

Information Pack for prospective Staff Governors

This pack will provide you with information about being a staff governor at University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust.

If you have any special communication needs or would like this document in another format or language, please let us know by contacting the Membership team on 0117 342 3764 or FoundationTrust@UH Bristol.nhs.uk.

If you have any additional questions after reading the pack, please get in touch and we will be happy to help.

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www.uhbristol.nhs.uk/elections

Spring 2019

1. Introduction



“On behalf of University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust I would like to thank you for expressing an interest in joining our Council of Governors.

Our governors make sure the views of patients, carers and staff are represented and considered, and they play a key part in ensuring the Trust is effectively run. As a governor, you will have the opportunity to help shape the future of our hospitals.

I hope this information pack is helpful and look forward to meeting you.”

Jeff Farrar, Chair of the Trust



Group of UH Bristol Governors (June 2017)

2. About University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust

University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust (UH Bristol/ the Trust) is a dynamic and thriving group of hospitals in the heart of Bristol. We have over 9,000 staff who deliver over 100 different clinical services from nine individual sites. With services from neonatal intensive care unit to older people's care, we offer care to the people of Bristol and the South West from the very beginning of life to its later stages.



Our **mission** as a Trust is to improve the health of the people we serve by delivering exceptional care, teaching and research, every day.

Our **vision** is for Bristol, and our hospitals, to be among the best and safest places in the country to receive care.

We want to be characterised by:

- High quality individual care, delivered with compassion
- A safe, friendly and modern environment
- Employing the best and helping all our staff fulfil their potential
- Pioneering and efficient practice, putting ourselves at the leading edge of research, innovation and transformation
- Our commitment to partnership and the provision of leadership to the networks we are part of, for the benefit of the region and people we serve.

Governors can play a key part in helping us to achieve this vision.

You can find out more about the Trust, our hospitals, and our services on our website:
www.uhbristol.nhs.uk

3. About Foundation Trusts, Members and Governors

NHS foundation trusts are part of the NHS and provide healthcare according to core NHS principles: free care, based on need and not ability to pay. They have a degree of independence from the Department of Health which means they can take certain managerial and financial decisions themselves and have more control over their own finances. Nevertheless, they are subject to statutory requirements and have a duty to exercise their functions effectively, efficiently and economically.

