



# Becoming a Staff Governor

## A short guide for staff



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# 1. Introduction

## **Are you interested in representing Staff Member's views? Why not put yourself forward to become a Governor, we have three Staff Governor vacancies**

We are looking for **three Staff Governors** who will play a vital role as part of the Council of Governors. The elections will begin formally on **14 August 2017**.

So, if you are interested in shaping our services and would like to represent staff views, it will soon be time to request a Governor nomination form.

As an NHS Foundation Trust, the Royal United Hospitals 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:

- ◆ **11 Public Governors (elected by the public members)**
- ◆ **5 Staff Governors (elected by staff)**
- ◆ **5 Stakeholder Governors (appointed by partner organisations)**

### **All members of staff within the RUH are eligible to apply as long as:**

- ◆ You are on a permanent contract, or on a fixed term contract of at least twelve 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 whether you are on the Staff Membership database please contact the Membership Office on ext. 6288**

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 Membership Office can be contacted by email at: [RUHmembership@nhs.net](mailto:RUHmembership@nhs.net) or by telephone on ext. 1299.

## 2. 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.

Electoral Reform Services will run our elections and you will be able to request a nomination form directly from them from **Friday 14th August** (see page 9).

The most important thing you will need to be one of our Governors is enthusiasm for the role, rather than any specific skills or knowledge.

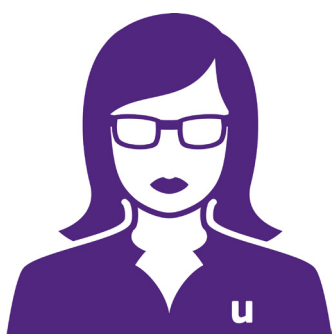
You should care about our patients, staff and the services the Trust provides, and specifically you should wish to bring the knowledge and experience of staff into discussions and decisions about the direction of the Trust.



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.

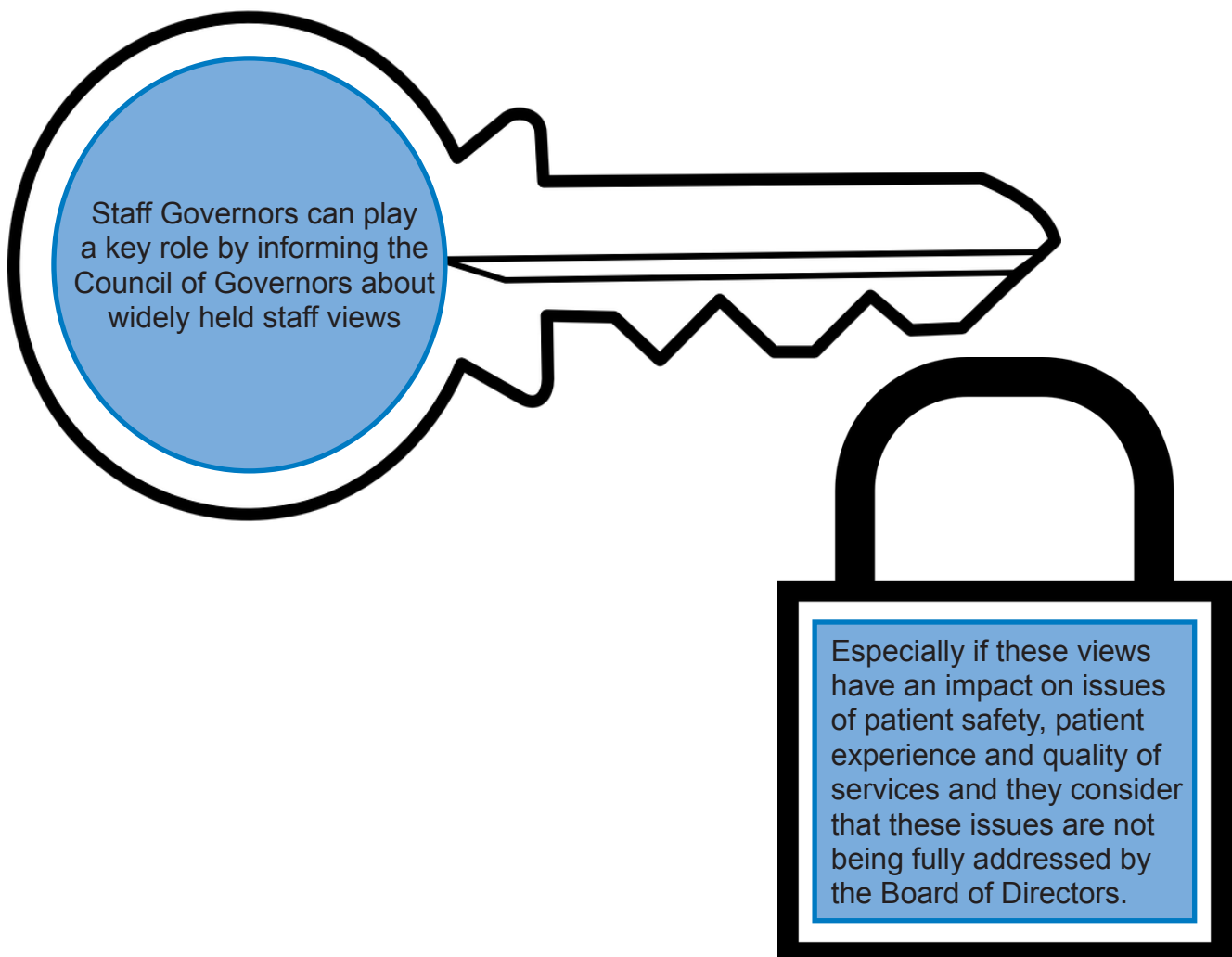
It is an important role, so please read on to find out more about what being a Staff Governor will involve.



