

# Information for Prospective Public Governors

## 2025



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# Welcome

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On behalf of York & Scarborough Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, we would like to thank you for expressing an interest in joining our Council of Governors. Governors have an important role in making our trust publicly accountable for the services we provide, and bring a valuable perspective to all our activities.

You will already know that being a member gives you a real opportunity to stay involved and play a part in shaping the future of the services within your community.

As a governor, you will hold non-executive directors to account for the performance of the board and represent the interests of NHS foundation trust members and the public. Our governors play a vital role in helping us to connect with our members, staff, stakeholder groups and our local communities. In doing so, the Council of Governors has a key part to play in the delivery of our mission – that is, to provide excellent healthcare to our patients and the wider community, and be a great place to work.

You can help make a real difference for our patients, using your skills, knowledge or interest in health services to give something back. Our hospitals rely on governors to engage with the public and those who use our services to share information about what is happening and get feedback on how we are doing.

The work of the Council of Governors is extremely interesting, with the role being both challenging and rewarding. As you would expect, it takes time and commitment.

This guide introduces you to the Trust and provides an overview as to what is involved in being a governor. We hope this will encourage you to stand for election and in doing so, help us to continue providing high quality care and create a positive future for our patients and staff.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martin Barkley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Martin Barkley  
Chair

# About Us

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York Hospital became a Foundation Trust in 2007. As a Foundation Trust we remain firmly part of the NHS but we are more independent, allowing us to make changes to the Trust's services in a more responsive and less bureaucratic way.

In July 2012 the Trust was extended to include Scarborough and Bridlington Hospitals along with community services for Selby, York, Scarborough, Whitby and Ryedale.

This includes some community nursing and specialist services as well as community hospitals including St Monica's in Easingwold, Selby War Memorial Hospital and Malton Hospital.

In April 2021 we changed our name to York & Scarborough Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

## Involving Local People

York & Scarborough Teaching Hospitals NHS is a Foundation Trust. This means that local people have greater involvement in the way we develop and run our services. It also gives us more flexibility in the way we can manage and invest our finances, allowing us to become more responsive to the needs of local communities.

## What is a Foundation Trust

Foundation Trusts are public benefit corporations sometimes called 'not for profit' organisations.

Foundation Trusts are part of the NHS and follow the standards and principles of the NHS, such as equality of access and care, and free at the point of delivery. The main difference is that they are run locally working with their communities to develop services to meet the local needs and are therefore accountable to the communities they serve rather than to the government.

### **Benefits of being a Foundation Trust**

- Members have a recognised voice in decision-making and planning future services
- More freedom to take own decisions about how we work and meet our obligations
- Financial freedoms to invest, borrow and innovate on behalf of patients/service users
- Freedom to invest in local services and buildings according to local priorities
- Able to restructure and modernise more easily to improve capacity and efficiency.

# How We Are Led

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To ensure our foundation trust is run and managed effectively, it has three levels of governance:

## **Board of Directors**

Our Board of Directors is responsible for the running of the Trust, setting the Trust's vision and values, strategy and for developing plans for the future, and is made up of a Chair, Chief Officers and Non-Executive Directors who have a range of individual skills and experience.

It is a unitary Board which means that both Chief Officers and Non-Executive Directors share the same liabilities and joint responsibility for every decision of the Board; all Directors therefore bear full legal liability for the operational and financial performance of the Trust.

## **Council of Governors**

Elected and appointed Governors make up our Council of Governors. There will always be more elected Governors than appointed Governors. Together the Governors bring a wealth of expertise, experience, ideas and views which are essential in ensuring the continuing effective development of our Trust.

The Council does not run our Trust and is not responsible for the day-to-day management of the organisation. This is the responsibility of the Board; however, the Council performs an essential role in the governance and development of the Trust by holding the Non-Executive Directors to account, both individually and collectively, for the performance of the Board in managing the Trust. It is also Governors' responsibility to represent the interests of members and the public particularly in relation to the strategic direction of the Trust.

