



**University Hospitals  
Bristol and Weston**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Information Pack for Prospective Public Governors

This pack will provide you with information about becoming a public governor.

If you have any special communication needs or would like this document in another format or language, please let us know by contacting the Membership team on 0117 342 3764 or [FoundationTrust@UHBW.nhs.uk](mailto:FoundationTrust@UHBW.nhs.uk).

If you have any additional questions after reading the pack, please get in touch and we will be happy to help.

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<https://www.uhbw.nhs.uk/p/about-us/council-of-governors>

February 2021

# 1. Introduction



“I would like to thank you for expressing an interest in joining our Council of Governors.

Our governors make sure the views of patients, carers and staff are represented and considered, and they play a key part in ensuring the Trust is effectively run.

We would encourage you to think carefully about this interesting opportunity, which necessarily involves a time commitment but would give you the chance to represent your community and make a positive contribution to the Trust.

I hope this information pack is helpful and look forward to meeting you.”

Jeff Farrar, Chair of the Trust



**Group of Governors (2019)**

## 2. About University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust

University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust (UHBW) was created on 1 April 2020, comprising University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust and Weston Area Health NHS Trust.

Bringing together a combined workforce of over 13,000 staff, the new Trust delivers over 100 different clinical services across 10 different sites serving a core population of more than 500,000 people. With services from the neonatal intensive care unit to care of the elderly, we provide care to the people of Bristol, Weston and the south west from the very beginning of life to its later stages.

Our services are delivered from our Bristol city centre campus and Weston General Hospital with some services delivered in community settings such as South Bristol Community Hospital.

We also provide specialist services such as children's services, cardiac and cancer services, and other smaller specialist services that are nationally commissioned, to a wider population through the south west and beyond.

### Our hospitals

**Bristol Royal Infirmary  
Bristol Royal Hospital for Children  
St Michael's Hospital  
Bristol Heart Institute  
Bristol Haematology & Oncology Centre**

**Bristol Eye Hospital  
Bristol Dental Hospital  
South Bristol Community Hospital  
Central Health Clinic  
Weston General Hospital**

Our **mission** is to improve the health of the people we serve by delivering exceptional care, teaching and research every day.

Our **vision** for 2025 is to:

- grow our specialist hospital services and our position as a leading provider in south west England and beyond
- work more closely with our health and care partners to provide more joined up local healthcare services and support the improvement of the health and wellbeing of our communities
- become a beacon for outstanding education and research and our culture of innovation.

**Governors can play a key part in helping us to achieve this vision.**

You can find out more about UHBW and our hospitals on our website: [www.uhbw.nhs.uk](http://www.uhbw.nhs.uk)

### 3. About Foundation Trusts, members and governors

**NHS Foundation Trusts are part of the NHS and provide healthcare according to core NHS principles: free care, based on need and not ability to pay.** They have a degree of independence from the Department of Health which means they can take certain managerial and financial decisions themselves and have more control over their own finances. Nevertheless, they are subject to statutory requirements and have a duty to exercise their functions effectively, efficiently and economically.

