

Job description: Trust chair
Accountable to: Council of Governors
Duration: 3 years
Time commitment: 3 days a week
Remuneration: Competitive

Role summary

The Trust chair, accountable to the Council of Governors, will provide leadership to both the Board of Directors and the council. This role is pivotal in upholding the highest standards of governance, integrity and transparency, ensuring that the Trust operates within the framework of its Licence, Constitution, and statutory responsibilities at all times.

Working collaboratively with non-executive directors, the chief executive and executive directors, the chair will guide the Board in fulfilling its collective responsibilities, which include:

- defining and steering the strategic direction of the Trust
- achieving corporate objectives, including national targets and core standards
- ensuring the delivery of safe, high-quality care for patients
- establishing and overseeing trust policies and their implementation
- advising the Council of Governors on strategic plans and other key matters
- being part of the corporate trustee body for the Trust's charitable fund
- safeguarding the Trust's financial sustainability

The chair will ensure that directors and governors receive timely, accurate and clear information to support effective decision-making and compliance with governance standards. They will also oversee regular evaluations of the Board's performance, including its committees and individual members, and foster an environment that enables meaningful contributions and constructive relationships across leadership bodies.

Performance in the role will be assessed against the six domains of the Leadership Competency Framework. The chair will also lead the appraisal process for non-executive directors, evaluating their effectiveness against these competencies as part of the annual review cycle.

Key duties

The chair of the Trust holds a central leadership role, responsible for guiding both the Board of Directors and the Council of Governors in fulfilling their statutory duties and strategic objectives. This includes setting the tone for governance, promoting the Trust's values, and ensuring effective collaboration across the organisation and wider health system. The key responsibilities are detailed below.

Strategic leadership and governance

- Lead the Board of Directors and Council of Governors in setting the strategic direction of the Trust and ensuring their effectiveness in all aspects of their role.
- Uphold the values of the Trust by personal example, promoting equality, diversity and inclusion for patients, staff and stakeholders.
- Ensure the Trust complies with its licence, constitution, and all statutory and regulatory obligations.

Board effectiveness and development

- Support and challenge the chief executive and directors to ensure the Trust meets the Care Quality Commission's well-led framework by promoting effective governance, strategic leadership, and a culture of openness, learning, and continuous improvement.
- Ensure annual evaluation of the Board/Council's performance, the Board's committees, and the directors/governors in respect of their Board/Council contribution and development needs, acting on the results of these evaluations and supporting personal development planning.
- Ensure an effective annual appraisal process is in place for non-executive directors, in conjunction with the Council of Governors.
- Ensure the chief executive is appraised annually and that all directors undergo annual performance reviews.

Operational oversight and communication

- Ensure an annual cycle of board meetings is maintained and that all required board committees are properly constituted and operate effectively.
- Maintain effective communication between the Board and the Council of Governors, ensuring the Board is aware of, and responsive, to the council's views.
- Promote high standards of corporate and clinical governance throughout the organisation.
- Develop a constructive and open relationship with the chief executive, providing support and advice while respecting executive responsibilities.
- Ensure the provision of accurate, timely and clear information to directors and governors to support effective decision-making.
- Set the tone and style of board discussions to encourage constructive debate and ensure decisions are implemented effectively in partnership with the chief executive.

External representation and system leadership

- Represent the Trust at national, regional and local levels, acting as an ambassador and ensuring the views of a wide range of stakeholders are considered.
- Lead the Trust's engagement with the Cheshire and Merseyside health and care system, contributing to joint organisational discussions and system-wide transformation in service delivery.
- Establish and maintain strong working relationships with the Trust's regulators.

Board culture and succession

- Safeguard the reputation and integrity of the Trust through exemplary conduct and leadership.
- Lead the Board in living the Trust's values and standards, fostering a culture of compassion, accountability and excellence.
- Build and maintain an effective and complementary board, ensuring it sees itself as a team and has the right balance and diversity of skills, knowledge and perspective.
- Work with the CoG to plan succession for non-executive director appointments.
- Ensure the Board is genuinely connected to staff and patient experience, using feedback and national equality standards such as WRES, WDES, EDS and the EDI Improvement Plan to inform assurance and improvement.

Governance and charitable oversight

- Chair committees or sub-groups of the Board, such as the Remuneration and Nomination Committees, as required to support the Trust's governance.
- Act as a director of the corporate trustee, overseeing the management and use of the Trust's charitable funds

Council of Governors (CoG)

The chair leads and supports the Council of Governors, ensuring they are well-informed, engaged and able to fulfil their statutory duties. Key responsibilities include:

- chairing council meetings and ensuring compliance with governance procedures
- facilitating member engagement so governors can represent the interests of trust members and the public
- ensuring governors have access to timely, clear information and dialogue with directors to hold non-executive directors (including the chair) to account
- supporting the council's responsibilities in appointments, remuneration, audit, quality accounts and statutory decision-making
- setting agendas that focus on strategy, quality and performance, enabling governors to contribute meaningfully
- promoting effective individual and collective participation
- overseeing governor training and development
- maintaining strong communication between the Board, council, senior management and stakeholders

Person specification

Summary

The candidate will have a background and experience that will allow them to lead and make a positive contribution to the Board of a patient focused organisation that provides healthcare. The candidate will have a range of exceptional skills including an analytical mind and sound judgement, in order to effectively lead the Board to deliver the Trust's strategic aims and ambitions. They will have the interpersonal skills to engage and influence effectively with a wide cross section of people and organisations locally, nationally and internationally.