Our Council of Governors has several statutory roles and duties, these include:

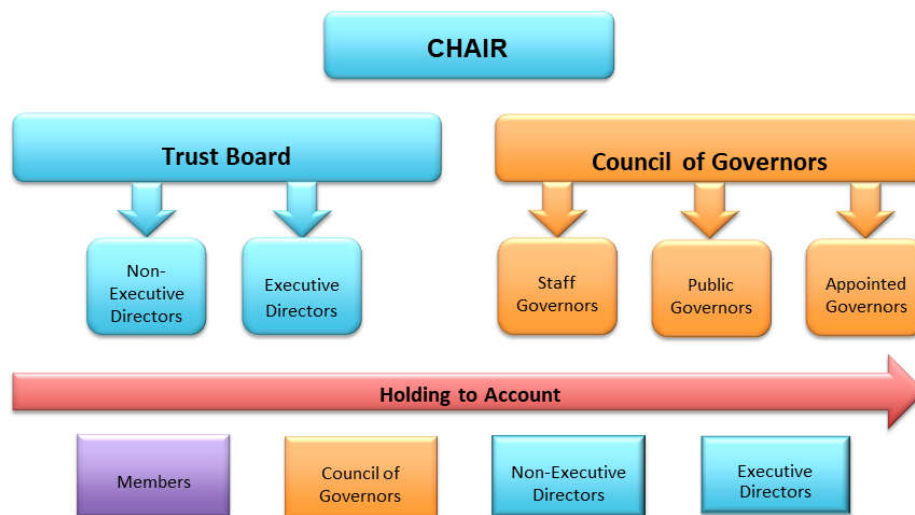
- Hold the non-executive directors, individually and collectively, to account for the performance of the board of directors.
- Represent the interests of the members of the Trust as a whole and the interests of the public.
- Appoint, and if appropriate remove, the trust chairman and non-executive directors.
- Decide the remuneration, allowances, and other terms and conditions of office of the Chair and Non-Executive Directors.
- Approve the appointment of the chief executive.
- Receive the Trusts annual accounts, any report of the auditor on them, and the annual report of the Trust at a general meeting of the Council.

- Approve an application by the Trust to enter into a 'significant transaction', ie merger, acquisition, separation or dissolution.
- Decide whether the Trust's non-NHS work would significantly interfere with its principle purpose which is to provide goods and services for the health service in England or performing its other functions.
- Approve amendments to the Trust's constitution.

## Membership

Being an NHS Foundation Trust means that as an organisation, we are accountable to local people, who can become members of the Trust. Members are eligible to stand for election as a governor and can vote to elect governors to represent them on the Council.

## How it all fits together



The Board and Council work closely together.

The Chair is a Non-Executive Director who leads both the Board and the Council and is the link between the two. The Chair has a key role in ensuring Directors and Governors are fully aware of their respective roles and responsibilities, and for building meaningful relationships between both groups.

The Council is the *voice* of the local community: it plays a central part in shaping the Trust's future, communicating local needs and priorities to the Trust, and in communicating the work of the Trust to the wider community.

Members of the Trust can become involved in Trust activities, i.e., patient experience events, and ask questions of the Board and the Council.

# Council of Governors FAQs

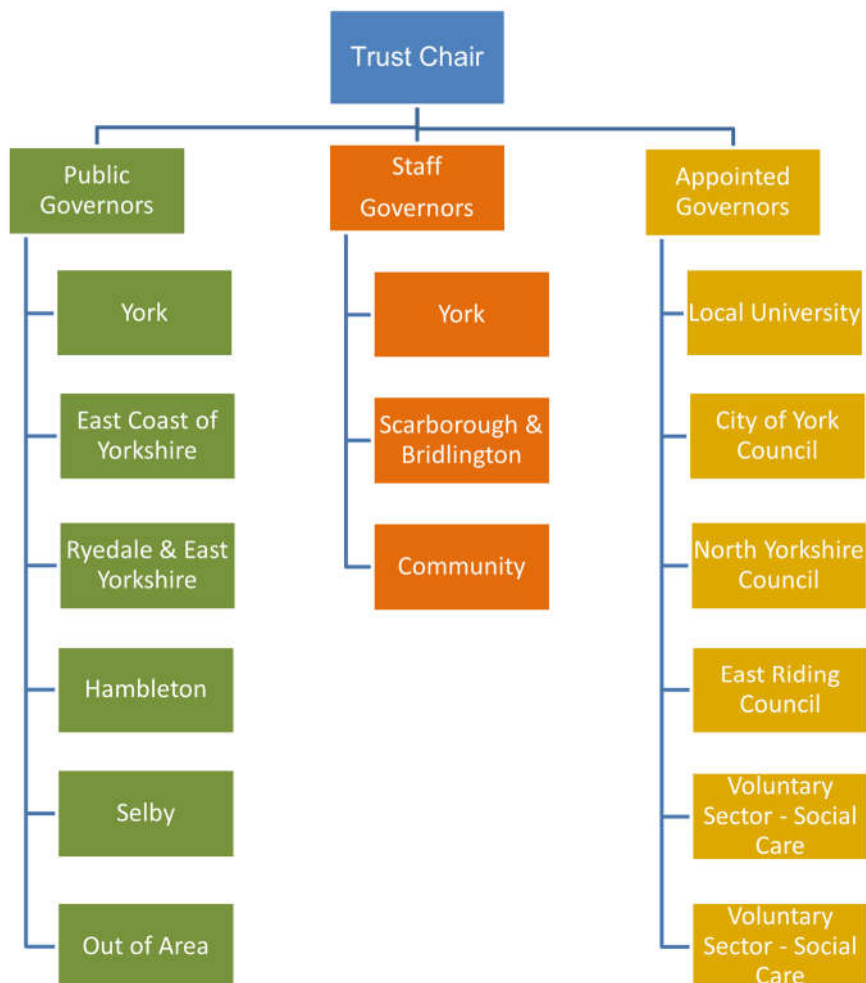
## Does the Council of Governors run the Trust?

