

Our Values as an NHS Foundation Trust

Our values underpin everything we do and describe the way we expect our staff to behave towards our patients, families and carers and each other. We have the following Four values:

Person Centred & Safe

Our focus is on delivering high quality, safe and person focused care through teamwork and continuous improvement.

Professional

We will be open and honest, efficient and act as role models for our teams and our communities.

Responsive

We will be action oriented and respond positively to feedback.

Friendly

We will be welcoming to all, treat people with respect and dignity and value others as individuals.

Progressive

We will constantly seek to improve and transform the way we work to ensure that our services respond to the changing needs of our communities.

The Role of the Staff Governor

The staff governor role involves working with others to improve a service, to check that the organisation is working effectively to achieve its purpose, and to protect the interests of the people who use the service as well as the people who provide the service (staff).

A staff governor has a responsibility to the staff members who have elected him or her. The role involves talking and listening to staff about issues and concerns that they may have. It's mainly about what is working well and what could be improved and feeding those views back into the work of the Council.

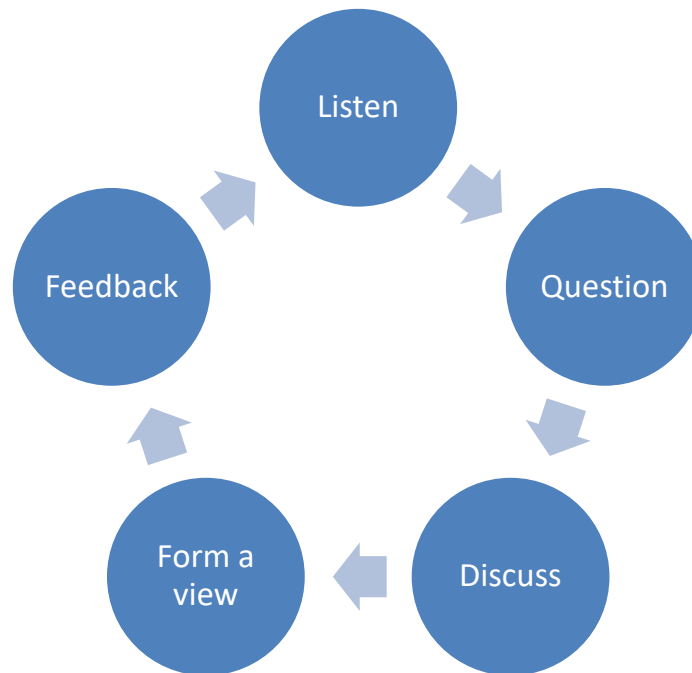
Staff Governors have the same rights and responsibilities as the public Governors. Staff Governors can play a key role by informing the Council of Governors about widely held staff views, especially if these views have an impact on issues of patient experience and quality of services and the Staff Governors consider that these issues are not being fully addressed by the Trust Board.

As Governors on the Council of Governors, Staff Governors also have to fulfil a number of statutory (legal) duties as well as other responsibilities, as follows:

Do's

Staff Governors have two main responsibilities:

- **To represent the views of staff, particularly in relation to the Trust's strategic direction.** Representing the views of staff members as a member of the Council of Governors, you would act as a link between Foundation Trust staff members and the Trust Board. The Council help the Board to make sure that the views of local communities, staff, and patients are taken into account when plans for services are being developed.
- **To hold the Non-executive Directors to account for the performance of the Board of Directors.** In order to hold the Non-executive Directors to account Governors are given various opportunities, for example by observing their activities, or meeting with them and asking them questions. The holding to account process can be visualised by this cycle:



What other powers and duties do staff governors have?

Staff Governors along with their other public Governors have certain powers and duties to help them with the role. These are:

- Appoint and, if appropriate, remove the Chair of the Trust
- Appoint and, if appropriate, remove the other Non-executive Directors of the Trust
- Decide the pay and allowances and the other terms and conditions of office of the Chair and the other Non-executive Directors
- Approve the appointment of the Chief Executive
- Appoint and, if appropriate, remove the Trust's Auditor
- Receive the annual report and annual accounts and the Auditor's report on the accounts
- Give a response when consulted by the Board of Directors on the Trust's Annual Plan
- Agree, in conjunction with the Board of Directors, changes to the Trust's Constitution
- Approve any proposal that would increase or reduce the turn-over of the Trust (in a financial year relative to the previous financial year) by £20 million or by 10%, whichever is the greatest
- Approve any applications for 'significant transactions' as defined in the Trust's Constitution
- Approve any applications for mergers, acquisitions, separation or dissolution of the Trust
- Inform the regulator, NHSE/I, if there were any 'material concerns' about the actions of the Trust Board which could not be resolved locally

Don'ts

What can't staff governors do?

