So you want to be a Governor of our Trust?

Information and guidance for prospective Governors

“be my VOICE...”

www.norfolkcommunityhealthandcare.nhs.uk  Looking after you locally
Welcome to our Trust

Your interest in becoming a Governor for Norfolk Community Health and Care NHS Trust is greatly appreciated.

This is an excellent opportunity to be one of the very first Governors of our Trust. Not only will this give you an important voice at the heart of local healthcare, but it also means that you will be learning with us about this new role and how it can benefit the local community.

You don’t need special skills to become an effective Governor but you do need to be passionate about the NHS, care about your local services and wish to represent the views of local people in your community or the staff you represent. You will then be able to help form the way our services are designed and delivered in the future.

It is our aim to create a representative and diverse Council of Governors including people from all walks of life; we are particularly keen to include people who use our services and carers. Having a Council of Governors is vital to the success of a foundation trust, as it will enable us to involve local people and staff more directly in how our services are designed and delivered going forward.

We have developed this handbook to explain the role of the Governor in more detail. I hope that it answers most of your questions and helps you to decide whether to take that next step and stand for election to become a Governor of our Trust. By doing this you will directly help us in achieving our objective, which is to provide the very best services to local people.

Ken Applegate
Chair

About our Trust

Norfolk Community Health and Care NHS Trust (NCH&C) is an independent health and care organisation, which is part of the NHS, employs NHS staff and provides NHS health and care to local people.

We serve a population of 870,000 people in and around Norfolk, making us one of the largest providers of community health and care services in the NHS. Our aim is to constantly improve our patients’ lives by providing them with the best care, close to where they live.

Our specialist teams across Norfolk provide personalised health and care services for everyone, from babies to the elderly. Our Health Visitors provide care to newborns and their parents while children are cared for in schools by our School Nurses. We help to keep people healthy with our Stop Smoking service and work with patients to regain their independence and quality of life after a brain injury or a stroke. We also provide end-of-life care services at home and in specialist community units, to allow people to pass away comfortably and with dignity.

We are based within the heart of the communities we serve as our services are often delivered to patients at a variety of venues. This could be within their local community hospital, clinic, care home, school and college or even within their own home. In doing this, we cover the whole of Norfolk and some surrounding areas.
The role of a Governor

Norfolk Community Health and Care NHS Trust

Being an NHS Foundation Trust

NHS foundation trusts were created to devolve decision making from central government to local organisations and communities. They provide and develop healthcare according to core NHS principles – free care, based on need and are accountable through Monitor, the independent regulator of NHS foundation trusts, to Parliament. They can also retain their surpluses and borrow to invest in new and improved services for patients and service users.

Having seen that our Trust provides safe and effective services and is well managed, the Trust Development Authority (TDA) has granted us permission to move on to the final stage in the FT application process, carried out by Monitor, and we hope to receive approval to become an FT in the next year. Approval from the TDA also means that we have been authorised to hold our very first Governor Elections.

Why we want to be a foundation trust

Foundation trust status and having a Council of Governors in place will make us more accountable to the public for the services we provide, help us to develop stronger links with our local communities, and give us greater freedom to improve our services. Not only can we more easily develop our services, but we can invest money into improving local NHS services.

One of the most important aspects of becoming a foundation trust is that it provides a way in which local people, including our patients, can help shape their health service and how services are delivered.

The Council of Governors ensures that the views of Members, as well as the wider community, are represented. It is the ‘voice’ of the community and influences how we go forward into the future.

How it works

Currently, our Trust is run by a board of directors, both executive and non-executive who are responsible for the organisation’s direction and performance. They have a broad range of individual skills and experience. Together, they provide the strategic direction for our services and are accountable for our Trust’s performance.

As an NHS foundation trust, our board of directors will be further influenced and held to account by the Council of Governors. The Council of Governors will play a central part in shaping our future, communicating local needs and priorities to the Trust, and in communicating the work of the Trust to the wider community.
Our Council of Governors

Our Council of Governors will be made up of elected and appointed Governors. Public and Staff Members will each elect Governors to represent them within their own constituency. We will also invite some key partners to sit on our Council of Governors to make sure we are listening to a wide range of views.