### 3. 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's achieve its vision of delivering high quality services to local people.

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.



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.

**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)
- ◆ Signposting staff to sources of help and guidance, for example, how to raise a concern, how to access the employee assistance programme and directing staff to Human Resources for help with individual employment issues etc.
- ◆ 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.

## **Statutory Responsibilities**

The main statutory responsibilities of the Council of Governors are twofold:

- ◆ To hold the Non-Executive Directors to account for the performance of the Board of Directors
- ◆ To represent the interests of members of the Trust and the interests of the public

Governors therefore provide an essential part of the governance structure of the NHS Foundation Trust and their Council is the collective body through which the Board of Directors explain and justify their actions to the members, stakeholder organisations and the wider public.

Governors provide a tangible link between the Trust and the local community which it serves. The Council of Governors' statutory powers / duties enable it to exercise genuine influence over the development and future of the hospital. Thus, the Council of Governors:

- ◆ Appoints and can remove the Chairman and Non-Executive Directors of the Trust and sets their remuneration and other terms and conditions
- ◆ Must approve the appointment of the Trust's Chief Executive
- ◆ Appoints and can remove the Trust's external Auditor
- ◆ Receives the Trust's annual financial and Quality Accounts and Auditor's report
- ◆ Must approve any merger or acquisition by the Trust
- ◆ Must approve any "significant transaction" by the Trust (as defined in its constitution)

## 4. Staff Governors and staff union representatives

The role of Staff Governor is significantly different from that of a trade union representative. Staff Governors do not work on behalf of individual staff members, or represent individuals to resolve issues or problems.

However, Staff Governors do have a responsibility for reporting staff views in the Council and other meetings and working groups where there may not be a staff union representative.



## 5. Support, Training and Induction programme for Staff Governors

The Trust recognises the important role of Staff Governors and will support them to work effectively. The Membership Office works closely with Staff Governors to provide them with access to administrative resources and information.

The Membership & Governance Manager will be the first point of contact and support for the Governors.

All Governors are expected to attend an induction programme which will assist Governors in carrying out their role. It is **mandatory** for all new Governors to participate in the induction programme.

All Governors are expected to adhere to the Trust's policies and procedures and will be bound by the Trust's Code of Conduct for Governors. Specific issues relating to confidentiality must be adhered to as defined in the Constitution.



**\*\* If you are considering standing for election please keep 9th November 2017 free for the bespoke RUH Governor Induction\*\***

## 6. How much time will being a 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.

**\*\* 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.\*\***



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 Boardroom. Staff Governors are expected to attend and meeting dates where possible are scheduled one year in advance.

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 Human Resources.

It is important to understand that if you choose to stand for election you do so on a voluntary basis.

Being a Staff Governor is not a paid role, but you will however be reimbursed for reasonable expenses incurred while working in the role; for example for travel and subsistence.



## 7. How do I stand for election?

The Trust has appointed the Electoral Reform Services (ERS) to run our elections and act as our returning officer - someone who sends and receives all the necessary documentation related to an election.

