

a

National  
Association

The independent organisation  
for school governors, trustees  
and clerks

SUMMARY REPORT

# Time to chair? Exploring the time commitments of chairs of multi academy trusts (MATs)

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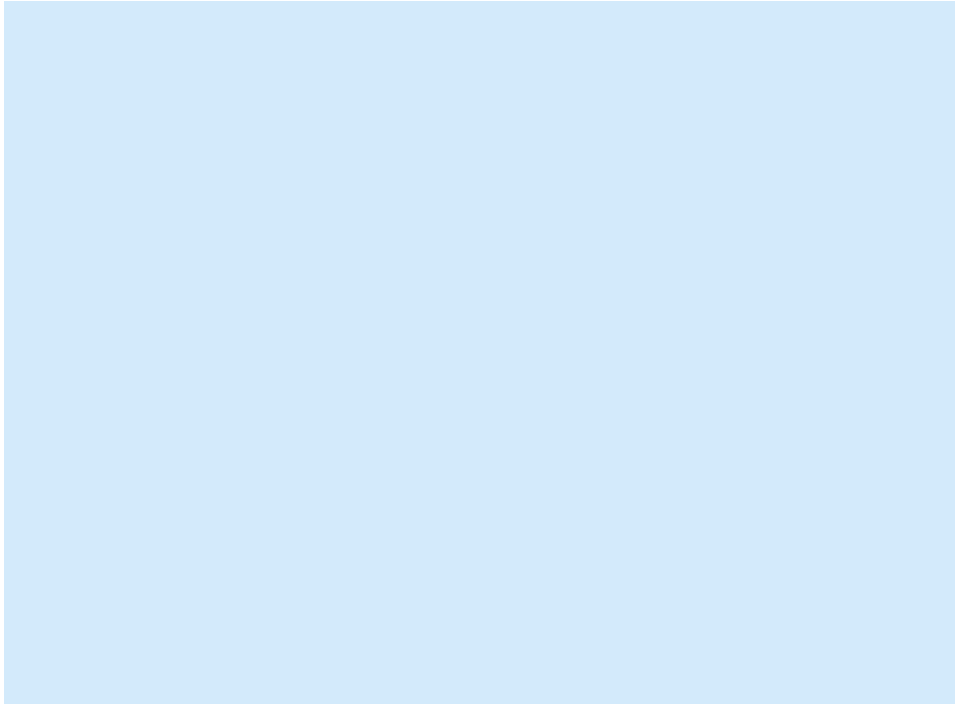
Partnership  
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# Summary

With these ideas in mind and the lack of research into the time commitments of those governing in MATs, who carry additional duties to those governing in standalone school settings, this study by the National Governance Association (NGA) partly funded by BELMAS, explores how much time chairs of multi academy trusts (MATs) spend performing their role, what responsibilities and duties they undertake and why, and how and if the role can be made sustainable and manageable for those who feel they would struggle with the time commitment.

To gather both rich qualitative and quantitative data, this study was conducted in two phases:



5. Most MAT chairs are present on more than one tier of governance and just under half (40.9%) are both members of their MAT and attend academy committee meetings in some capacity and this contributed significantly to their workload.

Over half of respondents in phase one (50.5%) either chaired, attended or sat on an academy committee and 73.1% were members of their trust. These additional duties accounted for 100.6 and 16.6 additional hours of governance work on average.

The reasons for direct involvement in both these tiers of governance were similar and in phase two, several MAT chairs said that attending the meetings of these groups helped communication and prevented both trustees and members sitting within an “ivory tower”, helping them to ‘know their schools’. Some attending academy committee meetings were doing so on a temporary basis until governance at this level was stronger.

mechanisms and forums to communicate with their local tier. This level of separation created clearer lines of accountability. This was also important for MAT chairs that were not members of their trust and even those that were had generally felt that it would not

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### For MAT chairs and boards:

- MAT chairs currently also serving as members should reconsider this position in line with current best practice.
- Feedback and lessons from other trusts that sitting on academy committees as well as the trust board can contribute to blurred lines of accountability and confuse roles within the governance structure.
- Instead of attending academy committee meetings, MAT chairs should explore alternative ways of communicating with their local tier such as by reviewing meeting minutes as opposed to directly attending, utilising email and/or apps to communicate
- MAT chairs should also be wary of acting as a member of an IEB style academy committee for new or struggling schools within the trust. While the dedication to ensuring good governance at all levels is commendable, MAT chairs should resist being
- currently not in place, to help assist with the management and communication of

### For the sector and government:

- be complete separation between those at a local level, trustees, executives and members.

