



Cheshire and Wirral Partnership **NHS**
NHS Foundation Trust



A guide to becoming a Foundation Trust Governor

Care • Well-being • Partnership



Forward from the chairman and chief executive

Firstly we would like to thank you for your interest in becoming a governor for Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (CWP).

This document provides a broad overview of the role and remit of our Council of Governors and how they add value to CWP. Whilst it is not exhaustive, we hope that this booklet will outline to you the key responsibilities of our Council of Governors and help develop your interest further.

As a Trust we continue to deliver high quality services and care to our population, as well as developing and delivering innovative and effective services across the area. The Trust continues to maintain effective working relationships with local commissioners and other providers; working together to achieve identified national directives. Working closely with our governors and members is also extremely important to us as a Trust.

The role our governors take is an important one, providing a direct link between the Trust and local communities, staff and key partner organisations. As a governor you will represent the interests of your



*Sheena Cumiskey, chief executive
and David Eva, chairman*

constituency or organisation and, as part of the Council of Governors, receive information from the Trust to enable you to hold the non-executive directors to account for the performance of the Board. You will have the opportunity to work with the Board of Directors to help shape the Trust's plans for the future and therefore directly impact the services provided by CWP.

We hope that this booklet is helpful to you and encourages you to nominate yourself to become a governor. We wish you all the best with your application, and look forward to working with you soon.

Sheena U. Cumiskey

David Eva

Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (CWP)

Our Foundation Trust serves people across Cheshire and Wirral with services also provided to other areas, for example Trafford and Bolton. CWP also provides some specialist services on a regional footprint. Its activities have always been to provide primary and specialist mental health, learning disabilities, child and adolescent mental health and drug and alcohol services - as well as a range of health services such as eating disorders. Since 2011, CWP has also provided community physical health services in West Cheshire.

Some facts and figures about CWP:

- A 'public benefit' organisation and part of the NHS
- First established in 2002 as a result of five local NHS bodies merging
- Became a Foundation Trust in 2007
- Was the first mental health trust in the North of England to become a Foundation Trust
- Regulated by Monitor (independent regulator of Foundation Trust's)
- Led by a Board of Directors
- Guided by a Council of Governors
- Work in partnership with local authorities and voluntary organisations
- Provide services from 65 sites
- Approximately 3,400 staff
- Have a membership base of over 15,000 people
- Serve a population of approximately 1 million people.

Foundation Trust status - some key facts

Foundation Trusts are special types of NHS Trusts that have more freedoms from central government. For example, we are able to keep our financial surplus and reinvest it to improve services for local people.

In order to gain these freedoms, CWP was required to pass a rigorous set of quality checks by the regulator of Foundation Trusts, Monitor.

Monitor authorised CWP as a Foundation Trust with effect from July 2007 and agreed our Foundation Trust constitution as part of our provider licence.

A central feature and key requirement of a Foundation Trust is to offer membership to the Trust and to have an elected 'Council of Governors'.

Membership

Our members include people from the local communities that we serve, our staff and service users. Anyone aged 11 years old and over who has an interest in the work of CWP can become a member of the Trust. Members can get involved in helping us to elect our governors and receive information and attend events to help shape and develop services in the Trust.

Our members help us to:

- Ensure that there is local involvement in different aspects of service development
- Challenge the stigma associated with mental illness, learning disabilities and drug and alcohol problems
- Have a bigger 'voice' to support further investment in the services we provide.

If you become a member of CWP you are helping to support a wide variety of local services, including adult mental health services, drugs and alcohol services, child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), learning disability services and community health services in West Cheshire.

You will have the opportunity to get involved in the decisions we make and to influence the way in which we plan and develop our services. Members can work with us to inform us of their needs and of the services our local communities would like us to deliver.

Council of Governors

The Council of Governors collectively links a Trust to its patients, services users, staff and stakeholders. Governors are collectively responsible for representing the interests of all these groups as well as the general public to the Trust's Board of Directors.

