



How to use the Stepping into the Chair resources

These resources support directors stepping into the chair role, particularly during their first six to 12 months. It provides practical guidance and tools to help new chairs prepare, set expectations and strengthen board effectiveness.

The aim is to help the chair understand what should be preserved, what may need attention and where change could help the board govern more effectively.

Some first-time chairs step up from a board they already serve on. Others join a board as chair. These resources support both starting points. They can also help a new chair understand the expectations, sensitivities or unresolved issues inherited from the previous chair's tenure or the transition itself.

The resources are organised around four transition themes:

1. Shift

Understand what changes when moving from director to chair

2. Set

Establish the board's focus, expectations and boundaries

3. Strengthen

Build effective relationships, board dynamics and constructive challenge

4. Sustain

Support long-term board performance, chair effectiveness and succession

The four resources are:

TRANSITION GUIDE: A practical guide to the chair role, including how the chair adds value, how the role differs from being a director, and the relationships, boundaries and responsibilities that shape chair effectiveness. It includes a 'Director to chair: what changes?' comparison to help first-time chairs understand the shift in role, influence and board leadership.

FIRST 180 DAYS AS CHAIR: A transition plan to guide new chairs through their first six months, from early preparation and relationship-building to setting board expectations, improving meeting focus, agreeing shared priorities, maintaining personal sustainability and seeking feedback on their performance.

CHAIR-CEO RELATIONSHIP GUIDE:

A practical guide to help first-time chairs establish a constructive and appropriately bounded relationship with the CEO. It covers expectations, communication, governance boundaries, support, challenge, accountability and committee roles. It also examines the risk of the chair-CEO relationship becoming a substitute for board decision-making.

CHAIR MOVES: A set of practical prompts for common boardroom situations. It gives first-time chairs practical language and techniques to maintain focus, encourage contribution, support constructive challenge, clarify decisions and strengthen follow-through. It also includes prompts for situations before and after formal meetings.

Each resource serves a different purpose. The transition guide explains the role shift, the 180-day plan supports staged action, the chair-CEO relationship guide helps with judgement, and 'Chair moves' provides practical prompts for use in and around board meetings.

The resources can be used independently, with a mentor, an outgoing chair or a deputy chair, or as part of a formal chair induction process. Boards can also use it to support succession planning and clarify expectations before or soon after a new chair takes up the role.