# Becoming a Governor

# Introduction

Thank you for your interest in Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and the important role of our Council of Governors. This document provides information on the Trust, NHS Foundation Trusts and the role our governors play in helping us to meet our priorities and uphold our values.

# About Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (the Trust)

Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust received authorisation on 1 July 2004. It was formed from Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Trust, which was established following a reconfiguration of health services in Gloucestershire in 2002. The Trust provides acute hospital services from two large district general hospitals, Cheltenham General Hospital and Gloucestershire Royal Hospital. Maternity Services are also provided at Stroud Maternity Hospital. Trust staff also provide outpatient clinics and some surgery from community hospitals throughout Gloucestershire.

The Trust remains the major provider of secondary care services in the area. Analysis shows that for Gloucestershire we are the leading acute healthcare provider by a significant margin.

# Our Values as an NHS Foundation Trust

Our values underpin everything we do and describe the way we expect our staff to behave towards our patients, families and carers and between each other. We have the following three values:

* **Caring**, patients said: "Show me that you care about me as an individual. Talk to me, not about me. Look at me when you talk to me."
* **Listening**, patients said: "Please acknowledge me, even if you can't help me right now. Show me that you know that I'm here."
* **Excelling**, patients said: "Don't just do what you have to, take the next step and go the extra mile."

# What is a Foundation Trust

NHS foundation trusts were first set up in 2004 as part of the Government’s drive to make sure NHS organisations:

* make more local decisions
* have more financial freedom
* are more accountable to local people for the services they provide.
* NHS foundation trusts are also accountable to:
* their commissioners (the people who buy their services) through contracts
* Parliament (each foundation trust must lay its annual report and accounts before Parliament)
* the Care Quality Commission (through the legal requirement to register and meet the associated standards for the quality of care provided)
* Monitor – the regulator for NHS foundation trusts - through the NHS provider licence.
* On 1 April 2019 NHS Improvement and NHS England began working together as a new single organisation to better support the NHS to deliver improved care for patients and to support the delivery of the NHS Long Term Plan.

# How does a Foundation Trust Work?

As a Foundation Trust, we are a not for profit, membership organisations. We aim to respond to the needs of our membership and work closely with local communities to improve services and standards for local people. Regulators ensure that we are well-governed, legally constituted, financially viable and provide a high standard of care.

# Who leads Foundation Trusts?

Foundation Trusts are led by a Board of Directors who are responsible for outlining the Trust’s strategic growth, overseeing the management of the Trust and building the organisations culture. The Board includes Executive Directors and Non-Executive Directors. A Council of Governors holds the Non-Executive Directors to account for their performance on the Board and represent the interests of members and the public.

# Who are the members of the Foundation Trust?

We want our membership to be representative of the communities we serve. Anyone over the age of 16 with an interest in the services we provide and who lives in England or Wales can apply to be a member of the Foundation Trust. Membership is free, without obligation and will have no bearing on the care received. Members can receive information on the Trust, be consulted on plans for future development, elect representatives to the Council of Governors and nominate themselves for Governor.

# Membership Constituency

Our membership is composed of two constituencies:

**Public members:** Anyone who lives within the area of the Trust and is at least **16** years of age. Our public constituency includes Out of County.

**Staff members:** All staff employed by the Trust or who exercise functions for the purpose of the Trust who are employed on a permanent or fixed term contract of at least one year’s duration.

# Who are the Governors of the Foundation Trust?

The Council of Governors consists of Trust members representing Gloucestershire as well as those who live “Out of County”. It is important for our governors to represent a wide range of people from different age groups, genders, ethnicities and backgrounds in order to best represent the people we serve. Governors do not need to have special qualifications or expertise in order to be elected.

# Who can be a Governor?

You can stand for election to the council of governors if you are a member of our Trust and are at least **18** years old.

You can only stand for election in the constituency in which you are a member. For example, if you are a staff member you cannot put yourself forward for election as a public governor, or if you live in Gloucester you cannot stand for election in the Forest of Dean.

We also ask our partner organisations to put forward representatives to sit on our council of governors; so you can be an appointed governor if your organisation asks you to be its representative.

There are a small number of people who can be a member but not a governor. These include people who:

* are governors of other NHS foundation trusts
* have been convicted of an offence (or equivalent sections of the Mental Health Act) within the last five years leading to imprisonment of three months or more
* have been declared bankrupt.

# The Role of the Governor

Our Council of Governors is fundamental to the development and progress of the Trust. Our Governors make a real difference by ensuring that we listen to the views of our patients and those living locally as well as staff and other interested parties. They hold us accountable and ensure that we can make improvements to our services and information about them.

In addition to providing input into decisions made at a Trust-wide level, governors may also take a particular interest in aspect of the Trust’s work, such as quality of services,

# Types of Governors

Governors may be appointed as Public or Staff Governors. This allows governors to represent the membership constituency to which they belong.

