

Jargon Buster

The following document explains some acronyms and terms which governors may come across in their role. They have been sourced from our GovernWell training and council of governors' papers. If you would like to suggest any others to include, please contact governors@nhsproviders.org.

A		
A&E	Accident & Emergency	hospital department specialising in the acute care of patients who arrive without a prior appointment with urgent or emergency trauma
AACE	Association of Ambulance Chief Executives	provide ambulance services with an organisation that can support, coordinate and implement nationally agreed policy
AGC	Audit & Governance Committee	a committee of the board – helps the board assure itself on issues of finance, governance and probity
AGM	Annual General Meeting	a meeting to present and agree the trust annual report and accounts
AGS	Annual Governance Statement	a document which identifies the internal controls in place and their effectiveness in delivering effective governance
AHP	Allied Health Professionals	health care professions distinct from dentistry, optometry, nursing, medicine and pharmacy e.g. physiotherapists, radiographers, speech therapists and podiatrists
AHSC	Academic Health Science Centre	a partnership between a healthcare provider and one or more universities
AHSN	Academic Health Science Network	locally owned and run partnership organisations to lead and support innovation and improvement in healthcare
ALOS	Average Length of Stay	the average amount of time patients stay in hospital

AMM	Annual Members Meeting	a meeting that is held every year to give members the opportunity to hear about what the trust has done in the past year; could be part of the AGM
AO	Accountable Officer	senior person responsible and accountable for funds entrusted to their trust; for NHS provider organisations this person will be the chief executive
ALB(s)	Arms Length Bodies	an organisation that delivers a public service but is not a ministerial government department; these include HEE, HSCIC, HRA, HTA, NHSE, NICE, Monitor, NHSBSA, NHSBT, NHSI, NHSLA, MHPRA, CQC, PHE (See individual entries)
AfC	Agenda for Change	the NHS-wide grading and pay system for NHS staff, with the exception of medical and dental staff and some senior managers; each relevant job role in the NHS is matched to a band on the Agenda for Change pay scale

B

BAF	Board Assurance Framework	the key document used to record and report an organisation's key strategic objectives, risks, controls and assurances to the board
BCF	Better Care Fund	this fund creates a local single pooled budget to incentivise the NHS and local government to work more closely together in local areas
BMA	British Medical Association	trade union and professional body for doctors
BAME	Black Asian Minority Ethnic	terminology normally used in the UK to describe people of non-white descent
BoD	Board of Directors	executive directors and non-executive directors who have collective responsibility for leading and directing the trust
	Benchmarking	method of gauging performance by comparison with other organisations

C		
CAD	Computer Aided Dispatch	electronic system for dispatching emergency calls
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services	specialise in providing help and treatment for children and young people with emotional, behavioural and mental health difficulties
CapEx	Capital Expenditure	an amount spent to acquire or improve a long-term asset such as equipment or buildings. Typically capital is raised via a loan, but it can come from reserves and is paid back/written off over a number of years from revenue income. This is a contrast with revenue spend which is always from in-year income
CBA	Cost Benefit Analysis	a process for calculating and comparing the costs and benefits of a project
CBT	Cognitive Behavioural Therapy	a form of psychological therapy used mostly in depression but increasingly shown to be a useful part of the treatment for schizophrenia
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group	groups of GPs, clinicians and managers who are responsible for commissioning local health services in England (all GP practices must belong to a CCG)
CDiff	Clostridium difficile	a bacterial infection that most commonly affects people staying in hospital
CE / CEO	Chief Executive Officer	leads the day-to-day management of a foundation trust, is a board member and the accountable officer for the trust.
CF	Cash Flow	the money moving in and out of an organisation
CFR	Community First Responders	a volunteer who is trained by the ambulance service to attend emergency calls in the area where they live or work
CHC	Continuing Healthcare	Whereby those with long-term or complex healthcare needs qualify for social care arranged for and funded by the NHS

