

DRAFT Membership Strategy 2023-25

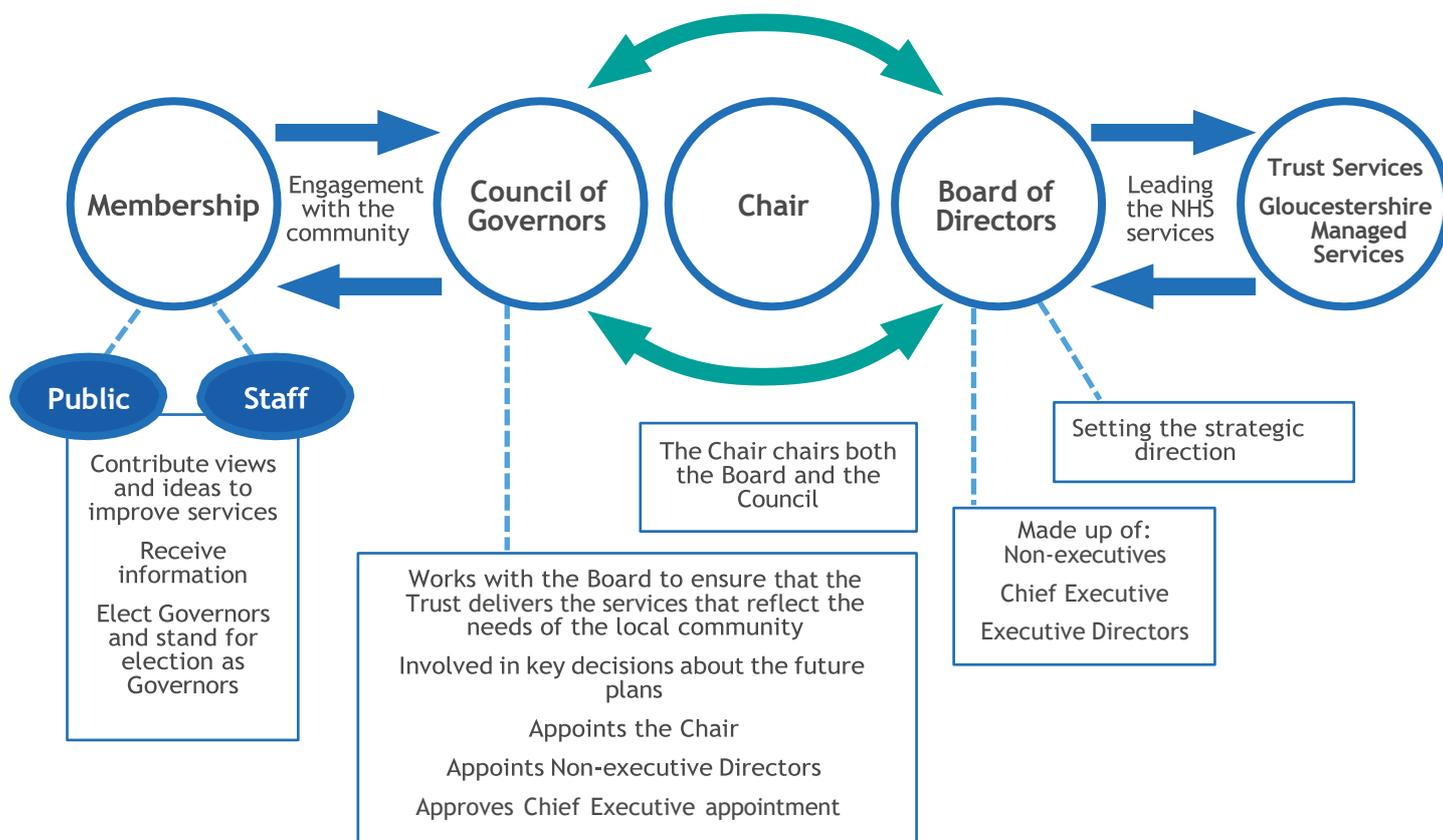
1. Introduction

As a Foundation Trust we are accountable to our local communities, our patients and staff, and enables us to listen to what matters most to people in our decision-making.

We do this by encouraging people to become a Trust ‘member’ which provides a range of benefits, but importantly ensures that people have a say in how services will be designed and delivered. In addition, members can elect Trust Governors, who perform a vital role in holding non-executive Board members to account for the performance of the Board. Members can stand for election to become a Governor.

It is important that we have an involved, informed, and representative membership, ensuring we continue to listen and respond to the needs of the community in delivering the best care and services.

The way in which membership and governors influence the Trust is illustrated through the diagram below (adapted from NHS Providers):



2. Developing a membership strategy

The overall picture for the NHS emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic is one of change, with continuing operational and financial pressures. This means we must be creative in how we strengthen and engage with our membership. We must also ensure that our membership and Governors, are representative of the diverse communities we serve across the county.