The Council of Governors is made up of the following elected Governors:

- 14 Public Governors
- 4 Staff Governors

Each Public constituency has two seats, except for Great Yarmouth and the Rest of England, which have one seat each to ensure representation is proportionate to the level of services we provide in those areas. We have also combined our North and East Staff constituencies to better align plans with our Trust’s locality structure and due to the small proportion of our staff based in east Norfolk.

In addition to elected Governors, we will have partner Governors who are appointed to the role. Our partner Governors will represent the organisations we work most closely with. They represent organisations that buy our services or help us deliver joined-up health and care, to voluntary organisations in Norfolk; the people who work closely with our staff at the very heart of the community:

- Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs)
- Norfolk County Council
- Norfolk Healthwatch
- University of East Anglia (UEA)
- Voluntary Norfolk

The Public Governors, Staff Governors and Partner Governors come together as the Council of Governors. This important body has significant influence, which is described later in this pack. The Chairman of the Trust chairs the Council of Governors.

Governors will serve three-year terms. However, after the initial election, there will be a number of Governors serving shorter terms to prevent losing the entire council every three years, which would damage the effectiveness of the Council of Governors. Governors may stand for election at the end of their term for a maximum of two terms when a break will be necessary before seeking re-election.

The length of office will depend on the total number of votes for each Governor. Those Governors who receive the most votes will be offered a three-year term and those with fewer votes will be offered a two-year term.

On average, the time commitment required works out at approximately 11 hours per month depending on how involved you choose, or are able, to be. For more information, see FAQs on p7.
Governors’ roles and responsibilities

The role of Governor is an important one, providing the direct link between the Trust, local communities and staff. As a Governor you will engage with local Members to gather their feedback and views and ensure our Trust Board hears their voice.

Governors do not undertake operational management of the Trust; rather they provide challenge to the board of directors and hold the non-executive directors individually and collectively to account.

Statutory responsibilities
The statutory responsibilities of NHS foundation trust Governors are as follows:

- Appoint and remove the Chair and non-executive directors (NEDs)
- Set the pay levels and conditions of employment for the Chair and NEDs
- Approve the appointment of the Chief Executive
- Appoint or remove the external auditor
- Scrutinise the Trust’s forward plans
- Hold the NEDs to account for the performance of the board of directors
- Represent the interests of the Members of the Trust as a whole and the interests of the public
- Approve “significant transactions” of the Trust
- Approve any amendments to the Trust’s constitution

For more information about statutory duties, please refer to Your statutory duties: a reference guide for NHS foundation trust governors on the Monitor website at: www.monitor-nhsft.gov.uk

Other areas of involvement
In addition to statutory requirements, Governors also have advisory, guardian and strategic roles.

Our Governors are the conduit to our Members, articulating their needs and concerns. Equally, we view our Governors as a resource to our board of directors assisting in the development of ideas and acting as the Trust’s ‘eyes and ears’ in the community.

In summary, our Governors have the following roles:

Advisory – Providing a steer on how the Trust can carry out its wider business.

Guardianship – Acting as guardians to ensure that the Trust operates in accordance with its purpose and authorisation.

Strategy – Advising on the longer-term direction of the Trust.

What Governors don’t do
A foundation trust Governor will not be involved in the day-to-day running of the Trust’s services. As mentioned previously, Governors are there to ensure the board delivers the strategic and operational systems and services. For example, foundation trust Governors do not:

- Deal with patient complaints – although they are able to inform the public about the Trust’s complaint system
- Act as champions for individual patients, although they can point people in the direction of the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)
- Get involved in the way the services are run
Help and support for Governors

We are here to help and support Governors in developing their knowledge and understanding about our Trust and the wider health community. This support will give Governors the necessary experience and abilities over time in order for them to make a real difference to the services we provide.

An induction programme for new Governors with individually tailored induction, training and mentoring arrangements will be available with access to both national and local training and development opportunities.