#### Members and governors

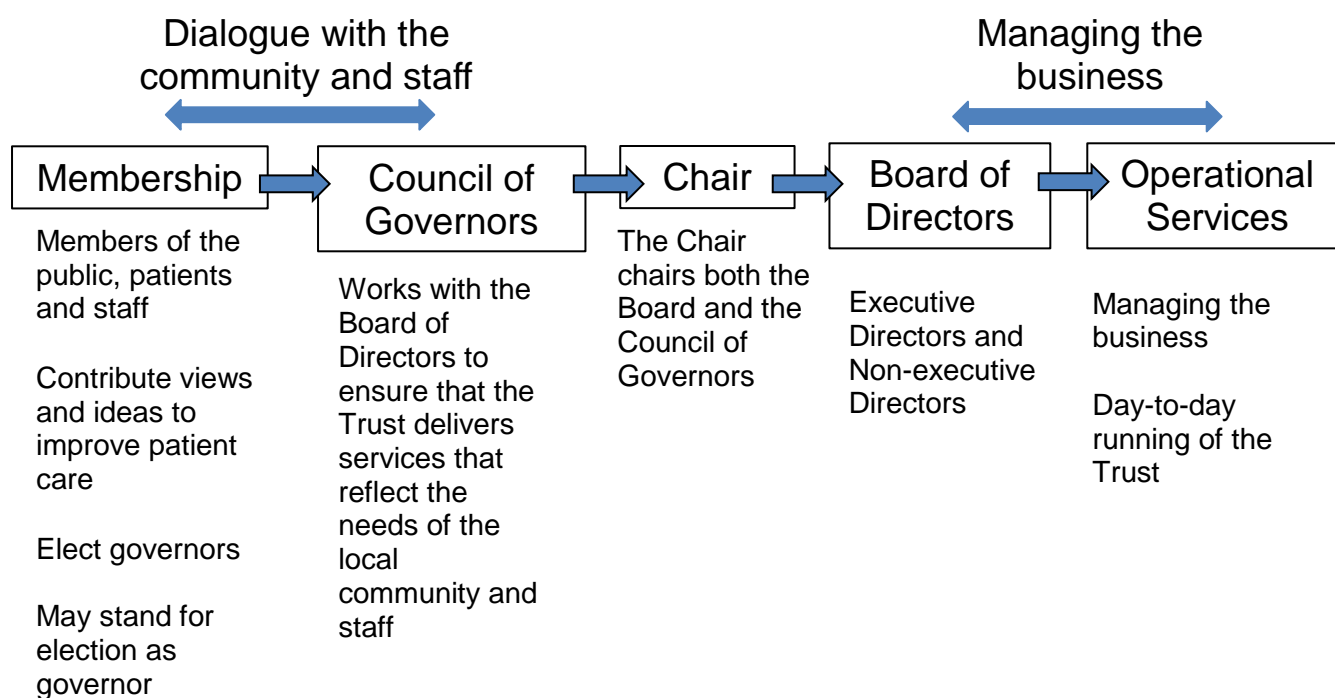
At the heart of the NHS Foundation Trust model is local accountability. A Foundation Trust must have a membership, and patients and local people who want to get more involved in their local health service can sign up to become Foundation Trust Members. Staff are also automatically members unless they choose to opt out.

Public and staff members can elect governors to represent them on the Trust's Council of Governors. This means that as a Foundation Trust we are accountable to the local community, the patients we care for and the staff we employ through our Council of Governors.

#### The relationship with the Board of Directors

The Board of Directors are responsible for the running and management of the Trust. The Board is made up of Executive Directors, who are full-time senior staff, plus an independent Chair and Non-executive Directors who hold part-time positions. The Council of Governors hold the Non-executive Directors to account for the performance of the Board of Directors.

#### How a Foundation Trust works



## 4. The role of the governor

The governor role is a voluntary position which helps to make the Trust **publicly accountable** for the services we provide. Governors have various powers and duties and will be given the information, support and training necessary to carry these out. Your **two key duties** are:

- To represent the views of members and the public, particularly in relation to the Trust's strategic direction
- To hold the Non-executive Directors to account for the performance of the Board of Directors.

### **Representing the views of members**

Governors act as a link between Foundation Trust members and the Board of Directors. The Council help the Board to make sure that the views of local communities, people who use the Trust's services and members of staff are taken into account when services are being developed.

### **Holding the Non-executive Directors to account**

Governors make sure that the Board is carrying out its duties effectively by 'holding the Non-executive Directors to account.'

They do this by meeting with them and asking questions, by observing them at meetings and by monitoring their activity.

### **What other powers and duties do governors have?**

Governors have been given other powers and duties in law to help them with the role. These are:

- To appoint and, if appropriate, remove the Chair of the Trust
- To appoint and, if appropriate, remove the other Non-executive Directors of the Trust
- To decide the pay and allowances and the other terms and conditions of office of the Chair and the other Non-executive Directors
- To approve the appointment of the Chief Executive
- To appoint and, if appropriate, remove the Trust's Auditor
- To receive the annual report and annual accounts and the Auditor's report on the accounts
- To give a response when consulted by the Board of Directors on the Trust's Annual Plan
- To agree, in conjunction with the Board of Directors, changes to the Trust's Constitution
- To approve any proposal to increase by 5% or more the proportion of the Trust's total annual income from activities other than the provision of health services in England
- To approve any applications for 'significant transactions' as defined in the Trust's constitution
- To approve any applications for mergers, acquisitions, separation or dissolution of the Trust
- To decide whether the Trust's private patient work would significantly interfere with its main purpose, i.e. the provision of goods and services for the health service in England or the performance of its other functions
- To inform the regulatory bodies if there are any 'material concerns' about the actions of the Board of Directors which cannot be resolved locally.

