



**East Kent
Hospitals University**
NHS Foundation Trust

Council of Governors
Membership and Members' Engagement Strategy

September 2019 – August 2022

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1. INTRODUCTION

The role of the Council of Governors is to work alongside the Board of Directors holding Non-Executive Directors to account for the performance of the Board. The Council also has a statutory duty to represent the interests of the FT members who elected them and the public as a whole.

- To be able to meet its statutory responsibilities there must be effective engagement between the Council and those it represents – the members and the public. This has to be two-way process. The engagement has to be a two - way process:
 - a) from governors to public members, staff and the general public in order to raise awareness of the role of Governors, provide updates on the work being done and the outcomes achieved and to encourage membership growth and involvement.
 - b) to governors from staff and public members, and the general public – in order to provide intelligence which will then be used to facilitate governor challenge of NEDs, to inform the Board and provide insights to inform service development opportunities.

This Strategy document lays out how the Council plans to use its resources over the coming three years to meet these responsibilities.

2. AIMS OF THE STRATEGY

The overarching aim of the strategy is:

To grow an engaged and informed membership that is representative of all parts of East Kent.

The purpose of the Strategy is to provide a framework for the Council to deliver this aim making best use of the resources available, recognising that these are finite and must be focussed to achieve maximum effect.

The framework has been built around addressing the following key questions:

1. Why is it important to have a membership and a Council?
2. What are the benefits of being a member of the Trust?
3. What does the Council want to achieve?

Why is it important to have a membership and a CoG?

It is a Statutory requirement of FT status to have a membership, but beyond this there is the potential for paving the way for service improvements based on the insights from service users. They have knowledge, experience, skills and views which can be of immense value to the Trust. Opportunities to make best use of this resource should be maximised.

Furthermore, Governors represent their constituents on Council and can utilise members' and the public's views to challenge NEDs about the Board's, and ultimately the Trust's, performance.

What are the benefits of FT membership to members?

To have an engaged and representative membership, people must be able to see how they will benefit from being a member.

The following are seen as member benefits.

- A regular newsletter and other ad hoc communication from the Council to keep members updated on the work the Governors are doing and how their feedback has supported this work.
- Regular communications from the Trust to keep members updated on service developments and 'hot' issues.
- Opportunities to raise their concerns with Governors and learn what has happened as a result.
- Members' meetings with presentations on interesting issues and the opportunity to engage with Governors and senior Trust managers.
- Access to the NHS discount scheme.

What does the Council want to achieve?

By increasing the understanding of the role of Governors and the purpose of the CoG, delivering the benefits of membership and ensuring effective means of engagement, the objective is to grow an engaged and informed membership that is representative of all parts of East Kent.

This in turn will enable the Council of Governors to carry out its key roles:

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

In order to realise the benefits of delivering the strategy, Governors will need to:

- Be clear about how the information gained from engagement is most effectively used to hold NEDs to account, can be utilised as evidence for Council to raise concerns or questions and to inform the agendas for Council meetings.
- Commit to ensuring there are a variety of opportunities to engage with members and to participate in these.
- Be active in promoting membership across the whole community.
- Be able to signpost members appropriately if the issues they raise are outside of the remit of the Council ie direct those with patient complaints to the Patient Experience Team.

3. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES TO DELIVER THE STRATEGY

It is important that the strategy identifies clear and measurable objectives to justify the:

- time given by governors to engage with members;
- staff time and funding invested by the trust to support membership; and
- the time given by members and the trust placed in the governors that they will act on the information provided.

The objectives underpinning this strategy are:

1. Raise staff and public awareness of the role of Governors.
2. Public Membership to be developed to fully reflect the population that the trust serves.
3. Increase Member engagement.

