

# GOVERNANCE AND STRUCTURE

Version reviewed in January 2020



Over recent years, the Well-Grounded team has undergone considerable structural and cultural change, shifting from a flat organisation and pioneer phase to a more substantial and structured phase where differentiation is the foundation. We have differentiated roles, status and commitment. The people resource is made up of staff, associates and a network of consultants. We have done a lot to build levels of trust across the staff and associates, we've agreed a clear Raison d'être of Well Grounded, and we collaborate well to deliver key pieces of work.

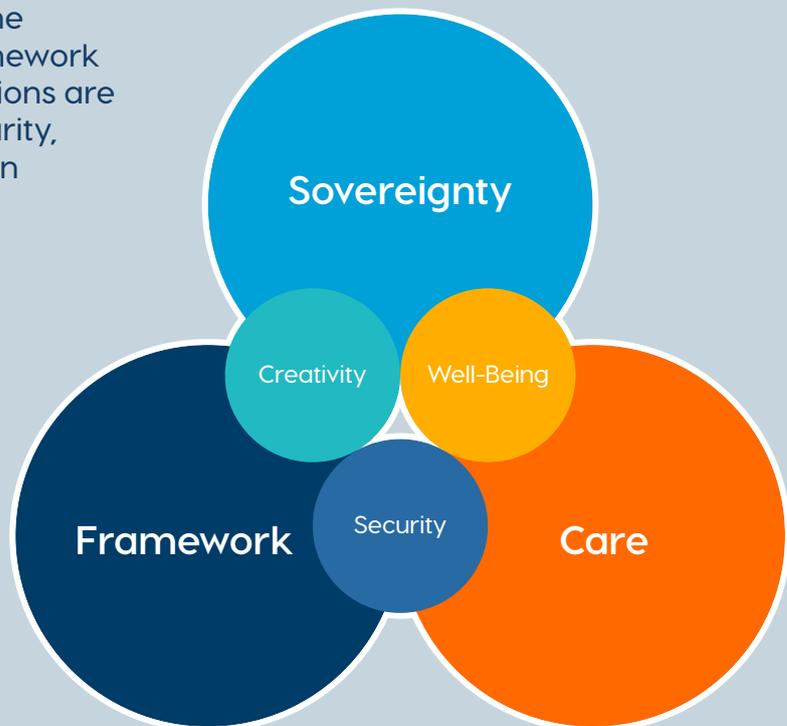
Since 2018 we have been in an organisational process to move our governance arrangements, group behaviours, decision-making methods, organisational structures, and processes, from a slightly confused mixture of flat/informal, collective/consensual, to a shared governance and consent based, decision making basis. The new shared governance structure was adopted in December 2019.

We believe this supports an agile and responsive organisation which can evolve to meet the emerging challenges of our times, supporting healthy cycles of action and reflection, and all without losing sight of our strategic focus.

## SHARED GOVERNANCE AT WELL GROUNDED

Our governance is based on the principles of Sovereignty, Framework and Care! These three dimensions are interdependent to ensure security, creativity, and well-being within our organisation.

It is from these intentions that we have formalised an organisation and a decision-making process that allows WG to develop over time and efforts.



# WHY A SHARED GOVERNANCE AT WELL GROUNDED?

Well Grounded was founded as a flat organisation, a non-hierarchical organisation based on a key value of **power equivalence** and with the intention of sharing power and making sure that everyone can contribute to the decisions that affect them.

But, in its early age, Well Grounded has faced challenges around:



For about 5 years we have been trying different models, shifting roles, differentiating, and we have learnt a lot. 'Effort of adaptation cumulated with team turnover didn't help to find the balance'. The team had to try and find balance and look for an alternative and concrete way to create a flexible structure. At the end of 2018, we discovered the well considered, shared governance model based on sociocracy. In early 2019 we started a serious journey into the structured shared governance model.

## SHARED GOVERNANCE, HOW IT WORKS AT WELL GROUNDED?



1. Organisational raison d'être guide all of our decisions and actions, collectively and individually.



2. Responsibility for strategy and delivery rests with the executive team:

The general circle is led by a member (the 1st link) who is nominated by the board (currently Mireille Kayijamahe) and she is responsible for appointing other people to lead circles and supporting them to deliver what's needed. The Board also appointed a second link (Currently Emma Almeras) who's primary role is to hold accountable the general circle to the board.



3. Nobody has job descriptions (except the finance caretaker).

We move in and out of roles according to what best serves our organisational purpose. Many of us are holding more than one role and are working in several circles.



4. Each role has sovereignty to find their next step. We use advisory processes to actively seek advice and feedback from within and beyond our team.



5. We work through self-organising, connected circles. Within a circle all roles exercise equivalent power.



6. Circles offer space to process tensions and to adjust governance:  
We organise tactical meetings to process tensions and governance as required to adjust, delete or create roles.



7. We use consent decision making and elections-by-consent to allocate structural roles (Circle facilitator and secretary) to engage the collective intelligence of the team and ensure collective ownership of the outcomes.



8. Our trustees participate in our governance model on equivalent power with members of staff : Our Trustees retain responsibility for ensuring that the charity is complying with the law, managing its finances well and acting in accordance with its charitable objectives. Trustees meet four times a year to review and approve key decisions and satisfy themselves that the governance model is operating appropriately.



9. We collaborate across difference and distance and do our best to supports good collaboration and provide care to each other.

At the moment, we're focusing on developing our skills around giving and receiving feedback, practice sovereignty, developing autonomy and designing processes that allow each one to be more effective.



10. We are still learning and we often make mistakes! :  
We take time to reflect at the end of an intervention, projects, meetings and key processes about what has gone well and what we might want to do differently in the future. We are doing our best to develop a team culture which support good collaboration. Our future challenge for learning will be about dealing with conflict and addressing feedback.