## **What can't governors do?**

Governors **do not** get involved in the day-to-day running of the hospitals. This means:

- They don't get involved in the detail of how services are run or how our hospitals are managed – this is the role of the Board and the senior leadership team.
- They don't monitor the performance of the hospitals – a governor's job is to make sure that the Board of Directors is doing this.
- They don't deal with patient complaints directly, but signpost to the appropriate Trust department (although governors may wish to highlight an issue if several complaints raised to them suggest a recurring issue with Trust services)
- They don't act as advocates for individual patients
- They don't seek to be elected to represent a single issue or cause - governors should seek to represent the interests of the whole of the constituency they represent
- They don't get involved in staff grievances, employee relations cases or negotiations.

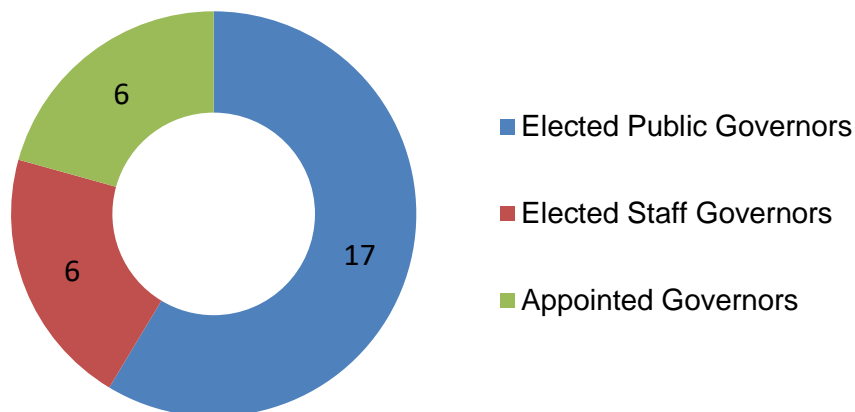
## **How do governors represent the views of members?**

One of the governors' main responsibilities is to help us to communicate with our members and make sure their views are fed back to the Trust. We will support you to find a way of doing this that will suit your skills, your preferences and the time that you have available. This could involve, for example: writing an article for our members' newsletter, speaking at members' events, supporting online or social media activities, or using your own networks to help us reach out to local communities to encourage a wide and representative membership.

Your schedule of meetings and other activities will provide you with the opportunities to carry out your duties. Training and guidance is provided to all governors to help you fulfil the role in the best way possible.

## 5. The Council of Governors at UHBW

Our Council of Governors is made up of **29 governors**:



- 17 elected **public** governors representing four geographical constituencies (9 governors for Bristol, 3 for North Somerset, 3 for South Gloucestershire, and 2 for the Rest of England & Wales)
- 6 elected **staff** governors representing four different staff groups (1 governor for Medical & Dental, 2 for Nursing & Midwifery, 1 for Other Clinical Healthcare Professionals and 2 for Non-clinical Staff)
- We also have 6 **appointed** governors from special interest groups (1 from the Trust's Joint Union Committee, 2 from the Trust's Youth Involvement Group, 1 from Bristol City Council, 1 from the University of Bristol and 1 from the University of the West of England).

Public governors are elected by Foundation Trust members in each of the geographical constituencies, and staff governors are elected by staff in each of the different staff groups. Elections are staggered over three years, to make sure that not all governors leave at once

**In 2021, there will be 7 public and 4 staff governor seats up for election: 4 public seats in Bristol, 3 public seats in North Somerset, 2 seats for Non-Clinical Staff, 1 seat for Other Clinical staff, and 1 for Medical and Dental Staff.**

There are no elections this year for members in the Public-South Gloucestershire, Public-Rest of England/Wales, or Staff-Nursing and Midwifery constituency classes



*"I have been impressed with how dedicated our Governors are in ensuring that the voices of our Trust members are heard. I personally am passionate about making our Trust a fantastic place to work and receive care and I am committed to communicating the interests of staff to the Trust board."*

**Hannah McNiven, Staff Governor, Nursing and Midwifery Staff**

## 6. Why become a governor?

Our governors tell us that they find their role hugely rewarding and enjoy the opportunity to help to bring about positive change at the Trust. Whilst the role can be demanding it is also interesting, and governors have a unique perspective of the hospitals and the NHS. Working alongside fellow governors is also a great way to meet new people and to feel part of a team.