ERS will send the Notice of Election will be sent to all staff on **Monday 14 August** to your home address. It is from this point that you will be able to request a nomination form directly from ERS via the details below.



**020 8889 9203**



**[ciara.norris@electoralreform.co.uk](mailto:ciara.norris@electoralreform.co.uk)**

All staff who are members of the Trust (see page 3 for criteria) will be eligible to request a nomination form but you cannot nominate other people.

The forms will be sent out by, and sent back to ERS.

### The nomination form

The nomination form will have space for prospective Governors to write a short statement about themselves which will consist of no more than 250 words. This will be the candidates' opportunity to introduce themselves to members and explain why he/she wishes to join the Council of Governors.

You may want to include:

- ◆ **Why you wish to carry out the role**
- ◆ **What you feel you could bring to the role**
- ◆ **Anything else you think staff would want to know about you**
- ◆ **A current photograph of yourself**

The information supplied by candidates is published and will accompany a ballot paper.

Please remember candidates' statements are published as received by ERS and will include any spelling or grammatical errors. Any statements of longer than the maximum word count are stopped at the maximum, even if this ends in mid-sentence.

The nominations process will close on **Tuesday 12 September** and all nominations will then be validated.

## 8. Key election dates

<b>Nominations open 14 August</b>	Nomination forms are available on request from Electoral Reform Services (ERS) <b>Nominations are open 14 August - 12 September</b>
<b>Deadline for receipt of nominations</b>	All nomination forms must be received at ERS by <b>5pm on 12 September</b>
<b>Candidate withdrawal</b>	Should any nominees wish to withdraw their nomination, they must put it in writing to ERS by <b>5pm 15 September</b>
<b>Voting</b>	Ballot papers will be distributed to all qualifying Members on <b>4 October</b>
<b>Voting closes</b>	Completed ballot papers must be received at ERS by <b>5pm 24 October</b>
<b>Results announced</b>	<b>25 October 2017</b>

### Candidate withdrawal

Nominees are given some time after the deadline for receipt of nominations to withdraw if they change their minds.

The final date for candidate withdrawal is **Friday 15 September**.

### Uncontested seats

Sometimes Governor seats may be uncontested, i.e. there is only one candidate for the seat. In such a case ERS will inform the Trust before ballot papers are distributed. If this occurs, the Trust will inform the candidate they have been successful.

### Canvassing

We will be encouraging all staff who put themselves forward for the election process to join together for a canvassing event at the beginning of October and throughout the voting period. The Membership Office will confirm these details with all candidates nearer the time.

This will be a fantastic opportunity for you to encourage staff to vote for you during the voting period and you can tell them why they should vote for you.

## Notice of poll

A notice of poll will be published prior to the start of the ballot. The notice of poll will be issued on **Tuesday 3 October**.

## Voting packs

Voting packs (for those eligible to vote) will be dispatched to home addresses on **Wednesday 4 October**. Each member who is eligible to vote will receive the following by post:

- ◆ Ballot paper – this lists every candidate and allows voters to mark their preference
- ◆ Candidate statements
- ◆ Instructions on completing the ballot paper

Voting packs will be posted to members' listed addresses and completed voting papers will be returned to ERS, not to the RUH.

Voting will close on **Tuesday 24 October**.

## Election results

When the ballot has closed, ERS will assess the results and provide the Trust with a comprehensive breakdown of the outcome.

ERS will only give the results to the Trust and to NHS Improvement. If a candidate has a query about the results, ERS will be available to explain the results to the candidate.

Results will be announced on **Wednesday 25 October**

## Length of term as a Governor

The term of office will begin from **Wednesday 1 November 2017** and will **expire on 31 October 2020**.