Governors are not responsible for the day-to-day running of the Trust and are not about 'rubber stamping' decisions made by the Board. However, Governors have an important role in the effective running of the Trust in that they hold the Board to account and advise the Board of public and staff opinion, acting as guardians of the public and staff interest. They make suggestions and when appropriate constructively question Board decisions.

One of the Governors' main responsibilities is to help communicate with the membership and public, and make sure the views of the membership and public are fed back to the Board. Governors also act as ambassadors and champions, helping to promote the work of the Trust in their communities.

## Who is on the Council of Governors?

The Council of Governors is made up of elected and appointed governors. It is chaired by the Trust's Chair. The Council of Governors has 28 governors:





- 16 Public Governors (Elected)
- 6 Staff Governors (Elected)
- 6 Appointed Governors

### How do Governors fulfil their role?

- They seek out and represent the views of members and local communities, particularly the views of the members in the constituency they represent.
- They share information about important discussions and key decisions the Trust is making with the members they represent.
- They take an active part in communicating and engaging with members and the wider public, who use our services and sharing information about the Trust's performance being an 'ambassador' for the Trust, not for self-interest or the interests of other organisations.
- They form a good working relationship with members of the Board.
- They participate in training and development opportunities.
- They encourage others to become members of the Trust and learn more about their local health service.

### What Governors don't do

Governors are not involved in the day-to-day running of the Trust's services – this is the responsibility of the Board, clinicians and managers. So here are some of the things that Governors don't do:

- They don't deal with patients' complaints – although they can tell people about the Trust's complaint system.
- They don't act as champions for individual patients – although they can point people in the direction of advocacy organisations like the Trust's Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALs).
- They don't get involved with the detail of how services are run – this is the role of the Board of Directors and senior managers. They do, however, have an influence on services by communicating the views of local communities.
- They don't act as representatives of the Trust to the media.
- They don't get paid or given preferential treatment for their work.
- They don't use their role to advance personal or specific political or to the ideological messages.

### Why become a Public Governor?

- It is an opportunity to support your local hospitals, perhaps giving something back if the NHS has had an impact on your life or those close to you.
- You can make a difference to the care and services provided to patients.
- You can use your existing skills, knowledge and experience to make a positive contribution.
- You can learn more about the health service and your local hospitals.



## How long is the term of office as a Public Governor?

Public Governors are elected or appointed for a term of up to three years and may seek re-election or re-appointment at the end of their term. This system enables members or the appointing organisation to review the effectiveness of their Governor representative but at the same time minimises the risk of wholesale changes which could damage the effectiveness of the Council. Governors may hold office for a maximum of three consecutive terms (in total 9 years).

## How much time is involved?

- Governors will tell you they enjoy the role, but the time commitment should not be underestimated.
- As well as attending four formal Council meetings a year, there are other things that you will need to get involved in such as attending Council sub-committee/working group meetings and engagement events. Time will also be required to prepare for and read papers provided for each meeting.
- Governors are also encouraged to attend the Board of Directors meeting held in public each month.
- Governors are also expected to reach out into the local communities to encourage wide and represent the membership; this may involve using your own groups/networks to engage with members of the public.
- Attendance at induction and mandatory training and development events will be required to ensure you are kept up to date with what is happening in the NHS and to learn more about the Governor role.
- Meetings take place on weekdays during the day. Most of these are via Teams, except the formal Council meetings which are held face to face.

