# Chair recruitment: Support for NHS Board chairs video

Transcript for the support for NHS Board chairs video.

**SPEAKER:** Sarah Compton-Bishop, Chair, NHS Highland

**>>SARAH:** Hi, I'm Sarah Compton-Bishop, I'm chair of the board of NHS Highland. So, we get asked from kind of perspective of new chairs, will I be supported during my first year as an NHS chair?

**>>SARAH:** So, the short answer is yes. The long answer is there is a lot of support, and it comes in all kinds of different shapes and sizes. And I'll just run through a few of them at a high level.

**>>SARAH:** So, first of all, there's some basic stuff. There's a lot of stuff you can read, a lot of kind of learning modules or learning texts that you can go through. But I think probably the, the more useful bit, or certainly the bit that I've always found more useful is that peer support.

**>>SARAH:** And that comes in a lot of different forms. So, what usually happens when you become a chair is you get paired up with a buddy, so another chair who is more experienced, and that really creates such a safe space for feeling your way through that first year.

**>>SARAH:** So, that more experienced chair can give you guidance advice, and sometimes that will be, you know, really practical, you know, speak to this person about that thing. And sometimes it'll be much broader, about how to cope with the demands of the job.

**>>SARAH:** They can answer some of your questions or they can help you figure out where to find the answers. And you'll also have a, a proper induction programme that will take you through, you know, the roles, responsibilities, how, how the nuts and bolts of the system work as well.

**>>SARAH:** You'll also have the opportunity to join something called an action learning set. So, this is something that I've done. I've found it really, really helpful.

**>>SARAH:** So, it is a, a small group of chairs that you'll get to know and, and you meet periodically. We work as a group through challenges. So, we take it turns about and we will bring a challenge and we work through it as a group that time is really valuable.

**>>SARAH:** This is a really complex role with some really wicked problems to unpick. So, that time in a safe space with a small group of peers, just working through those problems is, is hugely valuable. And we don't always have the answers. In fact, quite often those problems are wicked. So, they don't have a simple answer. But being able to work through it together is a huge learning experience and something I've really valued.

**>>SARAH:** And we also meet altogether, so we have a formal group, the chairs group. We meet periodically just ourselves, but we also meet periodically with the cabinet secretary. And that group is a huge source of support that the chairs across the country come from a really varied background with, you know, different professional and personal experience and skills. And, you know, between us all there is a lot of knowledge and experience and ways of looking at problems that you might not have considered.

**>>SARAH:** So, we do come together and we support each other and like I said, you know, sometimes that's with a very here and now problem, you know, a specific tricky issue. And sometimes it's just more general support.

**>>SARAH:** So, being an NHS chair is a really big responsibility, but you are never on your own. You know, that strong community around you, which includes structured learning, but also kind of those softer less formal conversations with peers. All of that forms a kind of a ring of support around you. And, and we are all very different, but that, that is a good thing.

**>>SARAH:** So, you know, it's, we want chairs to succeed. We want our boards to succeed. We want our chairs to succeed and to feel confident and to thrive in leading their board. And that starts from day one. And you will have the guidance and support, therefore you, as you move through that journey.