# What does a governor do?

The role of the council of governors is set out in the NHS Act 2006 and as amended by the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

**Statutory duties**

These include:

* appointing and, if appropriate, removing the Trust chairman and other non-executive directors
* deciding the remuneration and allowances and other terms and conditions of office of the chairman and the other non-executive directors
* approving any new appointment of a chief executive
* appointing and, if appropriate, removing the Trust’s auditor
* receiving the Trust’s annual accounts, any report of the auditor on them and the annual report, at a general meeting of the council of governors
* providing input on the Trust’s forward plan
* holding the non-executive directors, individually and collectively, to account for the performance of the board of directors
* representing the interests of the members of the Trust as a whole and the interests of the public
* approving significant transactions
* approving an application by the Trust to enter into a merger, acquisition, separation or dissolution
* deciding whether the Trust’s non-NHS work would significantly interfere with its principal purpose, which is to provide goods and services for the health service in England, or performing its other functions
* approving amendments to the Trust’s constitution.

**Non-Statutory duties**

In addition to their statutory duties, governors are also encouraged to take on non-statutory duties. This may include visiting wards, attending member or patient focus groups, giving talks and more. These activities are a good way to engage with members and the community.

# What does it mean to be a governor?

Being a governor can be a very rewarding experience. Governors have the opportunity to:

* represent views of constituents and shape the way our services are delivered
* Hold the Board’s Non-Executive Directors accountable for the Trust’s performance
* Attend events throughout the year which offer them a chance to engage with members of their constituency and staff
* Fulfil statutory responsibilities such as appointment of Non-Executive Directors and the Trust Chair

For more information on the backgrounds and experiences of our Council of Governor, please visit <https://www.gloshospitals.nhs.uk/about-us/our-governors/>

# How much of my time will it take up?

The Council of Governors meets at least six times a year. In addition to this there will be a programme of engagement sessions, training and visits to services.

The times, dates and venues of our Council of Governors' meetings will be agreed in advance to try to make sure that as many governors as possible can attend.

The Council of Governors has also set up working groups to look at various issues, e.g. membership and engagement, quality of services and performance. If you have a special interest, you may want to get involved in one or more group.

# Will I be paid for my time?

No. Being a Governor is a **voluntary** role and you will not receive payment for this position. You will be able to claim reimbursement for reasonable expenses in line with Trust guidelines.

# How long will I serve for?

Governors are elected or appointed for three years initially and can serve up to a maximum of nine years.

Governors may resign at any time, or may be removed by resolution of the council of governors if they are no longer eligible, have a poor attendance record or are not able to attend training and awareness sessions (without good reason) and in certain other circumstances.

# How do I get elected?

In order to run for election you must first be a member of the Trust. You may submit a membership form at the same time as your application. An online membership form is available here: [Becoming a member](https://www.gloshospitals.nhs.uk/about-us/support-our-trust/join-our-foundation-trust/)

You may then put yourself forward for election by submitting a nomination form online or by post or email. Submit an online nomination here [nomination form](https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.cesvotes.com%2Fgloshosp2023&data=05%7C01%7Clisa.evans66%40nhs.net%7C4cb5c64fdb6345b6b00c08db724346dc%7C37c354b285b047f5b22207b48d774ee3%7C0%7C0%7C638229405518681477%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=49MPwTAwMCY8ObQ01W3VwqG7lQhrTk9Jt5Qe3PpSLFQ%3D&reserved=0) :

Members seeking election must be nominated according to the area in which they reside. A list of vacancies is available on the next page.

All elected governors must be subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check taking office.

# Support for governors

Our Governors are a vital part of our work and we strive to support you in your role. Governors do not need to have particular expertise or qualifications. We will strive to support you to develop the skills you need to carry out your duties successfully.

**Spring 2024 Election Timetable**

Nominations are now open for people who wish to represent the following areas:

**Seats Available**

Nominations are open for elections in the following public governor constituencies:

* Cotswold x 1
* Forest of Dean x 1;
* Gloucester x 1;
* Tewkesbury x 1

In addition, we will also be holding elections for Nursing and Midwifery and Allied Health Professionals Staff Governors.

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| **ELECTION STAGE** | **DATE** |
| Notice of Election / nomination open | Tuesday, 6 Feb 2024 |
| Nominations deadline | Tuesday, 27 Feb 2024 |
| Summary of valid nominated candidates published | Wednesday, 28 Feb 2024 |
| Final date for candidate withdrawal | Friday, 1 Mar 2024 |
| Electoral data to be provided by Trust | Tuesday, 5 Mar 2024 |
| Notice of Poll published | Friday, 15 Mar 2024 |
| Voting packs despatched | Monday, 18 Mar 2024 |
| Close of election | Tuesday, 9 Apr 2024 |
| Declaration of results | **Wednesday, 10 Apr 2024** |

**Additional Information**

For further information, you may find the following websites useful:

Trust website: [www.gloshospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.gloshospitals.nhs.uk)

## NHS Improvement: [www.improvment.nhs.uk](http://www.improvment.nhs.uk)

Care Quality Commission: [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk)

Reference Guide for NHS Trust Governors:

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/284473/Governors_guide_August_2013_UPDATED_NOV_13.pdf>

Election Inquiries:

For inquiries about the management of the election process, please write to [ftnominationenquiries@cesvotes.com](mailto:ftnominationenquiries@cesvotes.com) or phone 020 8889 9203

To contact the Trust, please write to [ghn-tr.corporategovernance@nhs.net](mailto:ghn-tr.corporategovernance@nhs.net)