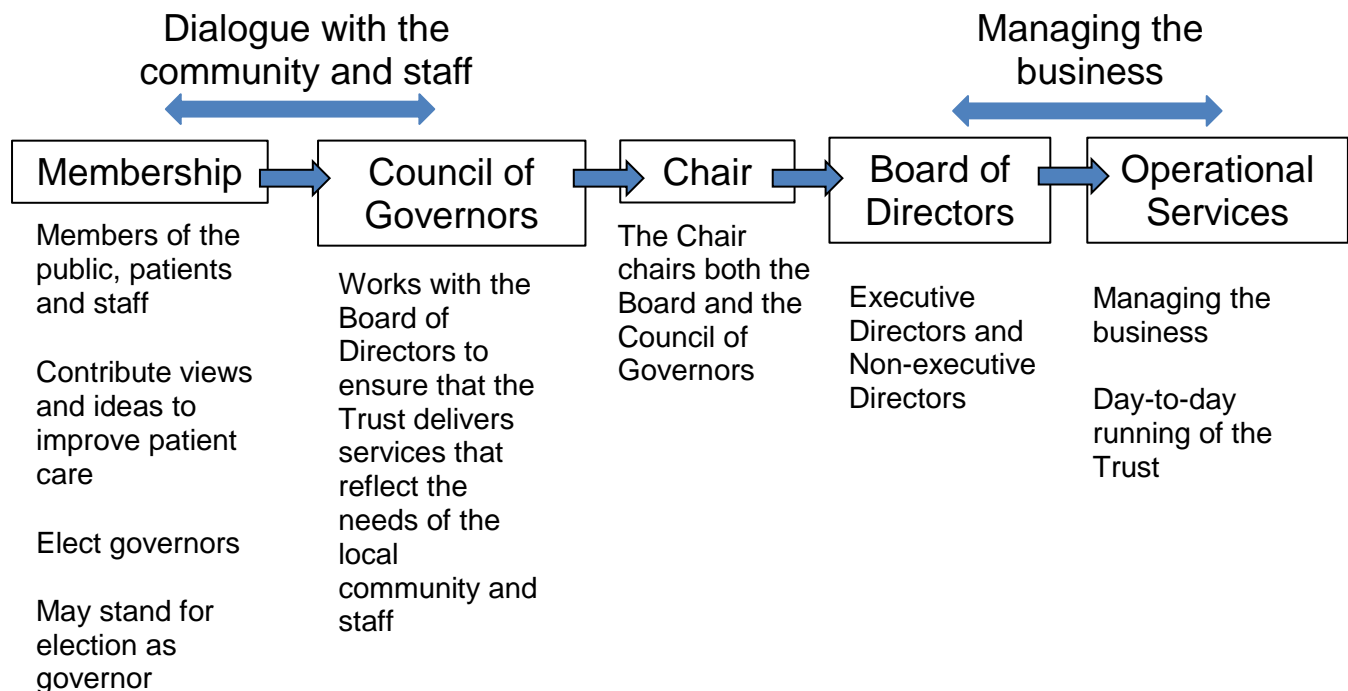
Members and governors

At the heart of the NHS foundation trust model is local accountability. A Foundation Trust must have a membership, and patients and local people who want to get more involved in their local health service can sign up to become Foundation Trust Members. **At University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust, staff are also automatically members too unless they choose to opt out.**

Public and staff members can elect governors to represent them on the Trust's Council of Governors. This means that as a Foundation Trust we are accountable to the local community, the patients we care for and the staff we employ through our Council of Governors.

The relationship with the Board of Directors

The Board of Directors are responsible for the running and management of the Trust. The Board is made up of Executive Directors, who are full time senior staff, plus an independent Chair and Non-executive Directors who hold part-time positions. **The Council of Governors hold the Non-executive Directors to account for the performance of the Board of Directors.**



4. The role of the Governor

The governor role is a voluntary position which helps to make the Trust **publicly accountable** for the services we provide. Governors have various powers and duties and will be given the information, support and training necessary to carry these out. Your **two key duties** are:

- To represent the views of staff and the public, particularly in relation to the Trust's strategic direction
- To hold the Non-executive Directors to account for the performance of the Board of Directors.

Representing the views of members

As a member of the Council of Governors, you act as a link between Foundation Trust members and the Board of Directors. The Council help the Board to make sure that the views of members of staff and the people who use the Trust's services and are taken into account when services are being developed.

Holding the Non-executive Directors to account

Governors make sure that the Board is carrying out its duties effectively by 'holding the Non-executive Directors to account.'

They do this by meeting with them and asking questions, by observing them at meetings and by monitoring their activity.

What other powers and duties do governors have?

Governors have been given other powers and duties in law to help them with the role. These are:

- To appoint and, if appropriate, remove the Chair of the Trust
- To appoint and, if appropriate, remove the other Non-executive Directors of the Trust
- To decide the pay and allowances and the other terms and conditions of office of the Chair and the other Non-executive Directors
- To approve the appointment of the Chief Executive
- To appoint and, if appropriate, remove the Trust's Auditor
- To receive the annual report and annual accounts and the Auditor's report on the accounts
- To give a response when consulted by the Board of Directors on the Trust's Annual Plan
- To agree, in conjunction with the Board of Directors, changes to the Trust's Constitution
- To approve any proposal to increase by 5% or more the proportion of the Trust's total annual income from activities other than the provision of health services in England
- To approve any applications for 'significant transactions' as defined in the Trust's constitution
- To approve any applications for mergers, acquisitions, separation or dissolution of the Trust
- To decide whether the Trust's private patient work would significantly interfere with its main purpose, i.e. the provision of goods and services for the health service in England or the performance of its other functions
- To inform the regulatory bodies if there are any 'material concerns' about the actions of the Board of Directors which cannot be resolved locally.

What can't governors do?

Governors **do not** get involved in the day to day running of the hospitals. This means:

- They don't act as a staff representative or union representative on employment issues, as there are other channels for dealing with such concerns
- They don't get involved in the detail of how services are run: this is the role of the Board, clinicians and managers
- They don't monitor the performance of the hospitals – a governor's job is to make sure that the Board of Directors is doing this.
- They don't deal with patient complaints directly, but signpost to the appropriate Trust department (although governors may wish to highlight an issue if several complaints raised to them suggest a recurring issue with Trust services)
- They don't act as advocates for individual patients
- They 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
- They don't get involved in staff grievances, employee relations cases or negotiations

What can a staff governor give back to the people they represent?