CIP	Cost Improvement Plan	an internal business planning tool outlining the trust's efficiency strategy
CMHT	Community Mental Health Team	A team of mental health professionals such as psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, community psychiatric nurses and occupational therapists, who work together to help people manage and recover from mental illness.
CoG	Council of Governors	the governing body that holds the non-executive directors on the board to account for the performance of the board in managing the trust, and represents the interests of members and of the public
COO	Chief Operating Officer	a senior manager who is responsible for managing a trust's day-to-day operations and reports to the CEO
CPD	Continuing Professional Development	continued learning to help professionals maintain their skills, knowledge and professional registration
CPN	Community Psychiatric Nurse	a registered nurse with specialist training in mental health working outside a hospital in the community
CQC	Care Quality Commission	The independent regulator of all health and social care services in England
CQUIN	Commissioning for Quality and Innovation	a sum of money that is given to providers by commissioners on the achievement of locally and nationally agreed quality and improvement goals
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility	A business practice which incorporates sustainable goals, usually positive impacts on environmental, economic and social factors, into a business model
CT	Computed Tomography	A medical imaging technique
	Caldicott Guardian	A board level executive director responsible for protecting the confidentiality of patient and service-user information and enabling appropriate information-sharing. Each NHS organisation is required to have a Caldicott Guardian

D		
DBS	Disclosure and barring service	conducts criminal record and background checks for employers
DBT	Dialectical behavioural therapy	A type of psycho-therapy, or talk therapy, which has been developed from CBT to help those experiencing borderline personality disorder
DGH	District General Hospital	major secondary care facility which provides an array of treatment, diagnostic and therapeutic services, including A&E
DHSC	Department of Health and Social Care	the ministerial department which leads, shapes and funds health and care in England
DN	Director of Nursing	The executive director who has professional responsibility for services provided by nursing personnel in a trust
DNA	Did Not Attend	a patient who missed an appointment
DNAR	Do Not Attempt Resuscitation	A form issued and signed by a doctor, which tells a medical team not to attempt CPR
DoF	Director of Finance	see FD
DPA	Data Protection Act	the law controlling how personal data is collected and used
DPH	Director of Public Health	a senior leadership role responsible for the oversight and care of matters relating to public health
DTOCs	Delayed Transfers of Care	this refers to patients who are medically fit but waiting for care arrangements to be put in place so therefore cannot be discharged
DoC	Duty of Candour	a legal duty on hospital, community, ambulance and mental health trusts to inform and apologise to patients if there have been mistakes in their care that have led to significant harm

E		
E&D	Equality and Diversity	The current term used for 'equal opportunities' whereby members of the workforce should not be discriminated against because of their characteristics. This is promoted by valuing diverse characteristics in a workplace.
ED(s)	Executive Directors <i>or</i> Emergency Department	senior management employees who sit on the trust board <i>or</i> alternative name for Accident & Emergency department
EHR	Electronic Health Record	health information about a patient collected in digital format which can theoretically be shared across different healthcare settings
EOLC	End of Life Care	support for patients reaching the end of their life
EPR	Electronic Patient Record	a collation of patient data stored using computer software
ESR	Electronic staff record	A collation of personal data about staff stored using computer software

F		
FD	Finance Director	the executive director leading on finance issues in the trust
FFT	Friends and Family Test	a single question survey which asks patients whether they would recommend the NHS service they have received to friends and family who need similar treatment or care
FOI	Freedom of Information	the right to ask any public sector organisation for the recorded information they have on any subject

FT	Foundation Trust	a public benefit corporation, which is a legal body established to deliver healthcare to patients / service users and has earned a degree of operational and financial independence
FTE	Full Time Equivalent	a measurement of an employees workload against that of someone employed full time e.g. 0.5 FTE would be someone who worked half the full time hours
FTSU	Freedom to speak up	An initiative developed by NHS Improvement to encourage NHS workers to speak up about any issues to patient care, quality or safety
FR	Francis Report	the final report, published in 2013, of the public inquiry into care provided by Mid Staffordshire NHS FT chaired by Sir Robert Francis QC

