Information for people interested in standing for election as a Foundation Trust Governor
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Welcome

Your interest in becoming a governor of Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust is greatly appreciated.

This booklet introduces you to the role of a governor and we hope it will help you to decide if standing for election is something you would like to do.

Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust provides a range of services:

- Mental health services to Norfolk and Suffolk
- Substance misuse services in Norfolk
- Forensic services
- Within Suffolk, we also provide services for people with learning disabilities

It is our aim to have governors who are representative of all walks of life, including people who use our services, and family and friends who act as carers, in addition to staff representatives.

Governors are vital to the success of a Foundation Trust. The role is interesting but it will also take time and commitment.

If you require further information please telephone: 01603 421 468.
An NHS Foundation Trust is run by a board of executive directors, who are responsible for the organisation’s day-to-day running, and non-executive directors, whose individual skills and experience provide guidance and accountability. Together, they provide the strategic direction for our services. This body (known as the Board of Directors) reports to NHS Improvement (formally known as Monitor), the organisation responsible on behalf of the Government for monitoring NHS Foundation Trusts.

Governors play an important role in reflecting local needs and are collectively known as the Council of Governors. They update the Board of Directors on priorities as seen by the wider community and act as a communication channel reflecting the views of their constituents. They hold the non-executive directors to account for the performance of the board of directors.

Governors provide the link between the wider community and the Trust.

As a governor, we will ask you to develop links between the community and the Trust. This will ensure we remain rooted in and responsive to our communities’ needs. Staff governors will fulfil the same role with their constituencies: the Trust’s staff.
The Council of Governors

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

- 13 public governors – seven from Norfolk and six from Suffolk
- Four service user governors (two from Norfolk and two from Suffolk)
- Two carer governors – one each from Norfolk and Suffolk
- Four staff governors from across the whole Trust

In addition to these elected governors we have appointed governors representing local organisations. These include the University of East Anglia, University of Suffolk and Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils.

Governors are elected for three-year terms. They may seek re-election at the end of their term. This system enables the members to elect new governors, but minimises the risk of wholesale changes, which might damage the effectiveness of the Council of Governors.

Governors may hold office for a maximum of nine years in total.
Governors’ roles and responsibilities

The Council of Governors is part of the Trust, and in fact only exists in relation to the Trust. Governors and directors have a common aim (which is the success of the organisation in providing health and social care services) but they have different roles to play.

Governors have specific roles which are set out in S.151 of the Health and Social Care Act (2012);

“The general duties of the council of governors are –

(a) to hold the non-executive directors individually and collectively to account for the performance of the board of directors, and
(b) to represent the interests of the members of the corporation as a whole and the interests of the public.”

As you can see from the list of responsibilities below, governors make critical decisions and carry out important duties.

To be an effective governor you need to have the time and skills to prepare for, attend and contribute to meetings. You also need to be motivated to meet and listen to members of the public.

1. What governors do:

- Hold the non-executive directors to account for the performance of the board of directors
- Represent the constituency they are elected or appointed to serve
- Comply with the Code of Conduct
- Assist the Trust with the recruitment and retention of members and engagement with the wider community
- Approve the appointment of the chief executive
- Appoint, remove and decide the terms of office, remuneration and allowances for the chair and non-executive directors
Contribute to the evaluation of the chair and non-executive directors
Appoint or remove the Trust’s external auditors
Provide a view to the Trust on the annual plan
Review the annual accounts, annual report and auditors’ report at a general meeting
Provide feedback to the Board of Directors on the development of future plans and strategy for the Trust

Participate in training,
Prepare for meetings by reading papers
Attend Council of Governor meetings across the two counties
Participate in Council of Governor subgroups and working parties which make suggestions and recommendations
Attend events to listen to the views of the public and members

2. What governors don’t do:

Although the term ‘governor’ sounds like ‘school governor’ or even ‘prison governor’, a Foundation Trust governor doesn’t actually get involved in the day-to-day running of the Trust’s services.

So – here are some things that Foundation Trust governors don’t do:

- They don’t deal with patients’ complaints – although they can tell people about the Trust’s complaint system and do hold non-executives to account for the implementation of the complaints policy
- They don’t act as advocates for individual patients – although they can point people in the direction of advocacy organisations like:
  - Our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)
  - NHS Complaints Advocacy Service: POhWER and Voiceability
  - Independent Complaints Association (ICAS)
  - Waveney Advocacy Services.
- They don’t get involved with the detail of how services are run. This is the role of the Board of Directors. They do, however, as shown on Page 2, have an influence on services by communicating the views of local communities.
Help and support for governors

We want governors to come from diverse backgrounds reflecting the local communities in Norfolk and Suffolk.

Elected governors will be provided with individually tailored induction, training and buddying arrangements as needed so that they are able to fulfil their roles effectively.

Training is arranged locally and governors are expected to attend.

We aim to support governors by providing large print or different format information and by providing transport to attend meetings for governors with disabilities.

If you are a carer we may be able to pay for alternate care to enable you to attend meetings.
How do I become a governor?
All governors must be a member of the Trust. Members will be advised of the timetable for elections and where, when and how to apply.

How long will I be a governor if I am elected?
Terms of office are for three years. Governors can seek re-election at the end of their term of office up to a maximum of nine years.

Am I eligible to become a governor?
All members who live in Norfolk or Suffolk and are aged 16 years or above are eligible to become a governor. There are some exclusions, which are shown in Annex 6 of the Trust’s Constitution (available on the website or from the Trust).

How will the elections work?
Our elections are run and monitored by the Electoral Reform Society.

Will I be paid?
No, this is a voluntary position, but reasonable expenses will be paid.

How often and when do governors meet?
There are at least six full Council of Governor meetings a year (this is under review) as well as the AGM and subgroup meetings (Planning and Performance, Trust Member and Governor Development and Code of Conduct). Most meetings are during weekdays although public events are often at weekends or in the evenings.
Contact details

Post: FREEPOST RRKE-BTHT-UETK
Membership Office
Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust
Hellesdon Hospital
Drayton High Road
Norwich
NR6 5BE

Email: membership@nsft.nhs.uk
Telephone: 01603 421468

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

NSFT PALS provides confidential advice, information and support, helping you to answer any questions you have about our services or about any health matters.

If you would like this leaflet in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or a different language, please contact PALS and we will do our best to help.

Email: PALS@nsft.nhs.uk or call PALS Freephone: 0800 2797257

Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust values and celebrates the diversity of all the communities we serve. We are fully committed to ensuring that all people have equality of opportunity to access our service, irrespective of their age, gender, ethnicity, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership or social and economic status.

Trust Headquarters
Hellesdon Hospital
Drayton High Road
Norwich
NR6 5BE