Governors are elected by Foundation Trust members or are appointed by one of our partnership organisations. Members elect Governors from their respective constituency (service user/carer, public or staff) during the election process. Partnership governors are appointed by local organisations that CWP work closely with. The Council of Governors is led by our chair of the Board of Directors.

Our governors

Our governors bring with them a diverse range of knowledge, skills and experience, which is highly valued by the Trust.

- Staff governors work for the Trust and are, therefore, close to operational issues.
- Partnership governors are employees of our partner agencies and are, therefore, well versed in the strategic direction of the NHS overall.
- Service user/carer governors have first hand experience of our services, either through care and treatment they have received personally, or through care and treatment provided to a family member or friend.
- Public governors represent the voice and opinion of our general public in relation to the services we provide, the views of the local community, environmental issues etc.

Why become a governor?

If you are interested in:

- Improving health services in your area
- Improving the public's understanding and awareness of CWP's services
- Supporting the work of CWP
- Giving something back to your local communities
- A challenging role that can make a difference...

Then becoming a governor for CWP may be for you.



Roles and responsibilities of governors

One of the main roles of a governor is to represent the voice of the people in their constituency. However, governors also have a number of statutory duties which were recently amended by the Health and Social Care Act 2012. These are to:

- Hold non-executive directors (NEDs) individually and collectively to account for the performance of the Board.
- Represent the interests of the members of the Trust as a whole and the interests of the public.
- Appoint and, if necessary, remove the chairman and non-executive directors.
- Review the remuneration and allowances of the chairman and non-executive directors.
- Approve the appointment of the chief executive (the Council of Governors does not appoint the chief executive).
- Receive the Trust's Annual Report and Accounts and the Auditor's Report.
- Appoint or remove the Trust's auditors.
- Approve significant transactions (mergers/acquisitions).
- Approve any amendments to the Trust's constitution.

Governors' views are also invited in respect of the Trust's business plans for the coming years. Therefore, governors play a vital role in influencing and shaping the future plans of the Trust.



Additional responsibilities

Governors are expected to be committed to the goals, aspirations and philosophy of the Trust, and are expected to make a reasonable time commitment to the Trust.

As a governor, your time will be spent undertaking the various responsibilities that a governor holds, including attending the full Council of Governors which meets five times a year. There are also sub-committees and working groups that governors can get involved with. The number of meetings attended as a governor will vary depending on how involved you choose to become. Alongside this governors will be expected to attend some training events. These sessions support governors in keeping up to date with changes in the NHS generally, learn more about the governor role, and provide an opportunity to share experiences with and obtain support from fellow governors.

Governors are also expected to promote the work of the Trust within their respective constituencies. This may involve governors arranging and/or attending local events and, at times, speaking at these events. Governors are asked to contribute to the recruitment of new members to the Trust

to ensure that the widest possible range of views are represented and heard, as well as encourage those members to become governors in the future.

Governors play an important role in ensuring that the Trust operates in a way consistent with its purpose and complies with the obligations placed on it as a Foundation Trust.

CWP values the role our governors play and will make all reasonable efforts to support governors to be effective in their duties.

How long can I be a governor? (Terms of office)

Governors are elected for a 3 year term and cannot hold office for longer than three full terms. A governor will not be eligible for re-appointment if s/he has already held office for more than seven consecutive years.

Governors can resign at any time, but will be encouraged to see out the full term of their appointment where possible.

Governors are volunteers to the Trust (unpaid). However, governors should not

incur any personal expense in discharging their duties, and will be reimbursed for all reasonable expenses in accordance with Trust policy.

Code of conduct for governors

As representatives of the Trust, governors are expected to conduct themselves in a way that is fitting for a public role.

