

MEETINGS OF THE BOARD IN PUBLIC: GUIDANCE NOTES FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

1 INTRODUCTION

Board meetings of Taunton & Somerset NHS Foundation Trust are open to the public. This sheet provides some information about how Board meetings work and how you can get involved.

Name plates for each board member are displayed on the table in front of the member to enable you to identify who is speaking at each meeting.

2 AGENDA AND PAPERS

The Agenda and Papers for the Meeting may be inspected from three days in advance of the meeting by visiting the website. A number of copies will also be available at the meeting but please be aware that if demand exceeds supply you may need to share with another member of the public.. Some items are confidential (for example if they concern an individual) - these are dealt with in part B of the meeting, and the Board may pass a resolution requiring the public to withdraw from this part of the meeting.

3 MEMBERS' INTEREST

All members of the Board are required to declare if they have any interests (e.g. financial) which are relevant to the work of the Trust and these are recorded in a register which is noted at the start of each Board Meeting – it is also published on the website. Members are also required to state at the start of the meeting if they have an interest in the items under discussion. Special rules govern whether a member who has declared an interest may take part in the discussion.

4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

A slot for Public Question Time is set aside near the beginning of the Meeting which is an opportunity for you to ask questions or make comments on matters within the Trust's areas of responsibility. You should be aware that it may not be possible for an answer to be given immediately in which case it will be given at the next meeting or provided in writing as soon as possible. The amount of time available for any member of the public to speak is three minutes and the maximum duration of Public Question Time will be 30 minutes.

If you do wish to speak, please advise the Trust Secretary before the Meeting and complete a Public Questions form. Alternatively, you can email your question to jade.renville@tst.nhs.uk in advance of the meeting. You must direct your questions and comments through the Chairman. You may not take direct part in the debate.

If a group of people wish to make the same point, this will be dealt with by the Chairman asking subsequent speakers whether they simply agree with what the first speaker has said, or whether there is anything that they wish to add. If the Chairman considers that a point is being unnecessarily repeated they may ask the speaker to finish.

If there are many people present at the meeting for one particular item on the Agenda for that Meeting, the Chairman may adjourn the Meeting to allow views to be expressed more freely. If a large number of people attending the Meeting wish to present a view on a particular item on the Agenda, a representative should be nominated to present the views of the group. An issue will not be deferred because members of the public cannot be present for the Meeting.

If the Chairman considers that the business of the Board is being disrupted by members of the public, the Chairman has power to require the public to leave the meeting.

Please note that all mobile phones must be switched off during the meeting.

5 DEBATE

The Board considers the items on the Agenda in turn. Each paper includes a recommendation as to what the Board should decide. For some items there may be a presentation; for others this may not be necessary. The Board may not actively discuss every item - this does not mean that they have not received careful consideration; it means that no-one wants to challenge the recommendations. A formal vote will not be taken if there is a general consensus on a suggested course of action.

6 MINUTES

A record of the issues discussed and decisions taken at the Meeting will be set out in the Minutes, which the Board will be asked to approve as a correct record at its next meeting.

The Minutes as presented to the next meeting of the Board for approval and are added to the website at the same time as the papers for that meeting. Prior to that, details of the decisions taken can be obtained from the Trust Secretary (see below).

7 CONTACT DETAILS

For further information, please contact:

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