The chair must meet the requirements for eligibility for public membership of the Trust as outlined in the Trust's constitution.

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Background and experience	Proven experience at board level or equivalent, leading and developing large, complex or evolving organisations across the private, public or voluntary sectors.	Extensive experience chairing boards in large organisations, particularly in contexts of complex change or significant operational pressures.
	Demonstrated strategic leadership that extends beyond organisational boundaries.	
	Previous experience as a non-executive director, with evidence of independent thinking, sound judgement, common sense and diplomacy.	
	Strong commercial and financial insight, ideally gained within a regulated environment.	
	Experience in building or nurturing successful partnerships and alliances within complex stakeholder landscapes.	
	Experience in holding executive teams accountable and being accountable to others.	
	Recognised for commercial expertise and an entrepreneurial mindset across sectors.	
	Demonstrated ability to manage media communications and maintain effective relationships with media representatives.	
	Extensive experience in leading robust board assurance processes within complex organisations.	
	Skilled in negotiation and influence at local, regional and national levels.	
	Must meet the eligibility requirements for appointment in accordance with the Trust Constitution, including the Fit and Proper Persons Requirement and the Criteria for Disqualification.	
Skills, knowledge and personal attributes	Experience in managing media communications and relationships effectively.	

	Personal integrity and a commitment to openness, with a visible and approachable leadership style.	
	Highly developed interpersonal and communication skills, including strong listening abilities.	
	Deep understanding of healthcare issues and the complexities of the NHS environment.	
	Commitment to the Trust's values, demonstrated through personal behaviour.	
	A demonstrable passion for patient issues.	
	Visionary and creative, open to change and supportive of innovation.	
	Proven leadership capability in building and developing high-performing teams.	
	Intellectual capacity to grasp complex strategic matters, analyse and resolve challenges, provide constructive challenge and communicate effectively.	
	Politically astute, with the ability to quickly understand key issues and build respect across internal and external stakeholders.	
	Financially astute, able to interpret reports, challenge assumptions and contribute to strategic planning for sustainability and value.	
	Understanding of the local health landscape in which the Trust operates.	
	Clear understanding of the legal responsibilities and liabilities of non-executive directors.	
	Sound knowledge of effective corporate governance.	
	Well-established and relevant professional networks.	
	Sufficient time and dedication to fulfil the responsibilities of the role.	

Eligibility criteria

The post holder must be and remain a member of one of the Foundation Trust's public constituencies:

- Warrington and Halton
- Rest of England

Disqualification criteria

A person may not become or continue as a member of the Board of Directors if they:

- have been adjudged bankrupt or their estate has been sequestrated and (in either case) has not been discharged
- are a person in relation to whom a moratorium period under a debt relief order applies (under Part 7A of the Insolvency Act 1986)
- have made a composition or arrangement with, or granted a trust deed for, their creditors and have not been discharged in respect of it
- have within the preceding five years been convicted in the British Isles of any offence and a sentence of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for a period of not less than three months (without the option of a fine) was imposed on him/her
- are a member of the Council of Governors, or a governor of another NHS foundation trust or any other NHS body
- have been removed from office as a governor of the Trust in accordance with the procedure for removal set out in Annex 5
- are a spouse, partner, parent or child of a member of the Council of Governors or Board of Directors
- are a member of a local authority's scrutiny committee covering health matters
- on the basis of disclosures obtained through an application to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), are not considered suitable by the Trust's executive director responsible for human resources
- have or have been the subject of a Sexual Offences Prevention Order, a Foreign Travel Order or a Risk of Sexual Harm Order made under the provisions of the Sexual Offences Act 2003
- are the subject of a disqualification order made under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986
- are incapable by reason of mental disorder, illness or injury of managing or administering their property and affairs
- have had their name removed from any list maintained pursuant to parts 4, 5, 6 or 7 of the NHS Act 2006 and/or regulations made under those parts, and have not subsequently had their name included on such a list, and due to the reason(s) for such removal, they are not considered suitable by the Trust's executive director responsible for human resources
- in the case of a non-executive director, have refused without reasonable cause to fulfil any training requirements established by the Board of Directors
- have refused to sign and deliver to the company secretary a statement in the form specified by the Board of Directors confirming acceptance of the Trust's Code of Conduct for Directors
- in the case of a non-executive director (excluding the non-executive chair), are no longer a member of the public constituency
- are a person who fails to satisfy the fit and proper persons requirements for directors as detailed in regulation 5 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities)

Regulations 2014: [Non-executive opportunities in the NHS » Fit and proper persons requirements](#)