G

GMC	General Medical Council	the independent regulator for doctors in the UK
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	the value of a country's overall output of goods and services
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulations	The legal framework which sets the guidelines for collecting and processing personal information

H

HCAI	Healthcare Associated Infection	these are infections that are acquired in hospitals or as a result of healthcare interventions; MRSA and Clostridium difficile can be classed as HCAIs if caught whilst in a healthcare setting
HCA	Health Care Assistant	staff working within a hospital or community setting under the guidance of a qualified healthcare professional

HCP	Health Care Professional	a provider of health care treatment and advice based on formal training and experience
HDU	High Dependency Unit	an area in a hospital, usually located close to the ICU, where patients can be cared for more extensively than on a normal ward, but not to the point of intensive care, e.g. patients who have had major surgery
HEE	Health Education England	the body responsible for the education, training and personal development of NHS staff
HR	Human Resources	the department which focusses on the workforce of an organisation including pay, recruitment and conduct
HRA	Health Research Authority	protects and promotes the interests of patients and the public in health research
HSCA 2012	Health & Social Care Act 2012	an Act of Parliament providing the most extensive reorganisation of the NHS since it was established, including extending the roles and responsibilities of governors
HSCIC	Health and Social Care Information Centre	the national provider of information, data and IT systems for commissioners, analysts and clinicians in health and social care
HSSIB		
HTA	Human Tissue Authority	regulates the removal, storage, use and disposal of human bodies, organs and tissue for a number of scheduled purposes such as research, transplantation, and education and training
HWB / HWBB	Health & Wellbeing Board	a local forum to bring together partners from across the NHS, local government, the third sector and the independent sector, led by local authorities
HW	Health Watch	A body created under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 which aims to understand the needs and experiences of NHS service users and speak on their behalf.



IAPT	Improved Access to Psychological Therapies	an NHS programme rolling out services across England offering interventions approved by the National Institute of Health and Care Excellence for treating people with depression and anxiety disorders
IG	Information Governance	ensures necessary safeguards for, and appropriate use of, patient and personal information. Key areas are information policy for health and social care, IG standards for systems and development of guidance for NHS and partner organisations
ICP	Integrated Care Pathway	a multidisciplinary outline of care, placed in an appropriate timeframe, to help a patient with a specific condition or set of symptoms move progressively through diagnosis and treatment to positive outcomes
ICS	Integrated Care system	Groups of NHS providers, commissioners and local authorities working together to improve health and care in the local area
ICT	Information Communications Technology	an umbrella term that includes any communication device or application, encompassing: radio, television, cellular phones, computer and network hardware and software, satellite systems, as well as the various services and applications associated with them
ICU or ITU	Intensive Care Unit Intensive therapy unit	specialist unit for patients with severe and life threatening illnesses
IP	Inpatient	a patient who is hospitalised for more than 24 hours
IT	Information Technology	systems (especially computers and telecommunications) for storing, retrieving, and sending information
IV	Intravenous	treatment which is administered by injection into a vein

K

KLOE(s)	Key Line of Enquiries	detailed questions asked by CQC inspectors which help to answer the five key questions to assess services: are they safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led?
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators	indicators that help an organisation define and measure progress towards a goal
KF	King's Fund	independent charity working to improve health and health care in England

L

LD	Learning Disability	a disability which affects the way a person understands information and how they communicate
LGA	Local Government Association	the national voice of local government in England and Wales. It seeks to promote better local government and maintains communication between officers in different local authorities to develop best practice
LOS	Length of Stay	a term commonly used to measure the duration of a single episode of hospitalisation