Despite the deep and lasting impact of the pandemic, the Trust and partners continued to successfully complete an ambitious programme of public engagement and consultation on our Fit for the Future Programme and our Centres of Excellence vision for our hospitals.

Health provision continues to evolve and it is essential that local people are directly involved in developing new models of care and in understanding any changes, and our membership remains an important part of that work.

There is strong collaboration across the One Gloucestershire health and care system, including working with partners in the voluntary and community sector, to ensure local people are involved in shaping health services and have opportunities to share their experiences.

The joined-up system working also gives rise to future opportunities in developing different, potentially shared, models of membership. As a result, this strategy will only cover the next two years.

This strategy therefore seeks to:

- Underline the Trust's commitment to membership
- Outline our vision for the next two years
- Understand our current membership picture and the challenges
- Identify actions to ensure we meet the challenges.

This strategy was codesigned with Governors and Trust staff who were part of a workshop on 8 June 2023. It has also been shaped through engagement with members of the public at events over the summer and our Young Influencers Group.

It also draws on the FT Code of Governance and best practice identified nationally.

3. Why does membership matter?

Our strategy sets out our vision and commitment for engaging and involving our Foundation Trust members, Governors and, with them, our communities. Their involvement is important in helping us to be a great place to work and receive care.

Membership helps to give local people across Gloucestershire a voice in shaping health and care and building our plans for the future.

Our vision is to develop a representative membership that means something to local people so they can be actively engaged in shaping services and how we work. Over the next two years, we want to improve how we engage and involve members, and ensure that we reflect the diversity of our amazing communities.

3.1 What is 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 not ability to pay.

3.2 What makes NHS Foundation Trusts different from NHS trusts?

As a Foundation Trust we are not directed by Government so have greater freedom to decide, with our governors and members, our own strategy and the way services are run.

We can also retain our financial surpluses and borrow to invest in new and improved services for patients and service users. This enables us to invest directly in the care of our patients.

Importantly, this means that as a Trust we are accountable to:

- our local communities through our Members and Governors
- our commissioners who contract our services on behalf of the community
- Parliament (every 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); and
- NHS England.

As a Foundation Trust we can be responsive to the needs of our local communities. One way that we achieve this is by recruiting Trust members, who are represented by governors. Members of the trust elect the Council of Governors to represent their views. Governors then work with the Trust's board of directors to agree the future plans of the organisation, which take into account the needs and wishes of the local community.

Governors also have the duty to appoint the Trust's chairperson and non-executive directors.

3.3 Who can be a member?

Anyone over the age of 16 and living in Gloucestershire can become a member. Our Members are made up of our staff, our patients and the public, most of whom have a general interest in supporting their local NHS services or who may bring specific experiences about a condition or service. Members help the Trust develop services to meet the needs of the people we serve.

Members are represented by a Council of Governors comprising elected public and staff members (who are elected by members), together with representatives of partner organisations, local authorities and Commissioners in the local community.

3.4 Our Council of Governors

A driving force behind our Trust is the active involvement of members of the public, patients and staff through our Council of Governors. Our governors represent the views and interests of Trust members and the local community, to ensure our Trust is rooted in its community needs and the things that matter most to our staff.

Governors are responsible for holding the Non-executive Directors, individually and collectively, to account for the performance of the Board of Directors, and for representing Trust members. Governors are members who stand to be elected or are appointed.

3.5 Our Public Governors

Public Governors have a primary responsibility to represent the interests of the members who elected them as well as their local constituent communities. We have 13 Public Governors and they provide an important link between the hospital and the local community, enabling us to gather views from local people and to feedback what is happening within the Trust.

Public Governors are made up of two elected individuals from each of the six districts and one from 'out of county' (which represents those who use our services from outside of Gloucestershire). 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.

3.6 Our Staff Governors

Staff Governors have the same role as Public Governors and are elected to represent the members of the staff constituency, as well as the wider membership and local communities. Staff Governors represent four key groups: allied healthcare professionals; medical and dental staff; nursing and midwifery; other and non-clinical staff.

As employees of the trust, Staff Governors bring a unique understanding of the issues faced by an NHS Foundation Trust, which they should seek to use in representing their members' interests and holding the non-executive directors to account for the performance of the board.

3.7 Our Appointed Governors

The Trust has four Appointed Governors who bring a wide range of experience in representing the views from their appointing organisations, which for Gloucestershire include: NHS Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board; Gloucestershire County Council; Healthwatch Gloucestershire; and Age UK Gloucestershire.