Staff governors provide a conduit for their colleagues to get their views, questions and concerns about the Trust heard by the Trust Board. Staff governors will be encouraged to bring the staff viewpoint to discussions over the Trust's plans and priorities, and to feed key information back to staff. Equally, the Board often look to staff governors to help with issues such as recruitment, retention, and staff engagement

Staff governors complement, but do not duplicate, the work of trade unions, staff councils, and other professional bodies.

How do I represent the views of staff?

We will support you to find a way to reach staff that will suit your skills, your preferences and the time that you have available. This could involve, for example: writing an article for Newsbeat, speaking at staff meetings, speaking at our Members' Events, supporting online or social media activities, holding governor surgeries, or using your own networks.

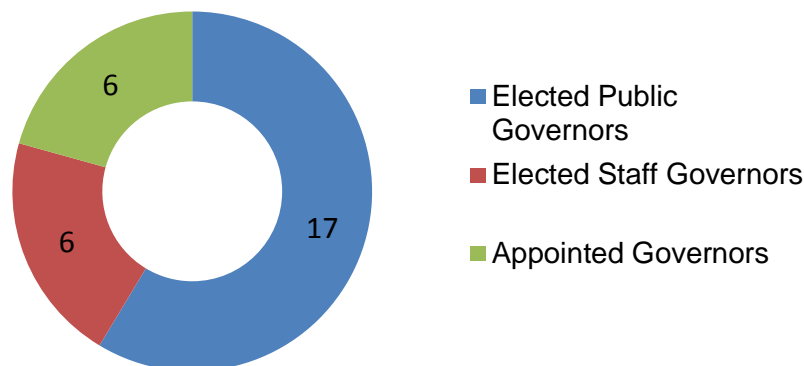


"As a Staff Governor, I feel it's important that the Trust looks after its staff and listens to them. If staff feel valued and are trained and supported to do their job to the best of their ability, this has a positive impact on patients."

Florene Jordan, Staff Governor (Nursing & Midwifery)

5. The Council of Governors at UH Bristol

As of 1 June 2019, our Council of Governors will be made up of **29 governors**:



- 17 elected **public** governors representing four geographical constituencies (9 for Bristol, 3 for North Somerset, 3 for South Gloucestershire, and 2 for the Rest of England & Wales)
- 6 elected **staff** governors representing four different staff groups (1 for Medical & Dental, 2 for Nursing & Midwifery, 1 for Other Clinical Healthcare Professional and 2 for Non-clinical Healthcare Professional)
- We also have 6 **appointed** governors from our stakeholders and partner organisations (1 from the Trust's Joint Union Committee, 2 from the Trust's Youth Involvement Group, 1 from Bristol City Council, 1 from the University of Bristol and 1 from the University of the West of England).

Public governors are elected by Foundation Trust members in each of the geographical constituencies, and staff governors are elected by staff in each of the different staff groups. Elections are staggered over three years, to make sure that not all governors leave at once. **In 2019, there will be 17 public and staff governor seats up for election.** This includes 4 staff governor seats in the **Nursing and Midwifery**, **Non-Clinical** and **Other Clinical** staff groups.

Please note that the next election in the Medical and Dental staff group will be held in 2020.

The Council of Governors is chaired by the Chair of the Trust



Jeff Farrar, Chair

As well as a Chair, there are also two Lead Governors, elected by governors annually from among their number, who act as another source of support and advice for governors.



Malcolm Watson
and Mo Phillips,
Lead Governors
2018/19

6. Why Become a Staff Governor?

Our governors tell us that they find their role hugely rewarding and enjoy the opportunity to help to bring about positive change at the Trust. While it is a voluntary role and can be demanding it is also interesting and gives you a unique insight into the running of the Trust. Staff governors are valued by the other governors as they offer them a view into the front line of the NHS, and working alongside your fellow governors is a good way to meet new people and to feel part of a bigger team. On a professional level, it is an opportunity to gain valuable experience to support your development and build on existing skills and abilities in a new setting, and can give you a heightened sense of professional wellbeing.

