officer
- To receive Trust wide staffing updates and monitor the impact on education and learning.
- The Committee shall advise the Board of any settlement agreements (including any augmentation of pension benefits) which may be payable in the event of the early termination of the employment of the CEO, Clerk, Headteachers/ Principals/ Executives of the Academies or any other senior member of staff, with the broad aim of:
 - avoiding rewarding poor performance and

- dealing fairly with cases where early termination is not due to poor performance.

In determining recommendations to the Trust's Board on the remuneration and conditions of service of designated senior post holders, the Committee will consider both national benchmarking information on pay and conditions for institutions of a similar size or approach and information on similar positions within the region.

Subject to express delegated authority from the Trust Board, the Committee may determine salary progression for designated senior post holders utilising a salary progression methodology approved by the Trust Board and may authorise the implementation of any such determination. Such action will be reported to the Trust Board at its next meeting.

8. Administration

- The Committee will meet at least once per term.
- The Finance and Resources Committee will consist of a minimum of three Trustees.
- The quorum for the Finance and Resources Committee meeting is three.
- The Chair and Vice Chair will be elected by the whole Board of Trustees from Chorus Education Trust Trustees and will serve for one year. No Chair or Vice Chair may serve for more than two consecutive years without the approval of the Board of Trustees.
- The Accounting Officer, Chief Operating Officer and Chief Financial Officer and other members of the Trust's staff may be invited to attend, but will have no voting rights.
- Clerking services will be provided by the Executive Assistant.
- Draft agendas will be agreed in advance by the Chair and submitted with any supporting papers and the minutes of previous meetings to members of the Committee one week prior to the meeting.
- Agendas and all relevant papers should be circulated to each member at least five working days prior to the date of the meeting.
- Minutes of meetings shall be circulated promptly to all members of the Committee for information and reviewed and signed at the next Finance and Resources Committee meeting.
- The Finance and Resources Committee will review these terms of reference on an annual basis and self - assess its performance against these terms of reference. Any training and development requirements should be reported to the Chorus Education Trust Board.

Terms of Reference of the South Yorkshire Teaching Hub and National Specialist SCITTs Committee

1. Authority

The South Yorkshire Teaching Hub (SYTH) and National Specialist SCITTs Committee is a committee of the Board of Trustees and is authorised to make recommendations on items within its Terms of Reference or specifically delegated to it by its Board of Directors.

It is authorised to request any information it requires from any employee, external auditor or internal auditor.

The South Yorkshire Teaching Hub and National Specialist SCITTs Committee is authorised to request any outside legal or independent professional advice it considers necessary, normally in consultation with the Accounting Officer. However, the Committee may not incur expenditure without approval of the Board of Trustees.

2. Role

The South Yorkshire Teaching Hub and National Specialist SCITTs Committee is to maintain an oversight into the work of the SYTH in developing the expertise of teachers and leaders in Sheffield and Rotherham. This includes Initial Teacher Training, Early Careers Teaching, National Professional Qualifications and Continuing Professional Development. It is to also maintain an oversight into the work of the National Specialist SCITTs in developing the training of teachers awarding Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).

The Committee shall report to the Board of Trustees on a termly basis and make whatever recommendations to them that it deems appropriate within the context of its terms of reference. The South Yorkshire Teaching Hub and National Specialist SCITTs Committee has no executive powers or operational responsibilities.

3. Duties

The South Yorkshire Teaching Hub and National Specialist SCITTs Committee has duties in the following areas:

- To monitor the impact of Objectives 4 and 5 of the Chorus Improvement Plan.

South Yorkshire Teaching Hub

- To ensure that SYTH Key Performance Indicators around the recruitment and retention of ITT students, Early Career Teachers and National Professional Qualifications are met.
- To monitor high quality provision in all the key functions of SYTH.
- To ensure that there is compliance with the provisions of the funding agreements.
- Approval of the SYTH annual and three year budget.

National Specialist SCITTs

- To monitor high quality provision in all the key functions of National Specialist SCITTs.
- To ensure that the current ITE Ofsted descriptors are met.
- To monitor implementation of any post OFSTED action plans.

- Approval of the National Specialist SCITTs annual and three year budget.

4. Administration

- The South Yorkshire Teaching Hub and National Specialist SCITTs Committee will meet at least twice per year.
- The South Yorkshire Teaching Hub and National Specialist SCITTs Committee will consist of at least three members. The quorum the Committee meeting is three
- CET staff may attend South Yorkshire Teaching Hub and National Specialist SCITTs Committee meetings but will not have voting rights.
- The Chair and Vice Chair will be elected by the whole Board of Trustees from Chorus Education Trust Trustees and will serve for one year. No Chair or Vice Chair may serve for more than two consecutive years without the approval of the Board of Trustees.
- Draft agendas will be agreed in advance by the Chair and submitted with any supporting papers and the minutes of previous meetings to Chorus Trust services one week prior to the meeting.
- Agendas and all relevant papers should be circulated to each member at least five working days prior to the date of the meeting.
- Clerking services will be provided by the Executive Assistant.
- Minutes of meetings shall be circulated promptly to all members of the Committee for information and reviewed and signed at the next South Yorkshire Teaching Hub and National Specialist SCITTs Committee meeting.
- The South Yorkshire Teaching Hub and National Specialist SCITTs Committee will review these terms of reference on an annual basis and self - assess its performance against these terms of reference. Any training and development requirements should be reported to the Chorus Education Trust Board.