

We need YOU To make a difference

Information and Guidance for Prospective Governors



Our Council of Governors November 2017

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Message from Marie Gabriel, Trust Chair



Thank you for your interest in the important role of Governor of the East London NHS Foundation Trust (ELFT). As a member of our Trust you are already interested in your local community, and how our mental and community healthcare can meet its needs.

I hope you will decide to become even more involved by joining the Council of Governors. It is a great opportunity to represent the interests of our service users and carers, as well as our staff.

Our Governors are very important to our Trust. They play a central role in improving services, advising the Trust about the needs of service users and the community. They hold our Non-Executive Directors to account and inform our strategies and future plans.

ELFT is performing well but we always work hard to become even better. In 2016, ELFT was rated as an 'outstanding' organisation and we retained that rating in 2018. We have also been named as the 2017 Provider Trust of the Year.

We have one of the highest staff engagement scores in the country. We are known all over the world for our meaningful and useful partnership with our patients and our determination to offer the best mental health and community care. We need passionate people like you to join us so we can achieve our mission to improve the quality of life for all we serve.

In this document, you can find out more about becoming a Governor and what to do if you want to stand for election. Whether you decide to stand for election or not, we still need you to have your say on the Trust's future. All members will receive a voting pack in September. Please use your vote to ensure we have the best possible representation on our Council.

Marie Gabriel

Chair of the Trust

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What is a Governor?

A Governor is someone who plays a very important role in the Trust. Governors help the Trust to be responsive and accountable to local people, staff and partners. Governors use their knowledge, networks and experience to inform the Trust's priorities and strategic direction. There are 45 Governors in total and together they form the Council of Governors which has specific responsibilities.

The Council of Governors provides an important link between the Board of Directors and members.

Our Board of Directors

Our Board of Directors is responsible for the running of our Trust. The Board sets the Trust's vision and values, and develops plans for the future. It is made up of the Chair, Executive Directors and Non-Executive Directors. They all bring a range of individual skills and experience. Together they provide the strategic direction for our Trust, including the quality of our services and how they are run. They are accountable for the Trust's performance, meeting national standards and financial requirements.

Both Executive 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 our Trust.

Our Council of Governors

Elected and appointed Governors make up our Council of Governors. The Council does not run our Trust and is not responsible for its day-to-day management. This is the responsibility of the Board. However, the Council performs an essential role of holding the Non-Executive Directors to account, both as individuals and as a group, for how well the Board manages the Trust. It is also Governors' responsibility to represent the interests of members and the public particularly when it comes to the strategic direction of the Trust.

Together the Governors bring a wealth of expertise, experience, ideas and views which are essential for the continuing effective development of our Trust.

How the Board and Council Work Together

The Board and Council work closely together.

The Chair is a Non-Executive Director and 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.

The Specific Powers and Responsibilities of Governors

Governors work within the Council of Governors. Their duties are laid down in law and are set out in our Constitution. In ELFT, we regard our Governors as our **critical friends** – we work together in a shared vision to achieve the best outcomes for our service users and communities.

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Some of the most important powers of the Council of Governors are listed below:

- The Council holds the Non-Executive Directors both individually and collectively to account for how well the Board of Directors is performing in managing the Trust
- The Council appoints and if appropriate removes the Chair and other Non-Executive Directors. It also sets the remuneration and terms and conditions of the Chair and Non-Executive Directors
- The Council approves the new appointment of the Chief Executive
- The Council ensures they can effectively represent the interests of the Trust's Members

The Council carries out its work in a number of ways. The Council holds meetings in public at least six times a year and Governors are expected to attend these so that they can effectively carry out their duties. In addition Governors will also be involved in other activities, depending on your previous experience or interests.