We want to encourage a diverse Council of Governors to ensure we understand and respond to the different needs of the communities that our hospitals serve. We will do our utmost to provide support to those with particular needs, for example, ensuring that visually impaired governors can access information and material and ensuring that meetings are wheelchair-accessible and have appropriate facilities. If you feel you may need extra support, please just let us know.

What qualities should a governor have?

The staff governor role is not a management position and there are no particular skills or experience required. **We welcome interest from all levels of the organisation.** Enthusiasm, commitment, an interest in the wider issues facing the NHS, and the ability to work as part of a team are the most important qualities. Governors have to be able to challenge the Board constructively to ensure they are doing their job properly, and there will be various reports, meeting papers and other information that you will be asked to read and comment on, so it would be useful to have some skills in these areas, but training will be provided.

We will support all governors with their development in the role, but would hope that anyone interested in becoming a governor would have some or all of the following qualities:

- An understanding and interest in health issues and a commitment to NHS values
- Good interpersonal and communication skills
- Sufficient time and commitment to fulfil the role
- Sound, independent judgement, diplomacy and common sense
- The ability to grasp relevant issues and understand relationships between interested parties
- The ability to develop an understanding of the different legal duties and responsibilities of governors and Board members.

Who is eligible to become a staff governor?

To be a governor, you must be 16 years of age or over and be a member of staff at the Trust in the category in which you wish to stand for election. You need to be a permanent member of staff, or have a fixed term contract of at least 12 months, or have been continuously employed by the Trust for at least 12 months.

There are certain reasons that could disqualify someone from being a governor, such as bankruptcy or recent criminal convictions. Our Constitution lists the exclusions in more detail and you can view the Trust's Constitution on the key publications page of our website www.uhbristol.nhs.uk/about-us/key-publications/ or ask the Membership Team to send you a copy.

7. Time commitment and meetings

Many of our current governors will tell you how much they enjoy the role but say that the time commitment should not be underestimated. An estimated time commitment is a minimum of **6-10 hours per month** to attend meetings and events and to read reports and papers. Governors have also told us that the more involved you are, the more you get out of the role.

Time offered to support you in your staff governor role

To fulfil your duties as a staff governor, you are entitled to time away from your job to attend meetings and other activities (see the Trust's 'Time off for Civil and Public Duties' policy). This is guided as an average of six hours per month, pro rata for part time employees. **It is important that the Trust has active staff governors who are able to attend meetings and play a full part in the Council of Governors, so we ask line managers to support you by being as flexible as possible, subject of course to the needs of the service.** You will be notified of meeting dates well in advance to help you plan your time.

What meetings will I need to attend?

There are four formal **Council of Governors** meetings a year that are statutory (required) to attend. Governors are also expected to attend the four **Governor Development Seminars** per year, and the **Annual Members' Meeting** which is held in September.

There are also three **governor groups** which focus on your specific responsibilities in the areas of strategy, quality of care, and constitutional issues/membership engagement. There are also frequent **informal meetings** with the Chair and Non-executive Directors. Governors are expected to attend a good mix of these meetings in order to ensure they are well informed and have the opportunity to raise queries and concerns.

A guide to the regular time commitment required:

- Council of Governors meetings (2 hours x 4 per year)
- Governor Development Seminars (6 hours x 4 per year)
- Annual Members' Meeting (2 hours x 1 per year)
- Governor Groups on Quality, Strategy and Constitution (2 hours x 4-6 per year for each group)
- Governors Informal Meeting/Meeting with the Chairman and Non-executive Directors (2 hours x 8 per year, an optional but very useful forum)
- Health Matters Events and other membership engagement events (2 hours x 9 per year, governors encouraged to attend and support when they can)
- Nominations and Appointments Committee (1 hour x 4 per year). *This is a committee of 12 governors which deals with the appointment, appraisals and other terms of service of the Chairman and Non-executive Directors. Meetings are open to committee members only.*

Meetings are generally held during office hours. Most of them take place at UH Bristol Trust HQ, Marlborough Street, Bristol, BS1 3NU. A full schedule of the meetings for the year is available on request and will give you a sense of timings and frequency of meetings.