We want to encourage a diverse Council of Governors to ensure we understand and respond to the different needs of the communities that our hospitals serve. We will do our utmost to provide support to those with particular needs, for example, ensuring that visually impaired governors can access information and material and ensuring that meetings are wheelchair-accessible and have appropriate facilities. If you feel you may need extra support, please just let us know.

### What qualities should a governor have?

Enthusiasm, commitment, an interest in health, and the ability to work as part of a team are the most important qualities. Governors have to be able to challenge the Board constructively to ensure they are doing their job properly, and there will be various reports, meeting papers and other information that you will be asked to read and comment on. **Governor meetings are usually held in central Bristol or on an online meeting platform, and are held within office hours**, so please take this into account when considering whether you can commit to the role. We will support all governors with their development, but would hope that anyone interested in becoming a governor would have some or all of the following qualities:

- An understanding and interest in health issues and a commitment to NHS values
- Good interpersonal and communication skills
- Sufficient time and commitment to fulfil the role (including the ability to attend meetings during office hours)
- Sound, independent judgement, diplomacy and common sense
- The ability to grasp relevant issues and understand relationships between interested parties
- The ability to develop an understanding of the different legal duties and responsibilities of governors and Board members.

### Who is eligible to become a governor?

Anyone can become a hospital governor and no particular experience or qualifications are required, although you must be 16 years of age or over and be an existing Foundation Trust member. You don't need to have been a patient at the hospital, and if you aren't a member at the moment then contact the Membership Team on 0117 342 3764 or go to <https://www.uhbw.nhs.uk/p/working-with-us/become-a-member-of-our-trust> to join for free today.

There are certain exceptions – you could be disqualified from being a governor for a number of reasons including bankruptcy or recent criminal convictions, for example. Our Constitution lists the exclusions in more detail and you can view the Trust's Constitution on the key publications page of our website <https://www.uhbw.nhs.uk/p/about-us/reports-and-publications> or ask the Membership Team.



## 7. Time commitment and meetings

Many of our current governors will tell you how much they enjoy the role but say that the time commitment should not be underestimated. An estimated time commitment for public governors is about **two days a month** to attend meetings during business hours and membership engagement activities, and read reports and papers for meetings. Governors have also told us that the more involved you are, the more you get out of the role!

### What meetings will I need to attend?

As a minimum, you would be expected to attend four formal **Council of Governors** meetings a year, four **Governor Development Seminar Days** per year, and the **Annual Members' Meeting** which is held in September.

There are also three governor groups which focus on your specific responsibilities in the areas of strategy, quality of care, and constitutional issues/membership engagement. There are also frequent informal meetings with the Chair and Non-executive Directors. Governors are expected to attend a good mix of these meetings in order to ensure they are well informed and have the opportunity to raise queries and concerns.

### A guide to the regular time commitment required:

- Council of Governors meetings (2 hours x 4 per year)
- Governor Development Seminars (6 hours x 4 per year)
- Annual Members' Meeting (2 hours x 1 per year)
- Governor Groups on Quality, Strategy and Constitution (2 hours x 2-6 per year depending on the group)
- Governors Informal Meeting/Meeting with the Chairman and Non-executive Directors (2 hours x 8 per year, an optional but very useful forum)
- Health Matters Events and other membership engagement events (ad hoc- governors encouraged to attend and support as many as possible)
- Nominations and Appointments Committee (1 hour x 2 per year). *This is a committee of 12 governors which deals with the appointment, appraisals and other terms of service of the Chairman and Non-executive Directors. Meetings are open to committee members only.*

With the exception of the Annual Members' Meeting and the Health Matters Events, **all governor meetings are held during office hours**. Most of them take place at UHBW Trust HQ, Marlborough Street, Bristol, BS1 3NU or via an online platform. A full schedule of the meetings for the year is available on request and will give you a sense of timings and frequency of meetings.