## Are Governors paid?

Governors do not receive remuneration although the Trust may pay travel and other expenses at rates determined by the Trust.

## How will I access meeting papers or receive information?

Papers for meetings and communications with governors outside meetings are all provided electronically. Those applying to be a governor should be comfortable using technology, particularly email, iPads and electronic meetings using conference facilities e.g. Microsoft Teams.

## What will I do in my first three months?

You will be asked to:

- attend a governor induction
- attend full Council of Governor meeting
- attend governor training and development session
- attend the Board meeting held in public

## Induction, Training and Support

All new Governors will be expected to attend the induction programme; the overall aim of the programme is to welcome Governors to the Trust, provide them with an overview of the organisation and explain the role and responsibilities of the Council of Governors. You will also have the opportunity of meeting the Board of Directors and other experienced Governors. It is mandatory for all Governors to participate in the induction programme.

The induction programme is part of the Trust's *Governor learning and development* which consists of modules designed to meet Governors' ongoing learning and development needs as well as keeping them up to date on what is happening in the NHS.

### **Will I need to comply with a Code of Conduct?**

All new Governors are sent a 'Governors' Code of Conduct' which you will be asked to review and sign to agree compliance with whilst carrying out the role of Governor.

### **Will I have to disclose information about my income, assets, or finance?**

You are required to declare on an annual basis, and as and when your circumstances change, any personal or business interests which may influence or be perceived to influence your judgement. Declarations include any directorships, interests in firms likely to be considered as trading partners or providing services to the NHS, positions of authority in charities and voluntary organisations in the field of health and social care; and connections with firms entering into financial arrangements with the Trust.

### **What happens if I move out of the area I am representing?**

Elected Public Governors will cease to hold office if they move out of the constituency area they were elected to represent. They will remain a member but in a different constituency based on their new residency address. If you move house, please let the Governor & Membership Manager know. They will be able to advise whether you are able to continue in your current seat, or whether you are eligible to represent another constituency.

### **I would like to be a Governor – what do I need to do now?**

If you would like to find out more about the role, please email us at [yhs-tr.governors@nhs.net](mailto:yhs-tr.governors@nhs.net)

Alternatively, have a look at our Governors pages on the Trust website <https://www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/about-us/council-of-governors/>.

# Elections FAQs

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## Why is the Trust having an election?

The Trust holds governor elections each year to fill any vacant seats on our Council of Governors.

## Who can stand for election?

We aim to have Governors who are representative of all walks of life; you do not need special skills or qualifications to become an effective Governor. You need to be enthusiastic, committed, and care about your local services. All types of people can become Governors, but you must:

- Be over the age of 16.
- Be a member of York and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.
- Live in the geographical area you want to represent.
- Have an interest in the health service.
- Be willing to act in the best interests of the Trust and abide by the values of the Trust and Nolan principles of public life.
- Have good interpersonal skills as you will need to talk to others.
- Be willing to travel to Trust sites for meetings/events, etc.

**NOTE: There are some circumstances in which you may be a member but not become a Public Governor. If you are not sure if you are eligible to be a Public Governor, please ask us. Contact details are at the back of this booklet.**

## Who runs the Election Process?

The election is run by an independent, external election company, CES. The single transferable vote system is used for our election process. This is a logical system of election designed to attain its objectives with economy, efficiency and certainty. It ensures that as far as possible, every vote has a positive part to play in helping to elect a candidate and making sure no voting power is wasted and that no voter has a greater influence on the result than any other.