4. Why become a member?

The core benefit of becoming a member is to have a voice, helping to shape the way services are provided, contribute to the future direction of the organisation, and ensure the Trust is responsive to the needs of local people and communities. Alongside this, membership provides opportunities to show support for the Trust and its work.

Becoming a member gives the opportunity to learn more about what we do and to be involved in shaping services and sharing your views. As a member you will:

- Be part of a community interested in the development of health and care services across Gloucestershire;
- Be kept up to date about our plans for the future and give us your views and opinions;
- Be invited to events and Annual Members Meeting;
- Receive a quarterly newsletter, keeping you up to date with news and developments;
- All members aged 16 or over are able to stand as a Governor or vote for a Governor;
- Learn about volunteering opportunities and other ways you can get involved;
- Benefit from discounts on many purchases through Health Service Discounts.

5. Our membership objectives 2023-2025

Gloucestershire Hospitals has been an NHS Foundation Trust since 2004 and we have a combined public and staff membership of around 12,000 members.

Our vision is to develop a more representative membership that means something to local people so they can be actively engaged in shaping services and how we work. Over the next two years, we want to improve how we engage and involve members, and ensure that we reflect the diversity of our amazing communities.

To achieve this vision, our strategy for 2023-2025 sets out four core aims:

1. Develop a membership that is representative of our diverse communities;
2. Support the Council of Governors to be reflective and representative of our diverse communities;
3. To improve the quality of engagement and communication with members;
4. To keep accurate and informative databases of members and tools to engage with people.

5.1. Increase membership of the Trust that is representative of our diverse communities;

We recognise that the value of membership lies in the quality of engagement, not solely in the numbers.

We want to organically build and recruit members from our six districts to ensure that it is representative of our diverse communities, and in turn enables wider representation on our Council of Governors.

To achieve this, we will:

- **Simplify the process for becoming a member**
We will make the process of applying simpler, more accessible and well publicised, including promoting the use of our online membership application form.
- **Proactively engage areas with low membership and demographic gaps**
We will use our database to understand where we have low representation and which demographic groups are also underrepresented.
- **Develop targeted campaigns to recruit members from under-represented areas**
We will work with partner organisations to explore and develop new ways of promoting membership to those who may not have considered becoming a member.
- **Promote membership opportunities to younger people in our community**
We will work with partner organisations to encourage membership from young people, and enable them to get involved in a wide range of ways with the Trust.
- **Refresh the membership pages on the Trust's website**
We will improve our webpages and link to our 'Get Involved' section to ensure information is engaging and appealing, with links to newsletters and event details. This will include making it clearer to public and staff members how they can get in touch with Governors.
- **Post regular messages on social media**
We will post regular information about membership, and information, news and links which our members will find useful.
- **Promote more clearly the benefits of membership**
We will re-define how we promote the benefits of membership, and explore the language we use to describe what membership means, to make it more relevant to our communities.
- **Refresh our membership recruitment material**
We will review our recruitment material to make this more impactful and engaging. This will include developing new membership posters, postcards and other materials to assist in recruiting new members.
- **Develop a schedule of community events**
We will build into our engagement programme attendance at a wide range of events to promote membership and encourage people to sign up. This will be targeted to key areas where uptake can be strengthened.

5.2. Increase the diversity of our Council of Governors

We need to work with the Council of Governors to ensure they are representative and reflective of the diverse communities we serve.

Where some groups are less well represented, we will try new ways of engaging with them to encourage them to become members and stand for election. This includes many of our seldom heard communities and young people.

- **Proactively engage members to stand for election**
We will use the membership engagement programme to listen and enable individuals to stand for election, in particular from seldom heard groups and young people.
- **Promote how to become a Governor to younger people**
We will work with our Young Influencers and partner organisations to encourage young people to stand for Governor.
- **Support training and development for Governors**
Ensure extensive training and support is available for Governors to ensure they are empowered and successful in the role.
- **Refresh the Governor pages on the website**
We will improve our Governor webpages, sharing the role and importance of the Council of Governors. This will include simplifying how people can get in touch with Governors.

Our Council of Governor constituent areas



5.3 To improve the quality of engagement and communication with members

We aim to build our membership organically, ensuring we are representative of the communities we serve, and we recognise that we want a more engaged and active membership rather than a large but passive one. Improving the quality of our engagement with our members is therefore a key priority.

We want to create real two-way engagement between the Trust and its members and provide meaningful opportunities for members to engage in issues. Members should feel involved in the organisation and supported to add value to the Trust. It will also help us to support our Governors in representing the interests of members and the public.

By 2025, we want to develop a partnership culture between members, Governors and the Trust to ensure more effective relationships in shaping decision-making.

- **Refresh existing communication channels with members**

We will improve how we communicate and engage with our members in order to provide the information that members want in an accessible way. This will include the systems and tools used to manage communication.

