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# Thinking of becoming a Staff Governor?

INFORMATION BOOKLET

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# Introduction

## Are you interested in representing staff?

**Why not become a governor, we have three vacancies in our election.**

We are looking for **three** staff members to put themselves forward to become a governor and play a vital role as part of the Council of Governors. The elections will begin formally on **17 July 2020**.

So, if you are interested in shaping our services and would like to represent staff views, it will soon be time to think about completing your nomination form.

As an NHS Foundation Trust, Sussex Partnership is accountable to the Members through a body called the Council of Governors. The Council of Governors is chaired by the Trust's Chairman and comprises of:

- 10 Service User Governors (elected by service user members)
- 7 Public Governors (elected by the public members)
- 4 Carer Governors (elected by carer members)
- 5 Staff Governors (elected by staff)
- 8 Stakeholder Governors (appointed by partner organisations)

### All members of staff at Sussex Partnership are eligible to apply as long as:

- You are on a permanent contract, or a fixed term contract of at least 12 months
- You have not chosen to opt out of NHS Foundation Trust membership (if you have you can opt back in at any time)

**To check if you are on the staff membership database please contact the Membership Office on 0800 015 3357 or email [ft@sussexpartnership.nhs.uk](mailto:ft@sussexpartnership.nhs.uk)**

The information set out within this guide is to inform you about the Staff Governor role to help you to decide if you would like to put yourself forward for the role.

**You must ensure that you speak with your manager before you put yourself forward for the role.** We are happy to answer any questions or queries that you may have; the Corporate Governance Manager can be contacted by email at:

[Natalie.hennings@sussexpartnership.nhs.uk](mailto:Natalie.hennings@sussexpartnership.nhs.uk) or by telephone 0300 304 2066.

# Why become a Staff Governor?

Do you want to have a say in the decisions that affect your working life, and contribute to making the services the Trust provides for patients the very best they can be?

Do you believe that the views of staff should be heard at every level of the Trust, and think that you would be able to understand and share the views of staff with the Council and Board of Directors?

If so, you may want to consider becoming a Staff Governor

The organisation does not select its Staff Governors – both Public and Staff Governors are elected in an independently run nomination and election process. Civica, formally known as the Electoral Reform Services will run our elections and you will be able to submit your nomination form from 27<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

The most important thing you need to be a governor is enthusiasm for the role, rather than any specific skills or knowledge.

You should care about our patients, staff and the services the Trust provides, and specifically you should wish to bring the knowledge and experience of staff into discussions and decisions about the direction of the Trust.

Staff Governors have a vital role to play as part of the Council of Governors, and the role should be satisfying and challenging.

Staff Governors have key responsibilities to both the Council and to the staff members they represent. It is an important role, so please read on to find out more about what being a Staff Governor will involve.

# The role of a Staff Governor?

The Staff Governor role is distinctive because it provides an opportunity for staff members to have a voice. As Staff Governor, you will inform the Council of Governors what staff views are, this could be on patient safety, patient experience and/or quality of services. Staff Governors work in partnership with the Board of Directors and give them support and advice in helping the Trust achieve its vision of providing outstanding care and treatment you can be confident in.

Staff Governors have equal rights with other Governors. The Trust has five Staff Governors who voluntarily put themselves forward for election to represent the staff members in order to make a real contribution to the strategic direction and governance of the Trust.

*“As a Staff Governor I can play a key role by informing the Council of Governors about widely held staff views, especially if these views have an impact on issues of patient safety, patient experience and quality of services and I consider that they are not being fully addressed by the Board of Directors”*



The role of the Staff Governor does not duplicate the work of other staff representatives (e.g. Trade Union representatives or professional bodies). Staff Governors are not involved in negotiations about pay and terms and conditions.

Staff Governors do not deal with specific individual issues for staff, for example, disciplinary or grievance issues which are dealt with by formal staff representatives. It is about listening to staff feedback, raising concerns with the relevant manager, and keeping abreast of feedback themes.

