

# Report to the Meeting of the Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust

**CoG 03/2021**

(Agenda item: 11)

# Council of Governors

**25 March 2021**

**Governor Election Plan**

**For: Information and assurance**

1. **Introduction**

In preparation for the forthcoming Governor Elections across the trust a Communications and Engagement plan has been prepared by the trust’s Communications and Engagement Team in order to support and promote the trust’s Governor Election process for 2021. This is currently being implemented to raise awareness of the elections and to encourage the public, patients, carers, and staff to become a member of the trust, and for members to vote and stand for election.

1. **Election Administration**

Civica Electoral Services is responsible for the administration of the elections, with support from Membership Engagement Services. The provider was chosen after competitive quotes from three potential providers. Civica is setting up an election website with the functionality for on-line nominations and voting. Candidates can also request a hard copy or easy read version of the nomination form.

Nomination data has been collated by Civica who will send nomination emails/letters to trust members across constituencies when the nomination period opens on 25 March. Nominations will close on 13 April, and a summary of valid nominated candidates will be published and put on the website platform the following day. 13 April is also the cut-off date for new members to take part in the election. The final date for governor candidate withdrawal is 16 April. Election data will be collated by ERS on 20 April. A notice of the poll will be published on the website platform on 30 April and voting packs will be dispatched on 4 May. All public and patient members will receive a hard copy ballot pack; staff members will receive an email.

The election closes on 24 May, with the **declaration of results on 25 May 2021**.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Election stage** | **Date** |
| Trust to send nomination material and data to CES  | Thursday, 11 Mar |
| Notice of Election / nomination open  | Thursday, 25 Mar |
| Nominations deadline  | Tuesday, 13 Apr  |
| Summary of valid nominated candidates published  | Wednesday, 14 Apr  |
| Final date for candidate withdrawal  | Friday, 16 Apr  |
| Electoral data to be provided by Trust  | Tuesday, 20 Apr  |
| Notice of Poll published  | Friday, 30 Apr  |
| Voting packs despatched  | Tuesday, 4 May  |
| Close of election  | Monday, 24 May  |
| Declaration of results  | **Tuesday, 25 May 2021**  |

1. **Election profile**

The vacancies are in the following Governor constituencies. Overall, the trust is increasing service user representation in the Council.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Constituency | Class | Vacancies |
| Public | BuckinghamshireOxfordshireRest of England and Wales | 311 |
| Patient | CarersService user OxfordshireService user Buckinghamshire and other counties | 243 |
| Staff | Oxfordshire, BaNES, Swindon and Wiltshire Mental Health ServicesBuckinghamshire Mental Health ServicesCorporate ServicesSpecialised services | 1111 |
| Total |  | 18 |

1. **Promotional activities**

**Press**

Press releases will be sent to local media in Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Swindon, Wiltshire and BaNES on the elections and on details of aspirant Governor events.

Willing governors and the Director of Corporate Affairs/Company Secretary will be proactively offered for media interviews about the value of shaping local services and the value of the NHS in order to promote participation.

Governor events will be also advertised in Daily Info and Oxford Mail events listings.

**Digital Collateral**

Leaflets highlighting the governor elections and signposting to the website have been created for distribution. The messaging has been tailored to carers, public and service users in different regions and partners such as Oxfordshire Mental Health Partnership, Barnados, Buckinghamshire Mind and others. The leaflets have been distributed to governors and contacts in the Trust’s patient and carer experience function and in partner organisations. Leaflets are digital this year in keeping with current infection control measures due to covid.

**Collateral distributed by Civica**

When nominations open, all Public and Patient members will receive a Notice of Election by post from Civica. Staff members will receive the notice by email. Notice of Election gives details of the election website where candidates can nominate themselves. Members have also an option to request a hard copy or easy read version of the nomination form.

When polls open, all Public and Patient members will receive a ballot pack by post, and have the option to vote online or by post. We have an option to offer phone voting, too -this can be decided at a later stage in April.

**Online/social media**

A social media campaign using Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram has been launched to draw attention to the elections, membership and the role of governors.

From January 2021 we have been running a paid advertising campaign on Facebook inviting people to become members, appealing to people’s goodwill to support their local NHS in these unprecedented times.

All content signposts to the trust website with information about how to apply.

The elections are a featured news item on the Oxford Health FT website and internal intranet.

We have also featured a series of interviews with our current governors talking about their experience of the role. Thank you to Hannah-Louise Toomey, Hasanen Al-Taiar, Angela Conlan and Ben Glass who have taken part (by the time of writing.)

Dedicated, targeted one-subject emails have been sent to all foundation trust members.

All Oxford Health staff have additionally been notified via the trust’s weekly staff email update.

The elections have also been promoted within the monthly Membership Matters e-bulletin.

**Stakeholders**

Information about the election and how to become a member and governor has been shared with key trust stakeholders in order for them to share with their service-users, patients, members and staff. This includes statutory and system partners and third sector organisations including Oxfordshire Mental Health Partnership, My Life My Choice, Barnardo’s, Bucks Mind, Youth in Mind and local authorities.

**Engagement events**

We are proposing two governor events where people interested in the role can hear from Director of Corporate Affairs/Company Secretary Kerry Rogers and current governors.

Governor events will be held online on Microsoft Teams with dates to be confirmed.

The communications and engagement strategy will be flexible and responsive in order to meet the needs of the campaign and ensure that it targets the public, patients, carers, and staff across all constituencies so that a range of quality candidates are put forward to fill the current vacancies.

1. **Accessibility for people who use our Learning Disabilities services**

The Membership Team has been working for two years now with the trust’s learning disabilities co-production group, which includes five people with learning disability – experts by experience – and one member of staff, to develop ways to make membership and governorship more accessible and meaningful for people with a learning disability. Members of the group have attended Council of Governors’ meetings as well as the Annual Members’ Meeting and given written feedback to the trust chairman and CEO.

Council of Governors’ meeting agendas and key papers are produced in easy read.

An Easy Read membership application form, nomination form and membership information leaflet have been developed by the Membership Team.

1. **Potential candidates to date**

Although nominations are yet to open, we have 15 people already interested in the role (as of March 16.)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Constituency and Class** | **No of Seats up for election in May 2021** | **Potential candidates as of 16/3** |
| Patient: Service Users Buckinghamshire and other counties | 3 | 1 |
| Patient: Service Users Carers | 2 | 1 |
| Patient: Service Users Oxfordshire | 4 | 4 |
| Public: Buckinghamshire | 3 | 2 |
| Public: Oxfordshire | 1 | 2 |
| Public: Rest of England & Wales | 1 | 2 |
| Staff: Buckinghamshire Mental Health Services | 1 | 0 |
| Staff: Corporate Services | 1 | 0 |
| Staff: Oxfordshire, Banes, Swindon & Wiltshire Mental Health Services | 1 | 3 |
| Staff: Specialised Services | 1 | 1 |
|  | **18** | **16** |

**Recommendation**

The Council of Governors is invited to note the extensive effort that is taking place in order to promote the role of governor and to deliver contested elections. Each governor is invited to support the trust in promoting the election and the role of governor, and the membership team would welcome offers from governors to share their experience of being a governor in election communications.

**Author and Title:**

Katariina Valkeinen, Senior Communications and Engagement Officer

**Lead Executive Director:**

Kerry Rogers, Director of Corporate Affairs & Company Secretary