M

M&A	Mergers & Acquisitions	mergers bring together two or more bodies to form a new legal entity and disband the merging bodies. acquisitions are take-overs of one body by another
MD	Medical Director	a member of the board who has a clinical background and has professional responsibilities for doctors and dentists in the trust
MHPRA	Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency	an executive agency of DHSC which is responsible for ensuring that medicines and medical devices work and are acceptably safe

MIU	Minor Injuries Unit	A unit which treats injuries or health conditions which are less serious and do not require the A&E service
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding	describes an agreement between two or more parties
MRI	Magnetic Resonance Imaging	a medical imaging technique
MRSA	Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus	a bacterium responsible for several difficult-to-treat infections in humans
MSA	Mixed Sex Accommodation	wards with beds for both male and female patients

N

NAO	National Audit Office	an independent Parliamentary body in the United Kingdom which is responsible for auditing central government departments, government agencies and non-departmental public bodies. The NAO also carries out Value for Money audits into the administration of public policy
NED	Non Executive Director	directors who are appointed, but not employed by the trust; they have no executive responsibilities and are responsible for vetting strategy, providing challenge in the board room and holding the executive directors to account
NHS	National Health Service	publicly funded healthcare system of the UK
NHS111	NHS non-emergency number	free-to-call single non-emergency number medical helpline operating in England and Scotland
NHSBSA	NHS Business Services Authority	a Special Health Authority of DHSC which provides a range of services to NHS organisations including: NHS Prescription Services, NHS Pensions, Help With Health Costs, Student Services, NHS Dental Services, European Health Insurance Card, Supplier

		Management (including NHS Supply Chain) and NHS Protect
NHSBT	NHS Blood and Transplant	a Special Health Authority of DHSC responsible for providing a reliable, efficient supply of blood, organs and associated services to the NHS
NHSE	NHS England	an executive non-departmental public body with a mandate from the Secretary of State to improve health outcomes for people within England
NHSI	NHS Improvement	The Independent regulator of NHS Foundation Trusts
NHSLA	NHS Leadership Academy	national body supporting leadership development in health and NHS funded services
NHSP	NHS Professionals	provides bank (locum) healthcare staff to NHS organisations
NHSX		A unit designed to drive the transformation of digital technology in the NHS
NICE	National Institute for Health and Care Excellence	provides national evidence-based guidance and advice to improve health and social care
NIHR	National Institution for Health Research	The largest funder of health and social care research in the UK, primarily funded by the Department of Health and Social Care
NMC	Nursing and Midwifery Council	nursing and midwifery regulator for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland
	Never Event	serious, largely preventable patient safety incidents that should not occur if the available preventative measures have been implemented. NHS England defines the list of never events every year
	NHS Digital	The information and technology partner to the NHS which aims to introduce new technology into services
NHSP	NHS Providers	NHS Providers is the membership organisation for NHS public provider trusts. We represent every variety of trust, from large acute and specialist hospitals through to community, ambulance and mental health

		trusts. Our members provide the full range of NHS services in hospitals, the community and at home.
	Nolan Principles	key principles of how individuals and organisations in the public sector should conduct themselves comprising of: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, leadership. Set by the Committee for Standards in Public Life, an independent advisory non-departmental public body set up to advise the prime minister on ethical standards
	NHS Resolution	not-for-profit part of the NHS which manages negligence and other claims against the NHS in England on behalf of their member organisations. also an insurer for NHS bodies
	Nuffield Trust	independent source of evidence-based research and policy analysis for improving health care in the UK, also a charity

O		
OD	Organisational Development <i>or</i> Outpatients Department	a systematic approach to improving organisational effectiveness <i>or</i> a hospital department where healthcare professionals see outpatients (patients which do not occupy a bed)
OOH	Out of Hours	services which operate outside of normal working hours
OP	Outpatients	a patient who is not hospitalized for 24 hours or more but who visits a hospital, clinic, or associated facility for diagnosis or treatment
OPMH	Older People's Mental Health	mental health services for people over 65 years of age
OSCs	Overview and Scrutiny Committees	established in local authorities by the Local Government Act 2000 to review and scrutinise the

		performance of public services including health services
OT	Occupational Therapy	assessment and treatment of physical and psychiatric conditions using specific activity to prevent disability and promote independent function in all aspects of daily life