You can:

- Be a member of one of three specific Committees or join a working group; these carry out detailed work on behalf of the Council
- Visit our various services. These provide the opportunity for Governors to meet service users and staff to better understand the Trust and give feedback that helps us improve
- Become involved in the Council's Quality Improvement (QI) projects. QI has changed the way our Council is run and it has improved the relationship with the Board of Directors and with members
- Support our campaigns to promote good health and fight stigma associated with long term health conditions
- Attend Board meetings to observe the contributions of the Non-Executive Directors and ask strategic questions during the public questions section of the agenda
- Attend review days and events such as the Trust-wide *Learning from Complaints* events
- Seek out and represent the views of members and local communities, particularly the views of the members in the constituency they represent to ensure the Trust remains sensitive to the needs and wishes of the community we serve
- Share information about important discussions and key decisions the Trust is making with the members they represent
- Assist with developing and promoting membership of the Trust
- Take an active part in engaging members, ensuring that the views of local communities and people who use our services are taken into account when plans for services are being developed
- Provide a Governor perspective on the Trust's future plans and strategies through opportunities provided
- Make their own judgments and take decisions in the best interests of the Trust, not for self-interest or the interests of other organisations
- Form a good working relationship with members of the Board
- Participate in training and development opportunities.

This list is not complete; we recognise that Governors will have different interests, knowledge and time to contribute.

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Training and Support

It all may sound a bit daunting but if you are elected, you will find much support from the Membership Office, ELFT's staff and your fellow Governors.

We will arrange a buddy system for your first Council of Governors meeting, pairing you with a more experienced Governor to welcome you to and support you during the meeting. You can find out a bit more in this short video: <https://bit.ly/2KEpaAk>

As part of your induction you will also meet with the Chair, staff and experienced Governors, during which time you can share your interests and identify what individual training and development needs you may have.

We also run various training and development sessions starting with a mandatory induction day on **6 November 2018**. We also encourage Governors to attend national conferences to network with their colleagues from other Trusts. Governors are expected to take advantage of these training and development opportunities to ensure they can be effective in their role.

The Different Types of Governors

There are three types of Governors who sit on the Council of Governors. They share the same responsibilities and work together as a unified group. They bring knowledge of their particular constituents whilst considering the needs of all those we serve. There are:

- **26 Public Governors** who live in and who are elected by members in one of our local constituencies namely Bedford, Central Bedfordshire, City of London, Hackney, Luton, Newham, Tower Hamlets, and the Rest of England (this covers all other areas within England). They play a crucial role in bringing a local perspective to the planning and development of services, acting as the link between the local community and the Board. Public Governors will meet with people in their local community to help report back on what happens at Council meetings and to listen to ideas and opinions from members and the public
- **9 Staff Governors** who are elected by the people who we employ – almost all of our staff are also members of the Trust. They bring knowledge of widely held staff views to Council debates and can bring first-hand experience to strategic discussions about quality. Staff Governors do not deal with any individual or personal issues that may involve staff; the role is very different from trade unions, professional bodies and staff-side organisations
- **10 Appointed Governors** who are nominated by our partner organisations, (local authorities, commissioners, academic and voluntary sector). They bring expert insights which have been invaluable, particularly when considering integrated care.

What Governors Can't Do?

You can see that Governors have an important role in the effective governance of the Trust; however, their role is in strategic planning and oversight. In practice this means:

- Governors do not get involved in the day to day operation of the Trust's services. This is the responsibility of the Executive Directors; they do, however, have an influence on services by communicating the views of local communities
- The Council cannot overrule decisions made by the Board of Directors, because in law the Board is responsible for the Trust. However, the Board does draw on the contribution of the Council of Governors when considering strategy
- Governors should not deal with patients' complaints – although they can tell people about the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) and the Trust's complaint system; they can, however, consider whether the Trust's complaints system is working well
- Governors do not inspect the Trust's services. This is the responsibility of our regulators, the Care Quality Commission; however, they go on site visits to inform their own thinking about the Trust's services
- Governors cannot act as advocates for individual patients, individual staff or themselves if they are receiving services from or are employed by ELFT – although they can point people in the direction of appropriate advocacy organisations or relevant Trade Unions
- Governors don't act as representatives of the Trust to the media
- Governors are volunteers and do not get paid or given preferential treatment for their work
- Governors do not use their role to advance personal or specific political or other ideological messages.

Who can be a Governor?

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. We need people who are passionate about the NHS, care about their local services, have the enthusiasm and the willingness to represent the views of the people in their community or staff group, and who have the time to commit to the role.