There are a number of other optional meetings and events throughout the year that governors will be invited to take part in, if they are able and willing, including:

- Board of Directors meetings (2 hours x 6 per year) – it's recommended that all governors should attend at least one Board meeting in each year, to see the Board 'in action'
- External courses and networking events, such as regional and national meetings with governors from other organisations; and meetings of other health organisations in Bristol.
- Ad-hoc Trust focus groups, briefings, celebrations, and other events.

The governor viewpoint is valued at the Trust, and from time-to-time governors are also invited to sit on Trust committees, appointment panels for senior roles, or judging panels for staff awards. Such activities are always optional and typically offered to the whole Council.

## 8. Induction, training and support

As part of your induction into the role, new governors will be provided with an **induction pack** of starting information. We will arrange for you to have a **1-1 meeting with the Chair of the Trust** in your first few months in the role.

All new governors are asked to attend the first Governor Development Seminar Day after their appointment date. At this seminar you'll get to spend time meeting the other members of the Council of Governors and key members of staff.

You will also need to attend a **Trust Corporate Induction Day**, which will include an introduction to our hospitals and all essential training that anyone regularly coming into the hospitals is required to undertake. We can advise on available dates upon your appointment.

### **What support will I receive on an ongoing basis?**

Day-to-day support is provided by Sarah Murch and Rachel Hartles in the UHBW Membership Team. We will be in touch with you regularly via email to send you meeting papers, relevant reports and other information, to advise you of forthcoming events and other opportunities that you may be interested in, and also to keep you updated with news relevant to your role. Our contact details are at the back of this pack and you are welcome to contact us at any time - we're on hand to help. You will also receive training and development through a programme of Governor Development Seminars.



*"I find it a privilege representing the public as a governor. Engaging with the staff and board members at our regular meetings is a very rewarding experience and illustrates the skills, compassion and dedication that exists throughout our organisation."*

**Ray Phipps, Public Governor, Bristol**

## 9. Elections

As a member of the public, you can stand for election for one of the following seats:

- **Public – Bristol:** 4 seats
- **Public – North Somerset:** 3 seats.

### Which constituency can I stand for?

To stand for a Public Governor you need to be a resident of the area in which you are standing, as defined by the Local Authority boundaries below - we can help you if you are unsure.



If you are a member of the public, then before you stand for election, you first need to be registered as a Foundation Trust member by completing a membership form – for a form please call 0117 342 3764 or join online at <https://www.uhbw.nhs.uk/p/working-with-us/become-a-member-of-our-trust>.

If you would like to stand for election as a governor, we will then send you a governor nomination form by email or post. You will need to fill it in, providing a photo to accompany a statement as to why you wish to be a governor. This statement will help the members choose who to vote for. If you would like to come to see us to talk about the role, please get in touch on 0117 342 3764 and we can arrange this.

**Nominations will be open from Thursday 4 March 2021 to Thursday 1 April 2021: please note any nominations received after 5pm on 1 April cannot be accepted.**

Governors are elected by the Foundation Trust members, so it is the members who ultimately choose their governor representatives. If there are the same number of seats available as there are candidates for election, the candidate(s) will be automatically elected unopposed. If there are more candidates than seats, there will be an election and all members in your constituency are invited to vote. The ballot will take place from Tuesday 27 April 2021 to Friday 21 May 2021. The election process will be co-ordinated by our Returning Officer, Civica Election Services: an independent body experienced in running democratic elections.

Successful nominees will join the Council of Governors from 1 June 2021 for a one-year or two-year term.

## 10. Term of office for Governors

Terms of office for elected governors are usually three years, however the terms beginning in 2021 will be shorter as governor elections were postponed in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Governors are then eligible to stand for re-election, to a maximum of three terms of office i.e. nine years maximum.

If during a term of office a governor becomes unable to maintain their commitment to the role, then we would ask that they discuss this with us in order to agree the suitability of continuing in post. Whilst we hope all governors are able to complete their term, we understand that in exceptional circumstances this may not be possible.

