

Conference Summary

14 October 2015



The PCFs conference in 2015 was themed *Seizing the initiative: the contribution of public bodies to the next wave of transformation* and aimed to prepare Chairs lead transformative action after the November Spending Review. The event took place in association with the Hays Executive, the Boston Consulting Group, Guardian Public Leaders Network and the Institute for Government on the 14th October 2015 at the Institute for Government. The following main points were highlighted during the day's proceedings:

- With spending cuts to public bodies expected to be a further between 25-40% over the next parliament, public leaders need to prepare for a shift from austerity measures towards redesigning the delivery of our services.
- Transformation can be achieved most effectively by Chairs working proactively to lead transformation in partnership with central government and departments. Over the next parliament, government would like to improve the relationship between public bodies and departments, talent sharing between public bodies and the civil service and lastly reinvigorate our review process for more efficient monitoring and delivery of services.
- Chairs are encouraged to engage with all their stakeholders to find the best transformational strategies for the purpose of their organisation, making full use of all available resources, such as their NED and sponsors' expertise, and learning from each other's experiences by sharing models of best practise. Through creating a network of ideas across the public sector, we can learn from successes such as digital transformation, improvements with procurement, talent-sharing and shared services.

- Purpose of the organisation and local differentiation are important variables in approaching transformation. We can learn from examples such as the DVLA who by investing in the transfer of outsourced IT to insourcing they have transformed customer experience, as well as saved £22.5million. However public bodies need to understand what strategies work best for their service.
- Effective leadership is an integral characteristic of achieving successful reform and Chairs need to capability to outline a positive and engaging narrative for reform across their leadership teams. Chairs must outline clear purpose and goals and support their staff throughout the process of change from design to implementation.
- Sir Gerry Grimstone, lead NED at MOD, at the request of Rt, Hon Matt Hancock, MP and Minister for Cabinet Office, is currently conducting a review in the Public Appointments process and the role of the Commissioner for Public Appointments. Twenty years after the position was made it is important to ensure that the integrity of the process is maintained and that appointments remain fair and awarded on merit. Some areas of potential improvement so far include transparency, consistency, diversity of appointments and candidate and public confidence in the process. An effective process for public appointments is just one way that we can ensure there is the best available skills and talent at the forefront of transformational reform.
- The cross-cutting review of regulators will replace lengthy and inefficient Triennial Review and is one example of how Chairs can take the lead in transformation with the support of Cabinet Office, to deliver more efficiently and consequently save money. It encourages greater collaboration across regulatory bodies, reducing duplication of work and facilitating a dialogue with people directly involved in the industries to outline what works best in practise.
- The review of regulators is a pilot initiative amongst wider government strategies of transformation, notably the classification review is another, working with the Institute for Government to outline clear guidance for the taxonomy of public bodies. They want a clearer working relationship of public bodies and their departments, and how to fully utilise sponsors for effective delivery of services.