Staff Governors do not get involved in the day to day running of the hospitals. They:

- don't seek act as a staff representative or union representative on employment issues (e.g. disciplinary or grievance issues; changes to individual staff contracts), as there are other channels for dealing with such concerns.
- don't get involved in the detail of how services are run (outside of your own job remit) this is the role of the Board, clinicians and managers
- don't deal with patient complaints directly, but signpost to the appropriate Trust department although Governors may wish to highlight if several complaints raised to them suggest a recurring issue with Trust services)
- don't act as advocates for individual patients
- don't seek to be elected to represent a single issue or cause - governors should seek to represent the interests of the whole of the constituency they represent
- don't get involved in staff grievances, employee relations cases or negotiations
- don't need to scrutinise the performance of the hospitals (the governor's job is to make sure that the Board of Directors is doing this.)

Notwithstanding the above, the holding of the Trust Board to account may well include specific issues, e.g. infection control, which may require Governors to intervene.

How Staff Governors Fulfil Their Role in Practice

(Staff) Governors will attend a number of formal meetings:

Meeting	Time Commitment	During/Outside of Office Hours
Council of Governors	up to 3.5 hours, 6 times a year	During office hours (usually 2.30-6.00 pm)
Annual Members Meeting	3-4 hours, 1 time a year	Outside of office hours
If relevant (i.e. appointed Governor Representative), observing Board Committees	up to 3 hours, 6 – 12 times a year	During office hours (usually 9am–12 pm)
If relevant (i.e. elected a Member) Governors' Performance & Nominations Committee	up to 2 hours, 6 times a year	Outside of office hours (usually 5-7 pm)
If relevant (i.e. elected a Member) Working Groups: e.g. Membership & Communication; Staff Governors Committee;	up to 2 hours, 4 times a year	During or outside office hours

Like any other member of the public, Staff Governors are entitled to attend public Board meetings. That said, the Lead Governor attends the Trust Board private meetings as a matter of course as an observer and feeds back to the Council.

Additionally, staff governors will engage with staff and feedback/issues; will take part in training; and will participate in social gatherings of the Council of Governors and Non-Executive Directors.

Other mechanisms of getting involved and fulfilling the role¹ may include:

- staff engagement – e.g. holding staff 'surgeries'; to listen to their views, concerns and ideas
- informing the staff about the work of the Council of Governors

¹ Under discussion/development

- acting as a conduit for widely held staff views and bringing these to the attention of the Council of Governors
- visits to wards and departments (e.g. quality, environmental/cleanliness)
- representing Council of Governors on major projects
- attending Membership events
- proofreading and suggesting amendments to hospital publications to make sure they can be easily understood by the general reader.

Frequently Asked Questions

Are Staff Governors similar to staff-side representatives?

No, the role of staff governor is significantly different from that of a Trades Union representative (or professional bodies). Staff governors do not work on behalf of individual staff members or represent individuals to resolve issues or problems neither are they a go-between or staff delegate.

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-side representative.

Can Staff Governors advise staff members?

Staff Governors should be able to advise Trust staff members on appropriate routes of action, keeping in mind the role of the individual's Line Manager and/or Staff representative.

If the individual staff member has not approached their Line Manager or Staff representative first, then the staff governor should direct the individual back to these sources. If there is any concern on the part of the staff governor that this is not the appropriate course of action (and it is likely to be only in exceptional circumstances that it is not) then the staff governor should refer to the Line Manager's Line Manager and/or the Human Resources. The Staff Governor may also sign-post the availability of Trust policies and procedures, clinical standards etc., that are available on the intranet.

Am I entitled to time off work to undertake Governor Duties?

The Trust is supportive if its staff undertaking the role but as always it would be courteous of the staff member to discuss their request with their line manager and consider it in the context of their own service and the effects that the employee's absence would have upon it on a regular basis. In practice it might mean requesting meetings to start at the start or end of the day, or lunchtime, to minimise impact on the day job and/or undertaking *some* duties in own time. With good will on both sides, it should be possible to allow the Staff Governor to undertake their role with minimal impact on the day job.

Should Staff Governors bring the issues brought up by staff to Board's attention?

Whilst bringing an issue raised by an individual to the Trust Board or Council's attention may not be appropriate, if an issue is indicative of a trend, or highlights a significant concern, it would be appropriate to escalate this via correct channels (e.g. a patient complaint is escalated to the Patient Advice and Liaison Service - PALS).

What about conflicts of interest?

Being a Staff Governor can, occasionally, bring conflicts of interest when dealing with the Trust business. In such circumstances it is best to be clear 'which hat you are wearing': are you an employee, a manager or a Governor? The Chair or Corporate Governance team can advise you on handling any conflicts

Support for Governors

Staff Governors are a vital part of our work and we strive to support you in your role. Governors do not need to have expertise or qualifications. We will strive to support you to develop the skills you need to carry out your duties successfully.

Additional Information

For further information, you may find the following websites useful:

NHS Improvement:

www.improvement.nhs.uk

Care Quality Commission:

www.cqc.org.uk

Reference Guide for NHS Trust Governors

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/284473/Governors_guide_August_2013_UPDATED_NOV_13.pdf