There are a number of other optional meetings and events throughout the year that governors will be invited to take part in, if they are able and willing, including:

- Board of Directors meetings (2 hours x 6 per year) – it's recommended that all governors should attend at least one Board meeting in each year, to see the Board 'in action'
- Walkrounds and assessments in hospital areas to observe the hospitals first-hand
- External courses and networking events, such as regional and national meetings with governors from other organisations; and meetings of other health organisations in Bristol.
- Ad-hoc Trust focus groups, briefings, celebrations, and other events.

The governor viewpoint is valued at the Trust, and from time to time governors are also invited to sit on Trust committees, appointment panels for senior roles, or judging panels for staff awards. Such activities are always optional and typically offered to the whole Council.

8. Induction, training and support

What support will I receive when I become a governor?

As part of your induction into the role, new governors will be given a **Governors' Handbook**. This will include a range of resources such as your Role Description, a Code of Conduct which you will need to sign and helpful information about UH Bristol, its hospitals and its divisions, the Council of Governors, the Board of Directors, the Foundation Trust membership and other resources you might find useful.

All new governors are asked to attend the Governor Development Seminar on **Thursday 13 June 2019, from 10am to 4pm**. At this seminar you'll get to spend time meeting the other members of the Council of Governors and key members of staff. To help bring your new role to life, the seminar will cover:

- A chance to discuss the opportunities and challenges of being a governor with the Trust Chair, Jeff Farrar and your fellow governors
- An overview of the current issues facing UH Bristol and the NHS locally and nationally, from the Trust's Chief Executive, Robert Woolley
- The Trust, its structure and how it is led, with the Deputy Chief Executive/Chief Operating Officer, Mark Smith.
- The governor role, key responsibilities and your relationship with the Board of Directors, with the Trust Secretary, Eric Sanders.
- Guide to governor meetings and next steps with the Membership Team.

What support will I receive on an ongoing basis?

Day-to-day support is provided by Kate Hanlon and Sarah Murch in the UH Bristol Membership Team. We will be in touch with you regularly via email to send you meeting papers, relevant reports and other information, to advise you of forthcoming events and other opportunities that you may be interested in, and also to keep you updated with news relevant to your role. Our contact details are at the back of this pack and you are welcome to contact us at any time - we're on hand to help. You will be given regular training and development sessions to support you in your governor role, and if you feel you need any additional support we will do our best to provide it.

9. Elections – How to Stand

There are 17 public and staff governor seats up for election in 2019, including four staff governor seats. If your role falls within one of the following groups, you can stand as a staff governor:

- **Nursing and Midwifery – 2 seats up for election (3-year term of office)** - all nursing and midwifery staff, including newly-qualified, and also healthcare assistants.
- **Other Clinical Healthcare Professional – 1 seat up for election (3-year term of office)** – this broad group covers the wide range of Allied Health Professionals employed in the Trust, ranging from those in pharmacy teams to staff in physiotherapy, speech & language therapists, dietetic teams, etc.
- **Non-clinical – 1 seat up for election (1-year term of office only)** This category includes all administrative staff at any level, including support staff such as those in IM&T, and also staff who work within the facilities and estates teams. We have a large number of non-clinical staff in a variety of roles, and it is important to hear their voice on the Council of Governors as they are vital to the effective running of our services.

To stand for a staff governor role you need to belong to the staff group you wish to represent. If you are unsure about the classification of your staff group or your eligibility then do get in touch and we can advise you accordingly. We can then send you a governor nomination form by email or post. You will need to fill it in, providing a photo to accompany a statement as to why you wish to be a governor and what skills you will bring to the role. This statement will help the members choose who to vote for.

Nominations will be open from 7 March 2019 to 4 April 2019: please note any nominations received after 4 April can't be accepted.

Staff governors are elected by the staff members in their constituent, so it is the members who ultimately choose their representatives. If there is more than one candidate for a seat, all staff in that constituency will be sent an email and asked to cast their vote online. Those without routine access to email will be notified of how they can vote by mail. The ballot will take place from 30 April to 24 May 2019. The election process will be co-ordinated by our Returning Officer, Electoral Reform Services: an independent body experienced in running democratic elections. If there is only one candidate for a seat, then that person will automatically be elected unopposed.

Successful nominees will join the Council of Governors from 1 June 2019, for a three-year term unless otherwise stated. The flow chart on page 14 sets out the election process.