We will use a range of different channels to target different groups; create an ongoing dialogue with members; provide opportunities for information sharing, discussion, and feedback from members; and celebrate Trust achievements so that members can share in this success.

- **Promote the work of Governors**

We will promote ways for members to get in touch with Governors, make the process simpler, so that ideas and issues can be shared. We will improve how we feedback on issues Governors have raised on members' behalf.

- **Explore alternative newsletter tools**

The Trust currently sends a quarterly newsletter electronically to members. However, the technology and system is now out of date and difficult to use, impacting on the quality and analysis of what people find of most interest. We will work with the Trust Charity and Communication Team to identify other options, including the potential to adopt the system they use, which would boost in-house training resources and save costs.

- **Build partnership engagement**

We will work with voluntary and community partners to increase our reach in sharing information, news and how people can get involved in working with the Trust, including membership.

- **Develop a programme of community engagement events**

We will develop a schedule of community engagement where the Trust will be present or leading, with support from Governors, so that members and the public have a range of opportunities to get involved where they live, and engage directly with their elected Governors.

- **Improve opportunities for members to give their views**

We will strengthen the ways members can engage with the Trust, for example through participation in events, community focus groups and surveys.

5.4. To keep accurate and informative databases of members and tools to engage with people.

The Trust uses a membership database, which holds a range of contact and demographic information for all members, in line with data protection legislation. However, an opportunity may be to work with the Trust Charity in adopting the same database system they use, which also could enable capture of other ways to communicate and engage with members (such as mobile telephone numbers).

- **Explore alternative database systems**

The Trust has a third-party database, which is costly and is difficult to use. It also only has limited functionality, meaning alternative ways of communicating with members and Governors is not available (i.e. such as SMS).

We would work to identify other options, including where systems are already in place within the Trust, which could boost in-house training resources and save costs.

- **Maintain an accurate membership database**

Our membership records need to be up to-date and meet regulatory requirements, but we also rely on this to identify which groups may be underrepresented or to identify trends in membership. The database will help us target recruitment initiatives to best effect and be linked to the trust website.

6. Delivering the strategy and evaluating success

Through this strategy, we want to change and improve our engagement with members and we recognise the importance of measuring its impact and evaluating its success.

6.1 Implementation

We will develop an action plan which will set out the steps we will take each year to deliver the strategy. The action plan will evolve and develop as the strategy is implemented and we learn more from what local people tell us they need.

We will take a phased approach over two years to deliver the strategy, with the first year focused on refreshing existing systems and processes as well as developing the plans for our community engagement.

6.2 Evaluating success

The Council of Governors is responsible for the delivery of the strategy, and Governors will take an active role in monitoring the implementation and regular reports will be made to the Council on progress

The principal ways in which we will assess the success of the strategy will include:

Reviewing the Trust's Membership

We will conduct a biannual review of the profile of the Trust's public membership to identify any under-represented groups.

This will help us to understand whether our targeted recruitment campaigns have been successful and whether we are succeeding in ensuring our membership is reflective of the diversity of our communities.

The reviews will look at the following factors:

- **Demographics:** This includes age, gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and geographic location.
- **Interests:** This includes the types of activities that members are interested in, such as volunteering, advocacy, and specific service or health areas.
- **Engagement levels:** This includes how often members attend events, participate in discussions, and contact the Trust.

The results of the analysis will be used to make our changes work, and we will also use the information to help support diversity and inclusion across our membership.

Measuring Involvement

To ensure that our efforts to promote a more active and involved public and staff membership have been successful, we will regularly measure the following metrics:

- **Readership of the membership newsletter:** Track the number of members who open and read the newsletter, as well as the clicks on links within the newsletter and the content;
- **Attendance at engagement events:** We will track the number of members who attend our engagement events, as well as the level of participation in discussions and activities.
- **Issues that members have responded to:** We will track the number of times members have contacted us about specific issues, as well as the nature of their concerns.
- **Surveys of all members:** We will conduct regular surveys of all members to assess their views on our work and their level of involvement.

This data will help us to understand how well we are connecting with members and to identify areas where we can improve.

Measuring Impact

Our annual Engagement and Involvement Review includes a key focus on membership and governor engagement. However, we also need to understand and evaluate the wider impact of our membership work.

This includes how we recruit and retain a representative membership, which is reflected in the make-up of the Council of Governors. We also need to demonstrate what has changed within the Trust as a result of members' views and activities.

To do this, we will use a variety of methods, including:

- **Surveys:** We can survey members to gauge their satisfaction with the Trust's engagement work and to identify areas where we can improve;
- **Data analysis:** We will analyse data on membership demographics, engagement levels, and satisfaction levels to identify trends and patterns.

This information will help us to understand the impact of our membership work and to make changes to ensure that it is meeting the needs of our members.