4. Develop pro-active approaches to seeking the views of members and the public on service development which will inform Council and Board discussions on the issues.
5. Update members on the work that they do and the outcomes achieved.
6. Increase the proportion of public members who can be contacted electronically.
7. Ensure there is a clear process for managing the information gathered via engagement and that it is used to facilitate the Council's responsibilities.
8. Develop means of obtaining insights into the Trust's services, and how they might be improved, from the members and the public

The Action Plan below sets out in detail the way that Council intends to deliver the Strategy objectives during 2019 – 2022, the timelines for each action and the measures of successful delivery. The document will be amended, as may be necessary over time. It should be emphasised that the resources available to the Council are finite; governors are volunteers who give of their own time and the Council is supported by a full time administrator within the Trust Secretary's office. It is therefore essential to prioritise the work of the Council to ensure that the best use is made of these resources in delivering the objectives.

It is considered that there are some tasks that Governors will participate in as part of their responsibilities to Council. These will provide data for triangulation, but are not public/member engagement per se. There are:

- Joint site visits – undertaken by a team of one Board Director, one Non-executive Director and two governors. Each visit last around two hours and tours four to six departments on one Trust site.
- Internal Trust inspection programmes where governors are requested to participate; such as mini-PLACE inspections to review the ward and department physical environments.
- External inspection programmes such as the annual National PLACE inspection programme.

4. ACTION PLAN

Agreed Engagement methods

Ref No	Action	Objective/s met	Measure of success	Time frame
1	<p>Governor newsletter (GNL)</p> <p>Year 1: review system used to circulate GNL electronically so that it provides data on level of access. Establish a baseline for the GNL influence & monitor events to determine how members/public heard about them via the GNL.</p> <p>Years 2 & 3: see an improvement in the measured effectiveness of the GNL.</p>	1 & 6 & 8	<p>a) Establish regular content and clear timelines for compiling, reviewing and issuing GNL.</p> <p>b) Introduce system for assessing access to the GNL.</p> <p>c) Establish measures and baseline data for influence of the GNL.</p> <p>d) Improve performance against the measures. Deciding at the end of year 1 how much that improvement should be.</p>	<p>Year 1</p> <p>Year 1</p> <p>Year 1</p> <p>Years 2 & 3</p>
2	Members Evening meetings	1 & 5 & 8	<p>a) Establish process for Governor involvement in the planning of the members evenings.</p> <p>b) Hold minimum of 6 meetings per year; 2 at each of the main sites.</p> <p>c) Increase attendance at the meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i For each round ii For each site, per round 	<p>By December 2019</p> <p>Annually</p> <p>Annually</p>
3	On site Meet the governor sessions	1 & 5 & 8	a) Minimum of 2 Governors to attend every scheduled session & 10 per year	Every session, report quarterly to MECC and Annually to Council

			<p>b) Minimum of 10 contacts made per session.</p> <p>c) Evidence of change arising from contacts made at the sessions.</p>	<p>Every session, report quarterly to MECC and Annually to Council</p> <p>Report bi-annually to Council</p>
4	Attending events with NHS partner organisations	1 □ 5 & 8	<p>a) Have a governor presence at 50% of the events the Council is invited to attend.</p> <p>b) At least two governors attending each event.</p>	<p>Annual report</p> <p>Every session, report quarterly to MECC and Annually to Council</p>

It was also decided to fully scope and trial, two further engagement methods in the first year of the strategy and review the outcome when the first annual performance report is considered by the Council at their meeting in November 2020.

- Piggyback existing external communications systems, such as Council newsletters.
- Member/public surveys

5. CHALLENGES TO THE DELIVERY OF THE PLAN

The details of the action plan will need to be carefully balanced so that it can be delivered using the resources available. Governor agreement with, and commitment to, the plan will be essential to that delivery.

There will be Governor elections in February 2020 and 2021; understanding the Strategy will need to be included in the induction plan to ensure that momentum is not lost as the Council manages the changes in dynamics resulting from a change in membership. Similarly, any changes to Trust staff involved in delivery of the plan will need to be managed to ensure continuity.

National changes to the role of Council and Governors may impact on the plan.

6. MONITORING THE PLAN

Progress against the plan will be reported at each of the quarterly meetings of the Council's Membership Engagement and Communication Committee. The MECC Chair will provide a report to Council after each meeting updating on progress against the plan and inviting discussion to ensure that the Council is in agreement with the plan as it develops.

The Strategy will be formally evaluated once a year, against the specified measures of success, with a report provided to the Full Council meeting in August.