“Governors, despite the fact of being volunteers, have an important role to play, from a strategic perspective, in the running of the Trust. The role of a Governor is interesting and rewarding and I hope that my contribution in this role has been an effective one so far.”

Rashid Joomun, Patient Governor

10. Term of office for Governors

Terms of office for elected governors are three years. Governors are then eligible to stand for re-election, to a maximum of three terms of office i.e. nine years maximum.

If during a term of office a governor becomes unable to maintain their commitment to the role, then we would ask that they discuss this with us in order to agree the suitability of continuing in post. Whilst we hope all governors are able to complete their term, we understand that in exceptional circumstances this may not be possible.

11. Code of Conduct for Governors

We ask all Governors to sign their agreement to a Code of Conduct before they take up their role. This highlights what is reasonably expected of individuals occupying the position of governor, asking them to:

- Act in the best interests of patients and the Trust as a whole
- Respect and value all governors and directors as colleagues
- Carry out governor duties without any expectation of personal benefit
- Be honest and act with integrity and objectivity
- Respect and treat with dignity and fairness the public, patients, relatives, carers, NHS staff and partners in other agencies
- Understand that the decisions of the Council must take full account of the needs and views of all patients, carers, local people and staff
- Respect appropriate confidentiality of information received in their role as governor
- Support and abide by the Trust's staff values: Respecting Everyone, Embracing Change, Recognising Success and Working Together.
- Adhere to all relevant Trust policies and procedures

We ask all governors to uphold the Trust's values:

Respecting everyone
Embracing change
Recognising success
Working together
Our hospitals.

You will also be asked to declare any relevant business interests on the **Register of Governors' Business Interests**.

12. Expenses

The governor role is voluntary and governors are not paid a salary. However, they can claim expenses such as travel incurred whilst carrying out their duties, in line with our policy.

13. Stand for election - Next Steps

Make sure you meet the eligibility criteria. Call us if you have any queries about this.



Contact the Membership Team on 0117 342 3764 if you would like to come to any meetings or events to meet the governors or to come in and talk to us about the role



Request a Nomination Form. You can do this through the Membership team by calling us on 0117 342 3764 or emailing us at FoundationTrust@UHBristol.nhs.uk. Forms are available from **7 March 2019**.



Complete the nomination form together with a photo and statement and return it to Electoral Reform Services **before noon on 4 April 2019**. You can complete and return the form electronically or by post.



If the seat is contested, voting will take place 30 April - 24 May 2019. You will then be notified whether or not you have been elected to the Council of Governors. If you have been successful, your term of office will begin on 1 June and your first seminar will take place on 13 June 2019.

At any time check the Elections page on our website for the most up-to-date election news:
www.uhbristol.nhs.uk/elections

14. Useful links

University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust: There is a wealth of information about the Trust, its services, and its current Board of Directors and Council of Governors on our website: <http://www.uhbristol.nhs.uk/>

Governor Role at University Hospitals Bristol: For up-to-date information about our elections, please see our governor election webpages: www.uhbristol.nhs.uk/elections

National Guidance on Foundation Trusts and the Governor Role: There are two publications that you might find interesting if you would like to read about Foundation Trusts and the governor role in more depth:

- **‘So you are thinking about becoming a governor?’** - Advice from NHS Providers (the membership organisation and trade association for NHS Trusts and Foundation Trusts): <https://www.nhsproviders.org/programmes/governwell/information-and-guidance/so-youre-thinking-about-becoming-a-governor>
- **‘Your Statutory Duties’** – In-depth guidance on governor duties published by NHS Improvement (the regulatory body for NHS Trusts and Foundation Trusts): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nhs-foundation-trust-governors-your-legal-obligations>

15. Contact information

Please contact Kate Hanlon or Sarah Murch from the Membership Team at any time with any further queries you might have. You can call us on 0117 342 3764, email us at FoundationTrust@UHBristol.nhs.uk or write to us at: Membership Team, University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust, Trust Headquarters, Marlborough Street, Bristol, BS1 3NU.

We look forward to hearing from you!



“I am really proud of the NHS and what we do at this hospital so I wanted to take the chance to help ensure we continue to deliver the best care. I have been amazed at how much the Trust Board listens to and values the opinion of the Governors and it has given me a deeper understanding of how the NHS works.”

Andy Coles-Driver, Staff Governor (Other Clinical Healthcare Professionals)