The Foundation Trust Network (FTN) has been commissioned to develop a Governor Development Programme that will focus on induction, core and specialist skills for Governors.

The training will operate across the country, both online and face-to-face for the public, staff and stakeholder Governors. The FTN will develop a network of trainers recruited from within FTs or similar organisations to deliver the training regionally.

NCH&C will participate fully in this national programme when we have Governors in place and this will be in addition to the local induction, training, and development provided by our Trust.

The local training programme will be made up of an initial induction and an ongoing programme.

The induction programme will cover:

- The role and responsibilities of Governors
- The Trust and its services (meeting senior clinicians and managers)
- Key processes and individuals within the Trust that will help signpost Members’ queries
- Introduction to the Trust’s strategy and plans
- Understanding the national and local health and social care system
- Key processes and contacts within the Trust for Governors and their roles
- Governance of the Trust, including how decisions are made, committees, meetings etc.

The ongoing programme will include:

- Skills development, such as: giving presentations, chairing committees and task groups, effective challenge and how to seek assurance, understanding and analysing finance and other reports
- Learning from other Governors of the Trust
- Visits to Trust sites and services
- Communicating with Members and holding constituency meetings

The Trust Secretary and his team will be the first point of contact for Governors once they are elected, and will support Governors in their role.
Frequently asked questions

Q. What are elected Governors?
A. Governors are elected from the Membership to represent the interests or our local population and staff on the Council of Governors.

Q. How do I become a Public or Staff Governor?
A. First of all you need to be a Member of our Trust. As a Member you will put yourself forward to stand for a Governor role based on the category in which you belong – be that public or staff. If you live in Broadland, you stand for election in that constituency. For staff it’s a similar process – except that you stand in the constituency in which you are based. All staff Members are eligible to put themselves forward as a candidate, irrespective of job title, grade or position.

Q. Am I eligible to become an elected Governor?
A. As long as you are at least 16 years of age, a Member of our Trust and fulfill the rules set out in our Constitution.

Q. I’m not a Member of the Trust, how do I join?
A. You can join online at: www.norfolkcommunityhealthandcare.nhs.uk/membership-registration.htm. Alternatively, contact the Membership Office at: nchandcmembership@nhs.net or call direct on 01603 697366.

Q. Do I need any previous experience or qualifications?
A. No. Governors come from ‘all walks of life’ because the Council of Governors is there to represent the whole community.

Q. How long will I be a Governor if I am elected?
A. Governors will serve three-year terms. However, after the initial election, there will be a number of Governors serving shorter terms to prevent losing the entire council every three years. At the end of your second term, a break will be necessary before you can stand for re-election.

Q. How will the elections work?
A. There will be a formal election and all Members of the Trust will be sent ballot papers to register their vote. Our elections are run and monitored by Electoral Reform Services (ERS).

Q. Will I be paid?
A. No. Foundation trusts do not pay Governors a wage. However, public and appointed Governors are eligible for the reimbursement of expenses in accordance with the Governors Expenses Policy. Staff Governors are eligible for reimbursement under the Trust’s Expenses Payments Policy.

Q. How much time will I be asked to give as a Governor?
A. You will be expected to attend a number of meetings:

• Council of Governors meetings held four times a year
• Meetings with constituency Members at least twice a year
• Annual General Meeting for Members once a year
• You may volunteer to sit on task groups or other boards (such as the Nominations Committee) on a quarterly basis

On average, the commitment works out at approximately 11 hours per month depending on how involved you choose to be.

Q. Can I be a Governor if I hold a public office elsewhere?
A. No individual can hold at the same time, positions of Director or Governor of an NHS Trust or NHS Foundation Trust.
Find out more

Thank you for taking the time to read this booklet. If you would like more information about becoming one of NCH&C’s first ever Governors, visit our Trust website at: www.norfolkcommunityhealthandcare.nhs.uk/Get-involved/our-governors.htm

Alternatively, please contact Electoral Reform Services, Customer Services Department on 020 8889 9203.

If you would like this publication in large print, Braille, alternative format or in a different language, please contact us on 01603 697300 and we will do our best to help.