

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

APPENDIX 9

QUESTIONS FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO ASK TO ASSESS STANDARDS OF GOVERNANCE¹

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?

¹ From the Langlands report: The Good Governance Standard for Public Services
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?