



## YHA GOVERNANCE REVIEW: WHAT NEEDS FIXING?

### QUESTIONNAIRE – In Confidence

#### Introduction

1. Please fill in this questionnaire only after reading the consultation document to which it is attached, and to which the following questions are drawn. **Do not feel you must answer all the questions** – feel free to give a view when you have one and leave the rest. Please aim to return this questionnaire **by the end of October 2006 if at all possible**, to ensure that your views influence a report to the Board that will be compiled by mid November.
2. Please return the questionnaire to Governance Review, YHA (England & Wales) Ltd, Trevelyan House, Dimple Road, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 3YH, or e-mail it as a Word attachment to [governancereview@yha.org.uk](mailto:governancereview@yha.org.uk).
3. Your views will be warmly welcome and carefully studied. They will remain confidential to the Review Leader (or anyone assisting him who will be bound to similar confidentiality) and will not be quoted without your express permission, unless you choose to indicate otherwise on the form below.

## **The Questions**

(Paragraph numbers refer to the accompanying consultation document by Andrew Purkis.)

**Your Name:**

**Your role in the YHA Movement:**

**Your views on any or all of the following questions:**

### **A Charitable Company (paragraph 6)**

1. *There does not appear to be any significant body of opinion in favour of altering the fact that YHA is now a charitable company limited by guarantee covering England and Wales – is this impression correct ?*

### **Awareness of YHA's Members (paragraphs 20 to 21)**

2. *Are members made sufficiently aware, when they join and subsequently, of their entitlements to participate in the governance of YHA through Regional Councils and through standing as national Trustees? Do they presently feel encouraged to do so? Is this an issue for the Review?*

### **Regional Councils (paragraph 23)**

3. *Does the role of Regional Councils warrant serious review?*

4. *Are they inherently capable, eg with better support and resources from the centre, of a revitalised contribution to broad-based participation and to mobilising the ideas and enthusiasms which YHA needs?*
  
5. *If so, what sort of changes should be considered to bring this about?*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. *Is there a case for scrapping the Regional Councils in their present form and finding alternative ways of engaging with members and stakeholders – and what are the major risks of doing so?*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. *If so, what options for change should be considered?*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. *Are there other points relating to Regional Councils that the Review should consider?*

The AGM (paragraphs 24 – 25)

9. *Should the Review consider seriously the pros and cons of an AGM open to all members?*



The Board of Trustees (paragraphs 26 - 30)

**Safeguarding YHA's Charitable Mission and Identity**

*15. Is the Board as presently constituted well equipped to safeguard YHA's charitable mission and identity?*

*16. If not, what sort of changes might be considered?*

*17. Should the Review consider whether the trustees receive sufficient, continuing training, in charity law, the duties of Trustees, financial management, Health and Safety and competencies that are particularly relevant to YHA?*

*18. In what respects might the Board be seen as too narrow in its current composition?*

*19. Should the Review consider whether particular elements in the YHA who do not participate in the Board at present, eg younger people, people working in schools etc, should do so?*

*20. Does it matter that the Board does not include people from ethnic minorities?*

21. *Should the Review consider the pros and cons of the Chief Executive's remaining a Trustee?*

22. *What other Governance issues are worth serious consideration when it comes to avoiding any perceptions of the Board as an unaccountable oligarchy or insufficiently versed in the experience of key elements of the YHA movement today?*

23. *Does it matter that national trustees (attracted by advertisement and elected at the AGM) should face a highly competitive election whereas many Trustees nominated by the Regional Councils face no contested election at Regional level and automatic election at the AGM?*

#### **Playing for high financial stakes in a competitive climate**

24. *Should the Review consider whether the Board as currently constituted is well equipped to meet the business challenges described in paragraph 18?*

25. *Is it important for the Review to consider whether the current Board has the right skills, experience and confidence to hold the highly expert paid staff effectively to account?*

26. *Should the YHA expect its Trustees to be able to contribute creatively and supportively to the work of the staff, as well as scrutinising it rigorously? If so, should the Review consider whether the Board is equipped to do this?*

- 27. Does the size of the Board in itself affect the quality of scrutiny and decision-making? Should the Review consider if the Board is too big?*
- 28. Does the Board achieve effective and consistent focus on financial and business monitoring? Is this an issue for the Review?*
- 29. Do any of the existing sub-committees of the Board need review as regards terms of reference, composition and effectiveness?*
- 30. Should the Review consider whether the Trustees are drawing sufficiently on good practice elsewhere in the charity sector in appraising their own performance?*
- 31. Should the Review consider whether the Board as currently constituted is well equipped to meet the business challenges described in paragraph 18?*
- 32. Is it important for the Review to consider whether the current Board has the right skills, experience and confidence to hold the highly expert paid staff effectively to account?*
- 33. Should the YHA expect its Trustees to be able to contribute creatively and supportively to the work of the staff, as well as scrutinising it rigorously? If so, should the Review consider whether the Board is equipped to do this?*

34. *Does the size of the Board in itself affect the quality of scrutiny and decision-making? Should the Review consider if the Board is too big?*
35. *Does the Board achieve effective and consistent focus on financial and business monitoring? Is this an issue for the Review?*
36. *Do any of the existing sub-committees of the Board need review as regards terms of reference, composition and effectiveness?*
37. *Should the Review consider whether the Trustees are drawing sufficiently on good practice elsewhere in the charity sector in appraising their own performance?*

#### **Embracing partnership with the wider community**

38. *Does the current composition of the Board give confidence in its ability to help YHA reach out to these partners successfully? What kind of additional skills and experience might be helpful? Are there any issues here for the Review?*
39. *Should the Review consider the pros and cons of setting a limit (as many charities do) to the number of consecutive three-year terms for which individual trustees are allowed to be re-elected?*
40. *Should the Review consider the risk that some key potential partners and funders of future YHA activities focusing on young people of limited means might be put off if there remains a preponderance of middle aged and elderly Trustees, and no ethnic minority representation? Might this also be a risk to YHA's brand and reputation? If so, what options for changes in Governance arrangements should be looked at?*

41. *Are there any other issues relating to the Board of Trustees which the Review should be considering?*

The National Officers (paragraph 31)

42. *Are current governance arrangements suitable in the long term for delivering National Officers that score sufficiently highly on criteria of calibre, understanding of charity and the respect and trust of YHA staff and wider stakeholders?*

43. *If there are doubts, what are the main barriers at present and what options should the Review consider for securing National Officers with the necessary qualities in future?*

44. *Are there other issues about the roles and selection of the National Officers that the Review should consider?*

**Any Additional Points From You?**

*Please comment here on any additional issue that you wish to draw to the attention of the Governance Review.*

**Confidentiality**

Your views given here will be regarded as confidential to the Review Leader and will not be quoted without your express permission.

*If you are happy for your views to be shared with others or made public without your permission, please tick this box:*

## **Thank You**

Thank you very much for taking the trouble to fill in this questionnaire. Please remember to send it in **by the end of October 2006 if possible**, following the instructions in paragraph 2 above.