NHS Providers

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

About us

1 What is NHS Providers and what does it do for governors?
NHS Providers is the membership organisation and trade association for NHS acute, ambulance, community and mental health services that treat patients and service users in the NHS. Since 2007 it has been training foundation trust governors to equip them with the knowledge and skills to fulfil their statutory duties. It runs the national training programme known as GovernWell, provides networking events and an annual conference as well quarterly e-newsletter and information and guidance for governors. More information about our products and services can be found on our website www.nhsproviders/governwell.

2 What is the Governor Advisory Committee?
This is an elected committee made up of eight governors and two foundation trust chairs that oversees the governor support programme at NHS Providers.

3 What does the Governor Advisory Committee do?
The committee meets quarterly and provides guidance and advice to oversee the work of NHS Providers in support of councils of governors. It puts us in touch with the topical issues that governors in their trusts are working on and provides us with various good practice case studies which we can pass on to other governors.

4 Why do you need an advisory committee?
One of NHS Providers' ways of working is that it strives to be evidenced based. Insights and advice from GAC members, that are representatives of different types of foundation trusts and different sub types of governor across the country, help NHS Providers ensure that the governor support programme understands governor's needs and develops high quality resources. It has been very useful to triangulate information from GAC with governor feedback from our GovernWell training courses, regional workshops, national conference and governor survey feedback.

5 What is the commitment?
Governor Advisory Committee members meet four times a year as a minimum. Some members have also helped out with writing e-newsletter articles, reviewing new guidance documents, co-chairing regional workshops (of which we run four a year) and attending our annual conference. The latter are helpful ways of GAC members getting out and about and talking to fellow governors. All travel expenses for these events are covered by us.

6 Where are GAC meetings held and how long is the duration?
Governor Advisory Committee meetings are typically held in London (as current members have said London is the most accessible location for all parties) but we have held them elsewhere in the past. We normally start late morning around 11am to avoid anyone having to stay overnight and the meetings last 3 hours with lunch provided in between.

7 What does the role involve?

Meetings are overseen by a Chair that has been voted in by the committee, and a deputy chair takes on the chairs role when the incumbent chair is not available. Some members of the committee also help out in sub-groups or with campaigns e.g. raising awareness of the governor role during Volunteers Week. GAC members identify areas of concern that facilitate debate and action, such as new articles for our e-newsletter, presentations at regional workshops/conferences as well as commenting on our own governor survey results. Members also provide feedback on our resources e.g. website, draft guidance documents so we can continuously improve our offer. Member updates are useful to understand what is happening in practice, such as mergers, hospital re-developments; the processes and systems trusts are required to go through such as links with the regulators in service redesign; improvements to internal processes being made such as simplifying the process for governors appraising NEDs; areas of concern such as disappointing staff survey results, A&E pressures; areas of varying practice to debate such as governors observing audit committees; and issues in the news.

The election process as a whole

8 Why is the election happening now?

The term of office for governor members is three years. Our first committee was elected in April 2015 and so their terms of office end in April 2018.

9 Who are you communicating with?

We have notified chairs, trust secretaries and governors via a variety of communication channels including direct emails, articles in our newsletters and other publications, information sessions at network meetings and events.

10 Please explain the overall election time frame.

ELECTION STAGE	Date
Nominations open	11 December 2017
Nominations deadline	12 January 2018 (noon)
Voting opens	26 January 2018
Close of election	30 March 2018
Declaration of results	4 April 2018

11 Who is managing the election?

NHS Providers has contracted Electoral Reform Services to manage the election for us. ERS will be known to many of you as the organisation which manages your trust governor elections. We have chosen to inform trusts early about the election process so that they have time to discuss it fully with their Councils of Governors before deciding on a nomination. Just like in your trust we have our own election rules. These have been agreed with the GAC and our board and are available on our website here.

12 Where can I go if I have questions not covered here?

ERS is managing this election and any queries should be directed by your trust secretary to Ciara Norris from 4 December 2018 at Ciara.Norris@electoralreform.co.uk, telephone 020 8829 8456.

