



# Information for Prospective Governors

## Welcome to Taunton and Somerset NHS Foundation Trust

Your interest in becoming a governor for Taunton and Somerset NHS Foundation Trust (which primarily provides services from our Musgrove Park Hospital site) is greatly appreciated. You do not need any specific skills or qualifications to be a governor. Enthusiasm and a passion for good quality healthcare and the willingness to represent not just your own views but also the views and concerns of your constituents are essential.

Having a Council of Governors is vital to the success of a foundation trust as it enables us to involve local people and staff more directly in how our services are designed and delivered.

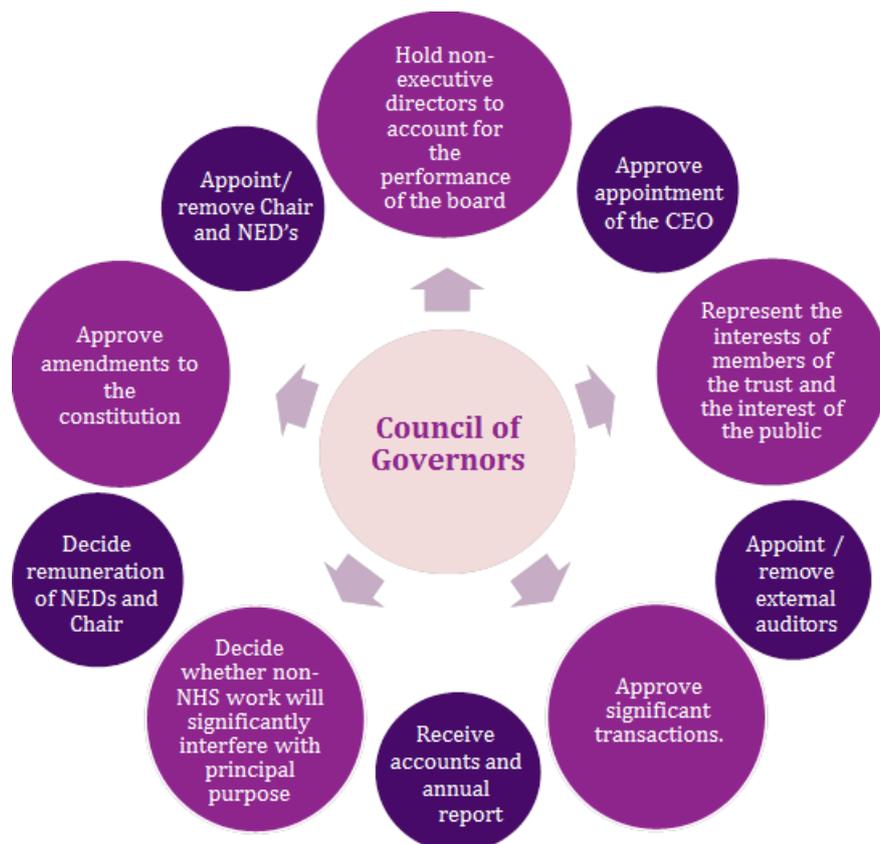
### Why do we have governors?

We became an NHS Foundation Trust (FT) on 1 December 2007. Whilst remaining part of the NHS, being an FT gives us greater autonomy to manage our own affairs, making us publicly accountable to the local population through our membership. Members elect governors to represent their interests and hold the Board of Directors to account. We have 28 Governors. 15 are elected by our public members, five are elected by staff and eight are appointed by key partnership organisations.

### What is the role of a Governor?

The Council of Governors plays an important role within the Trust. They are not responsible for the day-to-day running of the organisation, but they have an important advisory role to the Board of Directors.

The Council of Governors is responsible for the following:



## **How does it all fit together?**

The Chairman of the Trust is chair of both the Board of Directors and the Council of Governors providing a link between the two and ensuring that governors' views are represented at the Trust Board.

## **Terms of Office**

### ***Elected members (including staff)***

A governor shall be elected for a term of office of three years, or, in the case of a governor who takes up office mid-term, the remaining time in office until the next general election. A governor can be re-elected or re-appointed to a maximum of three terms (nine years).

### ***Appointed governors***

An appointed governor may hold office for a period of up to three years and shall be eligible for re-appointment at the end of that term, subject to the proviso that he/she may not serve more than three consecutive terms without a break. An appointed governor shall cease to hold office if the appointing organisation withdraws sponsorship of them.

## **Eligibility**

Governors must be at least 16 years old and public governors must live in the area they represent. There are some reasons why a person may not become a Governor of the Trust. The full list of exclusions is given in Appendix 1 and Annex 6 of the Trust's Constitution available on our website:

<http://www.tsft.nhs.uk>

## **Expenses and payments**

Governors do not receive pay but may claim expenses incurred to enable them to fulfil their role. For most governors this is usually a mileage allowance and reimbursement of parking charges.

## **How we support our governors**

The Trust provides resources to enable governors to carry out their duties. Administrative support is provided by the Trust Management department for all meetings and events attended by governors. All newly elected governors will attend the Trust's induction session and will meet the Chairman.

Training and development are essential for governors to perform their duties effectively. Governors will be expected to attend an annual development day and any other training identified by them or the Trust to help their understanding of the role and responsibilities of a governor.

## **How much time will I need to spend in my role as a governor?**

The Council of Governors meets formally four times a year. In addition to attending these meetings you will be expected to put aside time to read papers. You can also choose to participate in any of the four governor led sub-groups of the Council of Governors covering patient experience, strategy, communication and engagement and appointments (which makes recommendations to the Council of Governors on the appointments and levels of remuneration for the non-executive directors and the chairman). In addition to the induction and training identified above, there is also an annual members' meeting which you are invited to attend, as well as other ad hoc events and meetings in which you may wish to participate. On average the time commitment is likely to be between four to eight hours per month.

## **Being a governor – is it for you?**

Thank you for taking the time to consider standing as a governor and getting involved in your local hospital. If you have any questions, please contact:

Mrs Carol Lydiate  
Trust Management  
Blackdown House  
Musgrove Park Hospital  
Taunton and Somerset NHS Foundation Trust  
TA1 5DB

**Tel: 01823 342511**  
**E-mail: [carol.lydiate@tst.nhs.uk](mailto:carol.lydiate@tst.nhs.uk)**