## I am interested in standing for election. How do I apply?

Members wishing to put themselves forward for election as a Public Governor must apply for a nomination form. Candidates are asked to provide:

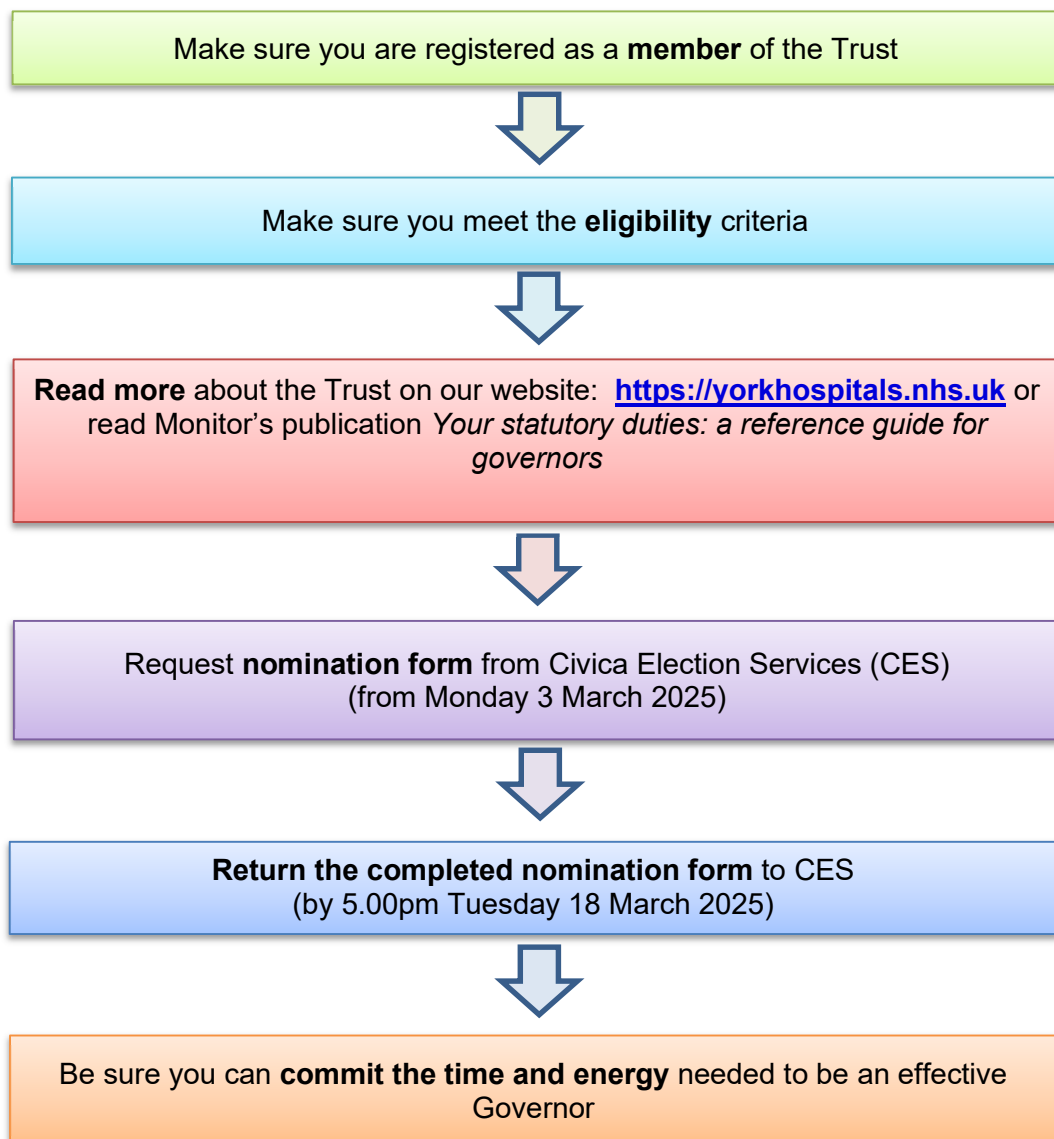
- Name, title, home address, date of birth and contact details
- Any membership of political parties
- Any financial or other interest in the Trust
- A photograph
- A personal statement of no more than 250 words

CES will send out ballot papers (either by post or email) to all members in each constituency where there is a vacant seat, and this will include the election statements of each candidate. Members will then vote for their preferred candidate and return their vote by post or electronically to CES.

There may be circumstances when no election is needed, ie. When there is only one person standing for one vacant seat; this is classed as uncontested.

CES will inform the Trust of the results and the candidates will then be contacted by the Chair or the Governor & Membership Manager (on the Chair's behalf).

## Next steps if you wish to stand for election as a Public Governor



## Want to Know More?

You can find out more by visiting our website on: [www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk)

If you have queries about becoming a member of the Council of Governors please contact:

Tracy Astley, Governor & Membership Manager  
Email: [tracy.astley@nhs.net](mailto:tracy.astley@nhs.net)  
Tel: 01904 721925

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