

# A **Blueprint** for Health Records Research in Scotland

## APPENDIX 9

### QUESTIONS FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO ASK TO ASSESS STANDARDS OF GOVERNANCE<sup>1</sup>

Organisations can also ask themselves these questions if they want to test their openness and responsiveness to the public and their service users.

**Good governance means focusing on the organisation's purpose and on outcomes for citizens and service users**

- What is this organisation for?
- Can I easily find a clear explanation of what this organisation is doing?
- Can I easily find out about the quality of service provided to the public?
- What is being done to improve services?
- Can I easily find out about the organisation's funding and how it spends its money?

**Good governance means performing effectively in clearly defined functions and roles**

- Who is in charge of the organisation?
- How are they elected or appointed?
- At the top of the organisation, who is responsible for what?

**Good governance means promoting values for the whole organisation and demonstrating the values of good governance through behaviour**

- According to the organisation, what values guide its work?
- Does it follow these values in practice?
- What standards of behaviour should I expect?
- Do the senior people in the organisation put these standards of behaviour into practice?
- Do they put into practice the 'Nolan' principles for people in public life (selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership)?

**Good governance means taking informed, transparent decisions and managing risk**

- Who is responsible for what kinds of decisions in the organisation?
- Can I easily find out what decisions have been taken and the reasons for them?
- Are the decisions based on up-to-date and complete information and good advice?

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<sup>1</sup> From the Langlands report: The Good Governance Standard for Public Services  
[http://www.cipfa.org.uk/pt/download/governance\\_standard.pdf](http://www.cipfa.org.uk/pt/download/governance_standard.pdf)

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- Does the organisation publish a clear annual statement on the effectiveness of its risk management system?
- Does the organisation publish a clear annual account of how it makes sure that its policies are put into practice? Is the statement reassuring?
- How does it compare with my own experience?

### **Good governance means developing the capacity and capability of the governing body to be effective**

- How does the organisation encourage people to get involved in running it?
- What support does it provide for people who do get involved?
- How does the organisation make sure that all those running the organisation are doing a good job?

### **Good governance means engaging stakeholders and making accountability real**

- Can I easily get information to answer all these questions?
- Are there opportunities for me and other people to make our views known?
- Does the organisation publish an annual report containing its accounts for the year? Are copies freely available? Is the content informative?
- How do I find out what decisions were taken as a result of my and others' opinions being asked for?
- Are there opportunities to question the people in charge about their plans and decisions?
- Can I easily find out how to complain and who to contact with suggestions for changes?