Being a Governor is your opportunity to influence health and social care in Gloucestershire and to work with the Board of Directors at Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust to help shape services, develop plans and influence change.

What is a Governor?

The full Council of Governors is made up of the following groups:

- **Public Governors**
  - 2 elected to represent each of the following district council areas: Cheltenham Borough; Cotswold District; Forest of Dean District; Gloucester City; Stroud District; Tewkesbury Borough
- **Patient Governor**
  - 1 elected to represent all patients who either live out of the county or who would prefer to be a member of the patients’ constituency rather than their geographical one
- **Staff Governors**
  - 1 elected to represent medical and dental staff - Vacant
  - 2 elected to represent nursing and midwifery staff
  - 1 elected to represent allied health professionals and other clinical, scientific and technical staff
  - 2 elected to represent all other non-clinical staff – 1 Vacancy
- **Stakeholder Governors**
  - 1 appointed by the Local Authorities for Gloucestershire
  - 1 appointed by the Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group
  - 1 appointed by the Gloucestershire Healthwatch
  - 1 appointed governor vacancy

Public Governors provide an important link between the hospital and the local community, enabling us to gather views from local people and to feed back what is happening within the Trust. They reflect Members’ interests and work on their behalf to improve health services for the future. By passing on ideas and suggestions Members also can help Governors carry out their role effectively.

Staff Governors are elected by staff members so that their particular views and comments can be used to shape the development of hospital services, enhance patient care or the working lives of staff.

The Trust’s constitution ensures that publicly elected Governors are in the majority.

What Governors do

Public Governors have two roles - statutory duties which are largely concerned with good governance within the Trust and non-statutory duties that are carried out by agreement between the Trust and the Governors and concentrate on the Trust’s relationship with the community it serves.

The statutory duties are:
- Holding the non-executive directors individually and collectively to account for the performance of the Board of Directors
• To require one or more of the Directors to attend a meeting for the purpose of obtaining information about the Trust’s performance of its functions or the Directors’ performance of their duties
• To receive an advance copy of the agenda of a meeting of the Board of Directors and to receive a copy of the minutes after a meeting
• Where the Trust may not be compliant with its Constitution or the National Health Service Act 2006, Governors will be able to refer the issue to a Monitor appointed Panel which will be able to launch an investigation
• Representing the interests of the members of the corporation as a whole and the interests of the public including dealing with complaints in accordance with the Trust’s Complaints Procedure.
• Selecting and appointing the Chairman and Non-Executive Directors
• Approving the appointment of a Chief Executive
• Approving the salary of the Chairman and Non-Executive Directors
• Advising the Trust’s Board of Directors on a range of issues
• Attending meetings of the Council of Governors
• Appointing the Trust’s External Auditor
• Receiving annual reports and accounts

The non-statutory duties which have been developed so far are:-
• Participating in Working Groups
• Representing the Council of Governors on Trust Committees and reporting back to the Council
• Developing the Membership strategy and helping to recruit new Members
• Helping to publish a quarterly newsletter distributed to all Members
• Attending Open Days and meeting with Members
• Considering and advising the Board of Directors on the hospitals’ future development

Role of Individual Governors

All Governors are equally responsible for the actions and decisions of the Council of Governors.

Governors are required to:-

• Ensure that on election to the Council and throughout their term of office they are qualified to stand as a Governor in respect of their constituency and comply with all the requirements of Governors as laid out in the Constitution.
• Governors will serve for a three year term of office. Governors may stand for re-election at the end of that term but may serve for no more than nine years in total.
• To attend regularly all meetings of the Council of Governors and any sub-committees on which they serve. Governors are expected to attend as a minimum 4 of the 6 Council of Governor meetings per year.
• Not to purport to act on behalf of the Trust outside Council meetings unless expressly delegated some specific task or responsibility by the Council of Governors.
• A Register of Governors’ interests is held by the Trust Secretary. Any Governor who has a material interest in any matter before the Council of Governors must declare that interest.

Liability

Governors do not have any financial liability for the work of the Trust. That liability remains with the Board of Directors.
Expenses

Publically elected Governors may claim travelling expenses for attending meetings of the Council of Governors at a rate of 45p per mile, in line with existing Trust policies. Governors other than staff Governors and those able to receive emails via their work (such as PCT and Local Authority Governors) are also eligible for £95 as a contribution towards their incidental expenses. Staff Governors may claim expenses in line with existing Trust policy to attend Council meetings and events.

Governors will not be reimbursed for loss of earnings.

What Governors can't do

 Whilst welcoming ideas, suggestions and general comments, it is not the job of Governors to deal with individual personal complaints about the hospital, or the care and treatment received. In the first instance advice can be sought from the Patients Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). Any formal complaint should be made in writing to the Chief Executive, not to PALS or a Governor.

Staff Governors are not there to deal with personal issues, for example disciplinary procedures or changes to contracts. They are not in a position to take on issues normally dealt with through personnel, staff organisations or trade unions.

I'm interested in being a Governor - what sort of person are you looking for?

Governors need to be able to take a broad overview of the work of the Trust and to represent not just their own views but also the views of the people in their community. There is a training programme for Governors. We welcome Governors with a wide range of experience and expertise which they can bring to the Trust.

If you have some understanding of the NHS or the Trust that's great, but it's not essential. There will be training, and there will always be people on hand to offer advice and support.

Elections to the Council of Governors take place in the early summer of most years, and governors will generally serve a three-year term of office, beginning and ending in July at the time of the Annual Members’ Meeting.

If you are concerned about the health and social care needs of the community, care about the future of health services and want to ensure that the Trust delivers top quality patient care and if you feel that you have the skills, we encourage you to stand for election.

How often do the Governors meet?

The Council of Governors meets six times a year, in January, February, May, July, September and November. Meetings are held on a Wednesday of these months, beginning at 5.30 p.m. The venue alternates between Cheltenham and Gloucester.

Governors will follow an induction plan and are expected to attend some training events, so that they are up to date with what is happening in the NHS, and can learn more about their role. You will also be expected to serve on other committees as allocated or support the work of other groups and this would involve additional commitment, usually four to six morning or afternoon meetings per year. You will also be invited to attend other meetings during normal working hours on an ad hoc basis.

What do I have to do if I want to be a Governor?

If you are not already a Member, you need to join the Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. You can do this on-line or by requesting an application form from the Trust Secretary. Becoming a Member of the Foundation Trust is completely free of charge and membership is open to anyone who lives in any of the six borough or district council
areas of Gloucestershire or who has been a patient of the Trust at any time in the last three years.

Expressions of interest are being sought to fill the two vacancies. If more than one expression of interest is received for each vacancy it will be necessary to hold an election. In this case you will need to give some information on the nomination from about yourself and the contribution you could bring as a Governor. You need to ensure that you have the time available to be a Governor

The information that is received about all the candidates will be put together and sent to members with a ballot paper. Staff Members will then vote for the candidate they choose.

If you are interested in becoming a Governor, please contact Martin Wood, the Trust Secretary, telephone 03004-222932 or email to martin.wood@glos.nhs.uk.