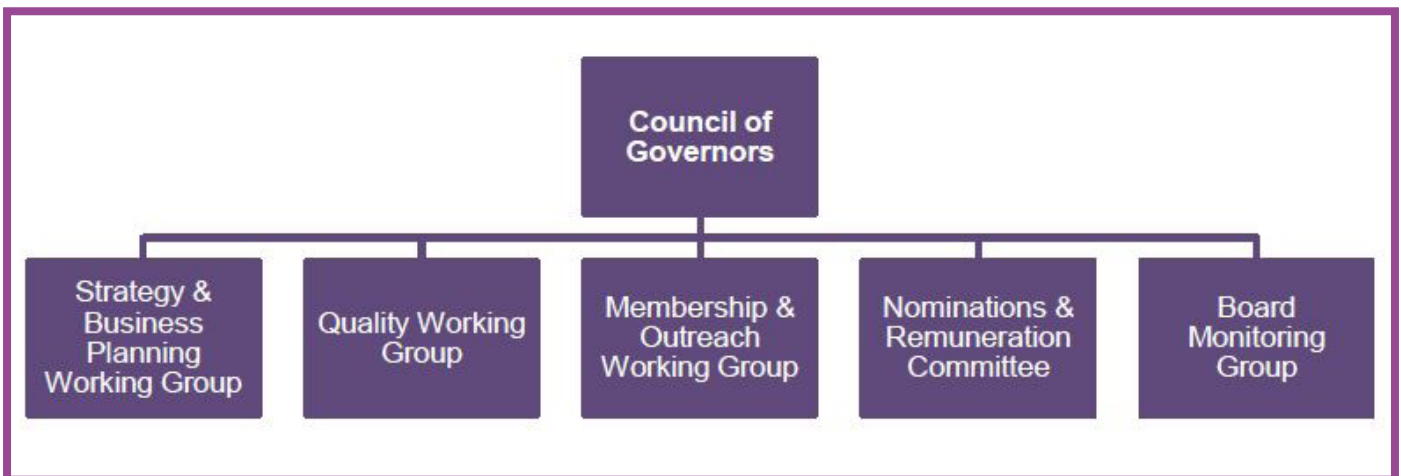
You will of course be welcome to stand for re-election and the maximum term of office for each elected Governor without a break is six years.

## 9. Governor Working Groups

In partnership with our Council of Governors, our Governors have established four smaller committees and working groups that conduct detailed reviews of areas of key importance to the hospital. The Council of Governors has also established an “informal” Board Monitoring Group shown below.

Governor working groups are supported by the Membership & Governance Manager, and also seek assurance from the Non-Executive Directors, to help improve accountability and enable feedback to be escalated to the Board where appropriate.

The Working Groups are as follows:



### Strategy & Business Planning Working Group

Reviews plans and strategies regarding the future of the hospital, ensuring that member's views are represented as well as the needs of the local community.



### Quality Working Group

To listen to patients and members to understand how we can improve patient experience at the RUH and to ensure Quality, patient experience, patient safety and clinical outcomes are of a high standard.



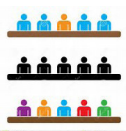
### Membership & Outreach Working Group

Aims to grow and develop the Trust's membership and facilitates communication between Governors, Members and the local community.



### Nominations and Remuneration Committee

Oversees the recruitment of the Chairman and other Non-Executive Directors as well as making recommendations to the Council of Governors on the remuneration of the Chairman and other Non-Executive Directors



### Board Monitoring Group

An informal group on Governors who attend the Board of Directors meetings in public to gain a greater understanding of the Trust and see the Non-Executive Directors hold the Board of Directors to account.

# Role within Governor Working Groups

Governors assist in the development of ideas, advise on issues and act as the Trust's 'eyes and ears' in the community and throughout the Trust with Governors having the following distinct roles:

## Advisory

Providing a steer on how the Trust can carry out its wider business to satisfy the needs of members and the wider community.



## Guardianship

Acting as guardians to ensure that the Trust operates in accordance with its purpose and authorisation and as "trustees" for the welfare of the organisation.



## Strategy

Advising on the longer term direction of the Trust so that the Board of Directors can develop effective policies.

All requests for Governor involvement will be considered by the Chairman of the Governors (who is also the Chairman of the Board of Directors).

## 10. Still interested?

The Membership Office would be happy to meet you informally to provide information and advice about the role of a Governor. The Chairman would also welcome the opportunity to meet with you.

The Membership Office can be contacted via any of the details below:



### By telephone

Roxy Poultney, Membership & Governance Manager  
01225 82 12 99 (ext. 1299)

Emily Morgrette, Membership Administrator  
01225 82 62 88 (ext. 6288)



### By post

FREEPOST RSLZ-GHKG-UKKL  
RUH Membership Office (D1)  
Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust  
Combe Park  
Bath  
BA1 3NG



### By email

[RUHmembership@nhs.net](mailto:RUHmembership@nhs.net)

**Everyone**  
Matters  
Working  
**Together**  
Making a  
**Difference**