## 11. Code of Conduct for Governors

We ask all governors to sign their agreement to a Code of Conduct before they take up their role. This highlights what is reasonably expected of individuals occupying the position of governor, asking them to:

- Act in the best interests of patients and the Trust as a whole
- Respect and value all governors and directors as colleagues
- Carry out governor duties without any expectation of personal benefit
- Be honest and act with integrity and objectivity
- Respect and treat with dignity and fairness the public, patients, relatives, carers, NHS staff and partners in other agencies
- Understand that the decisions of the Council must take full account of the needs and views of all patients, carers, local people and staff
- Respect appropriate confidentiality of information received in their role as governor
- Support and abide by the Trust's staff values: Respecting Everyone, Embracing Change, Recognising Success, Working Together, People, Reputation, Innovation, Dignity and Excellence.
- Adhere to all relevant Trust policies and procedures.

*We ask all governors to abide by the Trust's values:*

Respecting everyone  
Embracing change  
Recognising success  
Working together  
**Our hospitals.**



You will also be asked to declare any relevant business interests on the **Register of Governors' Business Interests**.

## 12. Expenses

The governor role is voluntary and governors are not paid a salary. However, governors can claim expenses such as travel incurred whilst carrying out their duties, in line with our policy. The process will be explained in full when a governor is appointed.

## 13. Stand for election as a hospital governor – next steps

Make sure you are registered as a member of the Trust. To become a member fill in a membership form online: <https://www.uhbw.nhs.uk/p/working-with-us/become-a-member-of-our-trust> or call 0117 342 3764.



Make sure you meet the eligibility criteria. Call us if you have any queries about this.



You are welcome to contact us if you would like to come to any meetings or events to meet the governors or to come in and talk to us about the role



Request a Nomination Form. You can do this through the Membership team by calling us on 0117 342 3764 or emailing us at [FoundationTrust@UHBW.nhs.uk](mailto:FoundationTrust@UHBW.nhs.uk). Forms are available from **4 March 2021**.



Complete the nomination form together with a photo and statement and return it to Civica Election Services **before noon on 1 April 2021**. You can complete and return the form electronically or by post.



If the seat is contested, voting will take place from 27 April to 21 May 2021. You will then be notified whether or not you have been elected to the Council of Governors. If you have been successful, your term of office will begin on 1 June.

At any time check the Elections page on our website for the most up-to-date election news: <https://www.uhbw.nhs.uk/p/about-us/council-of-governors>

## 14. Useful links

**University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust:** Information about UHBW, its services, and its current Board of Directors and Council of Governors is on our website: <http://www.uhbw.nhs.uk>. For up-to-date information about our governor elections, please see <https://www.uhbw.nhs.uk/p/about-us/council-of-governors>.

**National Guidance:** There are two publications that you might find interesting if you would like to read about Foundation Trusts and the governor role in more depth:

- **‘So you are thinking about becoming a governor?’** – Advice from NHS Providers (the membership organisation and trade association for NHS Trusts and Foundation Trusts): <https://www.nhsproviders.org/programmes/governwell/information-and-guidance/so-youre-thinking-about-becoming-a-governor>
- **‘Your Statutory Duties’** – In-depth guidance on governor duties published by NHS Improvement (the regulatory body for NHS Trusts and Foundation Trusts): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nhs-foundation-trust-governors-your-legal-obligations>

## 15. Contact information

Please contact Sarah Murch or Rachel Hartles from the Membership Team at any time with any further queries you might have. You can call us on 0117 342 3764, email us at [FoundationTrust@UHBW.nhs.uk](mailto:FoundationTrust@UHBW.nhs.uk) or write to us at: Membership Team, University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust, Trust Headquarters, Marlborough Street, Bristol, BS1 3NU. During the pandemic we have been working from home, so please email us or call us in the first instance.

We look forward to hearing from you!



*“My experience in this role so far has taught me invaluable amounts about the long-term plans of the Trust and has helped me appreciate how much work and effort is required to run a successful Trust like this one. Being a governor is a great opportunity and I look forward to future events and meetings to participate in.”*

**Aishah Farooq, Appointed Governor (Youth Involvement Group)**