# Staff Governor Responsibilities

In addition to being involved in the statutory responsibilities of the Council of Governors (detailed below), Staff Governors fulfil a number of other roles including:

- Staff engagement - for example, by hosting meetings with staff members to listen to their views, concerns and ideas
- Informing staff about the work of the Council of Governors
- Representing the interests and views of staff members throughout the Trust (excluding contractual issues or where there may be a potential conflict of interest)
- Acting as a conduit for widely held staff views and bring these to the attention of the Council of Governors if issues of concern are not being appropriately addressed by the Trust.

## MAIN STATUTORY DUTIES INCLUDE:

- To appoint, remove and decide upon the terms of office of the Chair and non-executive directors
- of the trust
- To determine the remuneration of the Chair and non-executive directors
- To appoint or remove the trust's auditor
- To approve or not approve the appointment of the trust's chief executive
- To receive the annual report and accounts and auditor's report at a general meeting
- To hold the non-executive directors to account for the performance of the board
- To represent the interests of members and the public
- To approve or not approve increases to non-NHS income of more than 5%
- of total income
- To approve or not approve acquisitions, mergers, separations and dissolutions
- To jointly approve changes to the trust's constitution with the board
- To express a view on the board's plans for the trust in advance of the trust's submission to Monitor

# How much time will being a staff governor take up?

The amount of time required to undertake this role varies from Trust to Trust; it will greatly depend on how involved a Staff Governor chooses to get involved in working groups and meetings with staff. However, we envisage that it will take a maximum of one day per month to fulfil this role effectively

## **TALK TO YOUR MANAGER:**

If you are considering standing for election you must discuss this with your line manager in the first instance. Please also share with them the information below.

## **MEETINGS**

The Trust recognises that it is important to enable Staff Governors to attend Council of Governors meetings and participate in working groups and other meetings needed to fulfil the role. Council of Governors meetings take place four times per year and are currently held in the on-site across our geographical locations. Staff Governors are expected to attend and meeting dates where possible are scheduled one year in advance.

## **INDUCTION AND TRAINING**

If you are elected we will provide an induction programme and also identify what individual training and development needs you may have. We also run training sessions and encourage Governors to attend national conferences to network with their colleagues from other Trusts. Governors are expected to take advantage of these training and development opportunities to ensure they can be effective in their role. You will be expected to attend an Induction; the date for this will be advertised on our website.

The duties undertaken as a Staff Governor are considered as part of their standard working time. Staff Governors will be released from their normal work to attend these duties and will be paid as usual. They will not be expected to subsequently complete work they would otherwise have done or to work additional hours to make up the released time. Department Managers are expected to support Staff Governors in this way, with guidance and direction from the Director of Corporate Affairs.



# What you need to do next

The election process must be undertaken by an independent organisation. The election system used by the Trust is based on the 'single transferable vote' and voting is by return of the ballot paper.

If you decide to stand for election you can complete a nomination form online here: <https://www.sussexpartnership.nhs.uk/election> On the form you will be asked to write a short statement about yourself and why you are standing for election. This statement will be your introduction to members and will help them to decide whether to vote for you.

The election process follows a strict timetable. The important dates are listed on our website using the link above, this also includes contains contact details for the Returning Officer who will send out the nomination mailing and ballot papers and can answer any election queries.

The Trust cannot reimburse any expenses incurred during the election process by members who are standing for election.

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU WANT TO STAND FOR ELECTION AS A GOVERNOR

- Ensure you are a staff member on our membership database
- Agree to carry out your duties if elected as a Governor
- Have read the eligibility criteria that will be sent to you with the nomination pack and make sure that none of them apply to you
- Talk to your line manager and be sure you can commit the time necessary to be an effective staff governor. This will include attending meetings of the Council of Governors, induction and training sessions.
- Visit our website for further information on our current vacancies, timetable and who to contact for a nomination form: <http://www.sussexpartnership.nhs.uk/election>

***If you are still unsure, why not speak to one of our current Staff Governors by contacting [governors@sussexpartnership.nhs.uk](mailto:governors@sussexpartnership.nhs.uk)***



**For further information please contact:**

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