All governors are expected to sign a declaration stating that they agree to adhere to the Trust's code of conduct for governors, which includes to:

- Commit to and actively support the NHS Foundation Trust's vision and values
- Maintain confidentiality with regard to information gained
- Uphold the seven principles of public life as outlined by the Nolan Committee
- If a member of any trade union, political party or other organisation, recognise that as a governor, you will not be representing those organisations (or the views of those organisations) but will be representing the constituency (public or staff) that elected you, or the organisation that nominated you
- Undergo a disclosure and barring service check
- Respect and treat with dignity and fairness the public, patients, relatives, carers, NHS staff and partners in other agencies
- Seek to ensure that your governor colleagues are valued and that judgements about them are consistent, fair and unbiased and are properly founded
- Be a committed team member by working with your governor colleagues, the Board of Directors, Trust, NHS and wider community
- Seek to ensure that the membership of the constituency you represent is properly informed and able to influence services
- Seek to ensure that no one is discriminated against because of their religion, belief, race, colour, gender, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, age, social or economic status or national origin
- At all times comply with the Constitution, Standing Orders and Standing Financial Instructions of Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.

Am I eligible to be a governor?

No specific qualifications are required to be a governor. However, commitment to the role and a desire to make a difference is key.

All CWP Foundation Trust members over the age of 16 years are able to nominate themselves for election to the Council of Governors. However, you may not become an elected governor if any of the following apply:

- You have been declared bankrupt.
- You have been sentenced to prison for three or more months within the preceding 5 years.
- You are under 16 years old on the nomination date.
- You are a spouse, partner, parent or child of a member of the Board of Directors of the Trust.
- You are a member of a local authority's scrutiny committee covering health matters.
- You are a governor or director of another NHS Foundation Trust or NHS Trust.
- You have been dismissed from paid employment with a health service body in the previous two years (not including redundancy).
- You are required to register under the Sex Offender Act 1997 or are considered

unsuitable (by the Board of Directors) further to the outcome of a disclosure and barring services check.

- You have previously been removed from the position of governor for reasons stated in the Trust Constitution.

How do elections work?

Elections are held annually and the results are announced at the Annual Members' Meeting (usually held during September). Should positions be unfilled during the annual election, or positions become vacant part way through a term, a bi-election will be held as appropriate.

If you wish to nominate yourself to become a governor, you will be asked to provide information about yourself and your reasons for standing for election.

An external agency is used to run the governor elections, to ensure that the process remains totally impartial. All nominations and ballot papers are handled by the external agency, who also send out all relevant information to members to enable them to vote.

Normally the entire process will take approximately 9-10 weeks, from the notice of the election to the publication of the results.

Interested? What do I do now?

Are you a member of the Trust?

You are unable to vote if you are not a member of the Trust. You also need to be a member of the Trust prior to the election date in order to stand for election to become a governor.

All you have to do to become a member of CWP is call 01244 397393 or email **info@cwps.nhs.uk**

You can also download an electronic copy of the application form from our website (**www.cwps.nhs.uk**), which you can complete and email back to us.



Have you applied to be a governor?

If you wish to check if you are eligible to become a governor, or would like further information, please email **governor@cwps.nhs.uk** or phone 01244 397381.

Once the governor election process commences, promotional material will be circulated which will advise you how to request a nomination form and the process for submission. Should you require any support in completing your nomination form, please contact the corporate affairs team on: 01244 397381.

If you would like to know more about the governor role or have any questions in relation to becoming a Trust governor, please do not hesitate to consult our website (**www.cwps.nhs.uk**) or contact our corporate affairs team on: 01244 397381.



Cheshire and Wirral Partnership 
NHS Foundation Trust

CONTACT

Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS
Foundation Trust
Trust Headquarters Redesmere
Countess of Chester Health Park
Liverpool Road
Chester, CH2 1BQ

Tel: 01244 397397
Fax: 01244 397398

© Cheshire and Wirral Partnership
NHS Foundation Trust 2016

Care • Well-being • Partnership