Will the Code become a Government directive and something that sports organisations will have to do in the future?

We don’t see the code becoming compulsory or government owned.  It is an initiative driven by the sector for the sector and we imagine in future years it will be redrafted by the sector to reflect the dynamism of governance and the evolution of best practice. The code is drafted with the intention of success being measured through self-regulation. Support frame-works and toolkits will be provided to help organisations assess how well they are doing in terms of implementing the Code; however this is self-assessment and it is not envisaged that this will become part of a government directive. The Code aims to help organisations change their ethos, behaviours and attitudes; which will only work if organisations are committed to good governance. Self-assessment is part of the journey to achieving the best governance possible for an organisation.

What does signing up to the Code mean?

Signing up to the Code is a commitment to bringing to life the Principles of the Code in a unique way that suits your organisation. It is an aspirational sign up and you will not be ‘inspected’ by a regulator. Signing up to the Code is a commitment that you will take governance seriously and you will engage with making the Principles work in practice in your organisation. The Sport and Recreation Alliance may ask you for examples of best practice to share with other organisations and we will provide frameworks for self-assessment to help you. Signing up to the Code is a commitment to using the Principles as an aspirational plan and a step-change: not an all or nothing approach; but a commitment to using the Principles as a rationale and a stimulus to examine and improve governance structures. There is no timeline for implementation and signing-up is a statement of intent and commitment.

What are the benefits and why should we sign up to the Code?

The Code was designed with the intention of helping organisations in three ways. First, the Code will help organisations illustrate a commitment to good governance which will reduce the risk of external regulation and legislation – in other words signing up to the Code will help you continue to be guardians of your future and remain self-regulated as a sector. Second, the Code will help your organisation achieve sustainable development by encouraging you to develop systems and processes that do not rely on individual’s knowledge which can be easily lost. Third, the Code will give you credibility with participants, funders and commercial partners and therefore offer reassurance to your stakeholders that they should remain involved with you. You will be able to demonstrate to members, funder and partners that you are taking governance seriously and that you are a well-run organisation.

What support will I get in terms of improving governance?

You will have access to governance support, help and advice through the Sport and Recreation Alliance Governance Team. You will also be able to work alongside other like-minded organisations and benefit from sharing best practice and developing practices together if appropriate. Finally you will be able to benchmark your own success in terms of governance and take control in the areas that you feel need improving by using self-assessment frameworks made available through the Sport and Recreation Alliance website.

We are not able to tick everything that is included in the Code at the moment. Does this mean we cannot or should not sign-up?

Signing up to the Code is not an indication that everything in the Code has been achieved. Neither is it an indication that you will put in place a plan to achieve everything that is listed in the Code. Governance should not be about ticking a list. The Code includes Principles which each organisation needs to apply and implement in the way that works best for them. The practical considerations are suggestions of the ways an organisation could choose to implement the Principles and are not to be regarded as a checklist of what needs to be done. Signing up to the Code is an aspirational sign-up that your organisation is prepared to think seriously about governance and prepared to bring the Principles to life in a way that suits your organisation. If you agree with the Principles of the Code and want to debate how best to make them a reality in your organisation then you should sign up to the Code.

What do we have to do to indicate that we are signing-up to the Code?

In order to sign-up to the Code you should undertake the following:

1. Discuss the Code at a Board meeting and achieve Board approval that you will sign-up and examine the Principles in terms of what they mean for your organisation
2. Include the Code as an objective in your Strategic Plan
3. Select an individual in your organisation to take responsibility for the Code
4. Send a letter to the Sport and Recreation Alliance to confirm commitment to working on implementing the Principles throughout your organisation

We think we are doing well against all of the Principles except one of them. Can we work towards the other Principles and leave that Principle out?

Signing up to the Code is signing up to all of the Principles. It is not signing up to all of the practical considerations. The practical considerations are presented as ways in which an organisation may want to implement the Principles. If the practical considerations outlined under one Principle do not fit with your organisation then you should be asking why they do not fit. Is it because you do not practice the Principle or is it because you practice the Principle in a different way? You should challenge your organisation to identify the ways that you practice each of the Principles; however it should be acknowledged that some Principles will be more advanced than others and in some you may do all of the practical considerations suggested, while in others you will need a more unique implementation for your organisation. Working towards achieving the Principles is about making them work for your organisation and it is the ‘thinking about how to implement’ the Principle that is as important as actually implementing the Principle.

How will compliance with the Code be measured?

The Code is developed as a self-regulatory tool. It is not presented as a checklist and therefore it is not appropriate or possible for an outside organisation to audit performance. The Code relies on self-regulation and self-assessment allowing each organisation to determine how well they are doing against each of the Principles and outline where they will focus their attention. The Sport and Recreation Alliance may ask for case-study examples of practices that can be shared with other organisations as ideas for implementing the Code and equally academic institutions may want to help organisations through research and evidence projects to indicate how well an organisation has embraced the Code. Essentially, compliance with the Code will be measured by the organisation itself.