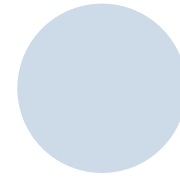


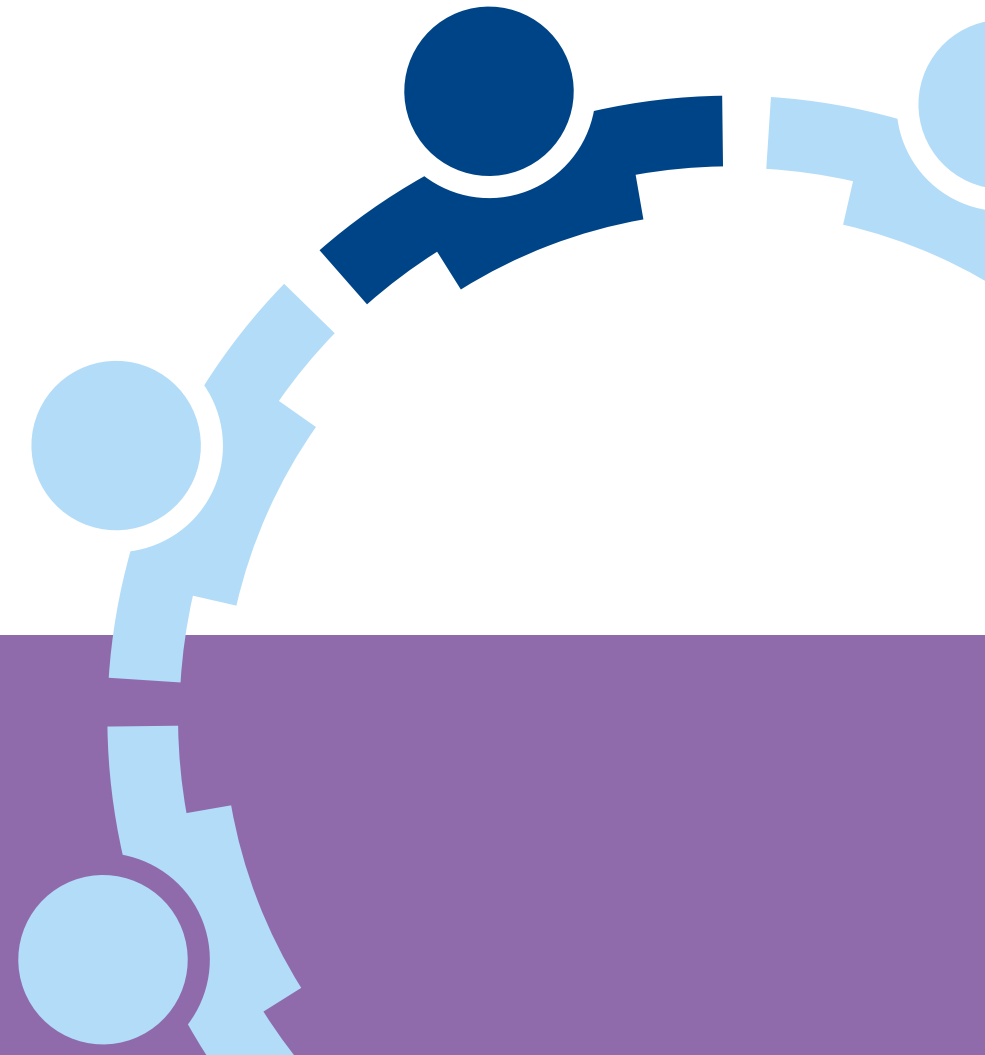
## RECOMMENDATIONS

For MAT chairs and boards:









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