Nominations

13 When will nominations be announced?
A call for nominations to this Committee will commence on 11 December 2017 and close at noon on 12 January 2018. This notification will be sent to your trust secretary who will have a discussion with your council of governors about it.

14 How do I apply?
Trust secretaries will be emailed a link to the online nomination form which they will need to complete.

15 Why have you chosen eight categories for nomination?
Like with your own council of governors, we are keen to achieve a committee that is representative of the different types of providers and governor sub-types across England.

16 Why are you not selecting from geographical areas?
We want to elect representatives from the four main NHS sectors and four types of governors to represent the broad views of councils of governors across our membership. The remit of the GAC members regardless of their background is to represent the broad interests of all governors.

17 Who is the electorate?
The electorate consists of 153 councils of governors of each foundation trust that is an NHS Providers member.

18 What process was in place to verify the electoral roles accuracy?
In July, we asked all Chairs and trust secretaries to inform us if any of their contact details had changed, or were due to change.

19 Can current members of the GAC stand again?
Yes, they can.

20 I think I might have a conflict of interest, does this matter?
If you are elected, you will be asked to declare any conflicts of interest in line with our organisations conflict of interest policy. If you think this might be the case, your trust secretary is welcome to speak to our governor support team about it.

21 Is canvasing allowed?
There are no restrictions on this. However we do not have a budget for this. Please discuss with your trust secretary.

22 What information needs to go on the nomination form?
The trust and nominated governor's name, governor type then provide information about their background, skills, experience and a statement about their suitability for the GAC. The nomination form will be submitted online by your trust secretary. You can access the form here.

23 Will you confirm receipt of a nomination form by each foundation trust?
ERS will confirm via email that the nomination form has been received. If you don't receive an email within 24 hours of submitting your nomination please contact at Ciara.Norris@electoralreform.co.uk, telephone 020 8829 8456.

Voting

24 When will voting papers be issued?
Voting papers will be issued via email on 26th January 2018 via your trust secretary.

25 What is electronic voting?
Electronic voting is a term used to describe the act of voting using electronic systems to cast and count votes. Many of you will now have experienced this type of election, not least in some trust governor elections.

26 Why have you chosen this method?
The process is efficient, accessible, auditable, transparent and secure. Electronic nomination forms and voting also helps reduce the risk of human error.

27 What are you doing to ensure a good turnout?
We have notified Chairs, trust secretaries, membership managers and governors from July 2017 onwards and will send regular reminders.

28 Is there any guidance for governors when reviewing the candidate statements?
We advise that governors look to the purpose of the committee outlined in the terms of reference, which can be found here.

29 What is the single transferable vote method?
The single transferable vote (STV) is a voting system designed to achieve proportional representation through ranked voting. Under STV, an elector (voter) has a single vote that is initially allocated to their most preferred candidate and, as the count proceeds and candidates are either elected or eliminated, is transferred to other candidates according to the voter's stated preferences, in proportion to any surplus or discarded votes. It is the method used in local authority elections. More details here.

30 What security do you have in place?
ERS will require a single contact from each trust to send a unique voting code and instructions. This is the trust secretary and details were taken from a recently updated list from NHS Providers customer relationship management database.

31 If each foundation trust can nominate one governor to stand for election to one of eight governor positions, won't they just vote for their own candidate?
This is the benefit of STV. Trusts have more options because a Trust can put their candidate as the number one option. They can put further preferences for other governors. These later preferences won't in any way harm the chances of their own governor.

Election results

32 When will the election close?
The election will close at noon on Friday 30 March 2018.

33 When will results be published?
Election results will be published on our website on 4th April 2018.

34 Please explain the order of succession.
The order in which people may become members of the GAC if the current governor or chair in post leaves or circumstances change.

35 What happens if I am not successful but would like to support NHS Providers?
The governor support team welcomes governors that would like to help raise awareness of the role in the form of case studies, support with campaigns such as Volunteers Week, help review new materials and resources. Please contact us on governors@nhsproviders.org.