You will need to be able to contribute to strategy, have some understanding of how effective organisations work and be able to work well as part of a wider team. Governors have to be able to challenge the Board to seek assurance so it could be useful to have some skills you may have developed at work or as a volunteer or in your personal life, such as reading reports and working with people.

You will also be expected to work in a way that reflects ELFT's values which are '*We care, We respect, We are inclusive.*'

So if you are considering standing for election you need to be able to show:

- You are aged 16 years or over and are a member of the constituency you wish to represent
- You are committed to working with us to continuously improve the quality of the mental health and community health services we provide and to helping us do so in a responsive and viable way
- You can meet the commitment of attending Council of Governors meetings which take place at least six times a year (these are mandatory).
- You can commit to an additional amount of time, (approximately one to three days a month)

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- You are able to read and interpret the content of papers and reports to be able to make informed recommendations and decisions
- You are able to actively listen and you value the contributions of different people
- You are able to ask strategic questions in a constructive and respectful manner
- You can effectively put the needs of the community above personal preference and understand that the Governor role is broader than your own experiences
- You are willing to actively communicate with your constituents and the wider membership to find out their views and concerns
- You are willing to participate in Governor Committees or activities and in other meetings to present the views of the members and general public
- You are willing to participate in induction and mandatory training and development events to ensure you are kept up to date with what is happening in the NHS and to learn more about the Governor role
- You will uphold the 7 Principles of Public Life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership
- You will also adhere to the Trust's Code of Conduct which outlines the appropriate conduct for Governors and addresses both the requirements of office and personal behaviour.

Who can't be a Governor?

There are certain statutory requirements that prevent an individual from becoming a Governor. You cannot stand to be elected as a Governor if you have received a criminal conviction within the preceding five years, declared bankruptcy, been dismissed from a NHS job within the preceding two years, or received disqualification from a health related professional body. There is a full list of these restrictions and this will be provided when you request a nomination form.

Terms of Office

Governors are elected or appointed for a term of three years and may seek re-election or reappointment 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 terms.

Elected Governors will cease to hold office if they are no longer a member of the constituency or class they were elected to represent.

Expenses

Governors are volunteers and are therefore not paid a salary. They are, however, entitled to claim expenses incurred in connection with their duties such as for travel to and from meetings of the Council of Governors, training days and conferences. Our Staff Governors are also entitled to time off to attend to their Governor duties.

Elections

An independent organisation – Electoral Reform Services (ERS) – will run the elections in a fair and legal manner using the 'STV' voting system to elect our Governors.

Our aim is to ensure that:

- Every voter has the opportunity to affect the result
- No vote is wasted
- No voter has a greater influence than another.

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How Will Elections Work?

All members are advised of the nomination and voting process details before an election so that they can nominate themselves as an election candidate for a Governor vacancy (if they wish) and also so that they can vote for candidates within their own constituency.

Members who wish to stand for election as a Governor will be asked to write a nomination statement of around 150-250 words outlining why they think members should vote for them to become a Governor, e.g. explaining the reasons for standing and including any relevant skills, knowledge and attributes. Attendance at Council of Governors meetings will also be included for Governors who are nominating themselves for re-election. The statement will appear in the election literature.

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

If you are interested and think you could be an effective Governor for the Trust, please contact ERS requesting a nomination form.

Online: www.ersvotes.com/elft2018

By phone: 020 8889 9203

By email: FTNomination.Enquiries@electoralreform.co.uk

By text: Text 2FT EL and your name and address to 88802

By post: Electoral Reform Services Limited, The Election Centre, 33 Clarendon Road, London N8 0NW

We must receive your completed form by **Monday 13 August 2018, 5pm.**

What is the election timetable for 2018?

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| • 16 July | Nomination forms available |
| • 5pm, 13 August | Closing date for nomination forms to be returned |
| • 5 September | Voting packs posted |
| • 5pm, 28 September | Close of election – voting papers must be received |
| • 1 October | Results of the election announced. |

I have more questions!

You can find more details (including Frequent Asked Questions) on ELFT's website at www.elft.nhs.uk/CouncilElections

Alternatively, you can attend a Prospective Governor Workshop or contact the Membership Office on:

- Freephone: 0800 032 7297
- Email: elft.membership@nhs.net

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