



June 2020

## Governor news

Welcome to the second edition of our newsletter in 2020 but the first since lockdown at the end of March.

This edition is inevitably influenced by the COVID-19 outbreak commencing with a user-friendly summary of the key issues faced by trusts, and the response from NHS Providers on behalf of its members. There is also a blog from East London NHS Foundation Trust which has been exemplary in the support of governors as its council has continued to conduct important business at this unique time. We are also delighted to include a profile and reflections from one of the most experienced governors in the NHS as she steps down after 12 years across two different trusts.

The governor support team at NHS Providers have also been adapting what we do for governors during this period. We have responded to more queries than ever before on the postponement of governor elections and communication between the board and governors. Our annual governor conference has been postponed to a later date and, in the absence of face to face events, we are pleased to announce four virtual governor workshops. All of these dates are included in the newsletter.

We are starting virtual bespoke training sessions for governors during the summer and will offer our open courses as virtual events in the autumn if we do not feel it is safe to return to face to face training at that time.

Finally, we hope that you find Governor Focus helpful and informative but welcome any feedback on its content to [governors@nhsproviders.org](mailto:governors@nhsproviders.org)

Included in this edition:

- A summary for governors on how NHS Providers has responded to COVID-19 to support its members;
- A blog from a trust corporate governance manager on supporting governors during this unique period;

- A briefing on the increasing trend of chairs who chair more than one board;
- An article on the process for chair and non-executive director appointments;
- An opportunity to attend our new virtual governor workshops;
- A governor profile of one of the most experienced governors in the NHS;
- A new date for the 2020 Governor Focus conference; and
- An update on our GovernWell training programme.

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## Governor policy

### [COVID-19: NHS Providers response](#)

The period since late March has been one of unprecedented challenge across the health and care sector. Patrick Garratt, Policy Officer, [describes how NHS Providers has responded to the COVID-19 crisis to support its members](#). This includes an overview for governors of the key issues faced by trusts and the resources available on our website to support them.

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### [Supporting governors during the COVID-19 period](#)

Norbert Lieckfeldt, Corporate Governance Manager at East London NHS Foundation Trust describes in [his blog](#) how the council of governors has continued to conduct important business during this unique period, including the appointment of a chair, and how they have tackled the challenges faced.

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### [Chairing more than one trust board](#)

Many governors will work in trusts which have a chair who chairs more than one board and some trusts will be considering this in the future. [This briefing](#) looks at the potential benefits and risks of more than one trust sharing a chair and includes reflections from chairs who have taken on a dual role.

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### [Chair and non-executive appointments](#)

We are often asked to advise on the composition of nominations committees and interview panels for chair and non-executive appointments. This query arose again during the COVID-19 period so John Coutts, Governance Advisor, provides a response in [this article](#).

## Governor impact and information

### Regional workshops

Two regional workshops for governors have been cancelled during the COVID-19 period – a meeting of the South West Governor Exchange Network (SWGEM) on 24 March in Taunton aimed at governors from trusts in the South West, and one of our workshops on 14 May in Crawley for governors from trusts in the South East.

Since we are unable to hold face to face workshops in the current climate, we organised two pilot virtual workshops in early June using the Zoom platform. These included a policy update focussed on the current issues for trusts, topical issues for governors during the COVID-19 period and an opportunity for governors to ask questions and share experience with colleagues. The overall evaluation of the events was positive and we now plan to offer these virtual workshops to all governors on the following dates –

**Monday 13th July 12-1.45pm**  
**Tuesday 14th July 9.30-11.15am**  
**Wednesday 29th July 1.30-3.15pm**  
**Thursday 30th July 11am-12.45pm**

An email has been sent to all trusts inviting them to book governors onto one of these workshops. If you would like to attend please contact your company secretary or the designated member of staff who supports governors.

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### Governor profile

Jenny Cobley steps down at the end of this year as Lead Governor at South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust after 12 years as a governor across two trusts in different care sectors. Jenny is one of the most experienced governors in the NHS and provides some interesting reflections in [a blog](#) for Governor Focus.

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### Governor focus conference 2020

As you may be aware, we were due to hold our Governor Focus conference in London next month, but as the current circumstances mean we are unable to come together at this time, we have postponed the event until **Tuesday 3rd November 2020**. We very much hope and plan to be in a situation where we can welcome governors from across the country to hear from health leaders and to share their own experiences. Please speak to your trust if you would like to attend, all foundation trusts will receive two free governor places (please note, those booked for the original date have been contacted and transferred to the new date and don't need to book again).

The conference will be hosted by NHS Providers' chair, Ron Kerr, and will include our national policy update, informing you of the policy issues being faced by your organisations, along with presentations from senior leaders in the provider sector. Keep an eye on our [website](#) for programme updates.

We will continue to monitor guidance with regards to COVID-19, to understand any risks and/or restrictions affecting this event and will act accordingly.

Additionally, we are still going ahead with our Governor showcase exhibition in 2020, which showcases the exciting work and best practice of up to ten trusts. We are keen to hear from trusts about the work and impact of governors in the NHS and any creative ideas that will promote, inspire and acknowledge their role.

Applications are now open, simply fill in an [application form](#) and ask a company secretary or membership manager to return this to our [governor support team](#) by 18 August 2020. Full details about the showcase and how to apply can be found on [our website](#).

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### **[LinkedIn group](#)**

We have established a new LinkedIn group for membership managers and governor support staff (please note, this is not accessible by governors themselves). This will provide an opportunity for networking, sharing practice and checking queries with colleagues. Please ensure that the relevant staff in your trust are aware of this and can join via [this link](#).

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### **Care Quality Commission**

The Care Quality Commission produce a monthly bulletin including updates on their reports, opportunities to engage with them and news about health and social care. Follow [this link](#) to register for the bulletin.

If you have not seen the CQC Guide for Councils of Governors published last year that is also available [here](#).

## **GovernWell training**

GovernWell, the national training programme for foundation trust governors, equips governors with the knowledge and skills they need to perform their role effectively. [The full calendar of course dates for 2020-21](#) has been finalised. Please see below for our events which are open for booking and you can [register your interest](#) for later dates in 2020/21.

We are continuing to monitor the government guidelines around the COVID-19 outbreak to ensure the safety of our delegates and speakers. We are confident that our upcoming events will go ahead, either face to face with the appropriate safety guidelines, or on a virtual platform if more appropriate.

Accountability and holding to account  
[20 October, London](#)

Effective questioning and challenge  
[18 November, Manchester](#)

Member and public engagement  
[23 September, London](#)

Effective chairing for governors  
[10 November, London](#)

Core skills  
[26 November, Birmingham](#)  
[1 December, London](#)

NHS Finance and business skills  
[30 September, Birmingham](#)  
[5 November, London](#)

Recruitment: the governor role in non-executive appointments  
[29 October, London](#)

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## **In-house training**

GovernWell training modules can be delivered exclusively for your council of governors, or a group of councils, with [in-house training](#). Benefits include tailored content to meet your requirements, developing consistency across your council and relationship building. For further information, please contact [Laura Ward](#).



To find out more visit our website, call 020 7304 6977 or email our [governor support team](#).



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