

## **Nuffield Council on Bioethics – Chair of the Governing Board**

### **Role Description**

#### **Introduction and Context**

The Nuffield Council of Bioethics (NCoB) was established in 1991 and is an independent deliberative body, funded and housed within the Nuffield Foundation and co-funded by Wellcome and the Medical Research Council. The NCoB is made up of a Council of independent members supported by an executive who are employees of the Foundation. The NCoB is independent in terms of the delivery of its work on its chosen topics, its conclusions and recommendations.

The Council is accountable to the funders for delivering the strategy as set out in its quinquennial funding arrangements, and for keeping its topic selection within its agreed remit. Responsibility for governance oversight of the NCoB rests with a small Governing Board.

The Governing Board oversees the work of the Council to ensure that it remains within remit, works efficiently and effectively, and adheres to the terms of the grants it receives and the arrangements by which it is constituted. It has oversight of any additional third-party funding and takes a view on reputational risk. It is made up of three officers of the funders plus three independent members, one of whom is the independent Chair. The Chair of the Governing Board is not a member of Council.

#### **Role of the Chair**

The Nuffield Council on Bioethics Governing Board Chair will be required to:

Act as an independent Chair, responsible to the funders, but also ensuring the appropriate independence of the Council in its decision making and outputs, subject to its acting within the terms of its remit. The role will include:

- Ensuring that the Board receives adequate information to provide effective challenge and assurance to the funders that the five-year Strategic Plan is delivered appropriately
- Provide assurance that the topics selected for work within the Strategic Plan are within the remit of the Council.
- Endorse the business plans (including budget and work plans).
- Oversee the NCOB organisational and reputational risk management and financial operations and ensure that good governance principles are adhered to at a high level.
- Plan and effectively Chair regular Board meetings, agreeing agendas, papers and facilitating open and constructive discussions, ensure all perspectives are heard and considered
- Build consensus, where possible from disparate views.
- Be an ambassador for NCoB supporting the Director with external relations where appropriate
- Work with the funder representatives to ensure that funding bodies, Trustees etc have sufficient visibility of the NCoB and confidence in the organisation (eg annually, attending and presenting the work of the Council to the Nuffield Foundation Trustee meeting).

## Person Specification

The Chair is likely to meet the following criteria:

- A strong interest in policy issues related to public health and bioethics
- An understanding of, or experience within, public policy, public health, or life sciences within the UK
- Some international experience or perspective would also be desirable but not essential
- Well developed awareness of, and commitment to, the mission, functions, and role of the Nuffield Council on Bioethics;
- A well-developed understand of good strategic governance;
- Highly developed facilitation and chairing skills
- A skilled communicator, networker and relationship builder
- Can demonstrate adherence to the Nolan principles of public life, selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership;

## Commitment and communication

Members serve on the Governing Body for up to three years, with the possibility of an additional three-year term.

The time commitment is expected to be up to two days per quarter (7-8 across the year), to include meetings and preparation time. The Governing Board normally meets twice a year.

The Chair of the Governing Board may be asked to report to the Nuffield trustees on the governance of the NCoB once a year. The Chair may also meet, as required, with the Chief Executive of the Nuffield Foundation.

In recognition of the time commitment, there is an honorarium of £4,000 per annum.