P		
PALS	Patient Advice & Liaison Service	offers confidential advice, support and information on health-related matters to patients, their families, and their carers within trusts
PAS	Patient Administration System	the automation of administrative paperwork in healthcare organisations, particularly hospitals. It records the patient's demographics (e.g. name, home address, date of birth) and details all patient contact with the hospital, both outpatient and inpatient
PbR	Payment by Results or 'tariff'	a way of paying for health services that gives a unit price to a procedure
PCN	Primary care network	A key part of the NHS long term plan, whereby general practices are brought together to work at scale
PDSA	Plan, do, study, act	A model of improvement which develops, tests and implements changes based on the scientific method
PFI	Private Finance Initiative	a scheme where private finance is sought to supply public sector services over a period of up to 60 years
PHE	Public Health England	a body with the mission to protect and improve the nation's health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities
PHSO	Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman	an organisation which investigates complaints that individuals have been treated unfairly or have received poor service from government departments and other public organisations and the NHS in England

PICU	Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit <i>or</i> Paediatric Intensive Care Unit	a type of psychiatric in-patient ward with higher staff to patient ratios than on a normal acute admission ward <i>or</i> an inpatient unit specialising in the care of critically ill infants, children, and teenagers
PLACE	Patient-Led Assessments of the Care Environment	Surveys inviting local people going into hospitals as part of a team to assess how the environment supports patient's privacy and dignity, food, cleanliness and general building maintenance
PPI	Patient and Public Involvement	mechanisms that ensure that members of the community – whether they are service users, patients or those who live nearby – are at the centre of the delivery of health and social care services
PTS	Patient Transport Services	free transport to and from hospital for non-emergency patients who have a medical need
PC	Primary Care	the first point of contact with the NHS for most people and is delivered by a wide range of independent contractors, including GPs, dentists, pharmacists and optometrists, it also includes NHS walk-in centres and the NHS 111 telephone service

Q

QA	Quality assurance	monitoring and checking outputs to make sure they meet certain standards
QI	Quality improvement	A continuous improvement process focusing on processes and systems
QIA	Quality Impact Assessment	A process within NHS trusts which ensures the quality of service is systematically considered in decision-making on service changes

QUI	Qualities and Outcomes Framework	The system for performance management and payment of GP's in the NHS
OAA	Out of Area Placements	occurs when a person with acute mental health needs who requires inpatient care is admitted to a unit that does not form part of the usual local network of services

R		
R&D	Research & Development	work directed towards the innovation, introduction, and improvement of products and processes
RAG	Red, Amber, Green classifications	a system of performance measurement indicating whether something is on or better than target (green), below target but within an acceptable tolerance level (amber), or below target and below an acceptable tolerance level (red)
RCN	Royal College of Nursing	a registered trade union in the United Kingdom for those in the profession of nursing
RGN	Registered General Nurse	a nurse who is fully qualified and is registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Council as fit to practise
Rol	Return on Investment	the benefit to the investor resulting from an investment of some resource. A high Rol means the investment gains compare favourably to investment cost. As a performance measure, Rol is used to evaluate the efficiency of an investment or to compare the efficiency of a number of different investments.
RRV	Rapid response vehicle	vehicles used to reach a patient as soon as possible
RTT	Referral to Treatment Time	the waiting time between a patient being referred by a GP and receiving treatment

S

SALT	Speech and Language Therapist	assesses and treats speech, language and communication problems in people of all ages to help them better communicate
SFI	Standing Financial Instructions	Policy used for the regulation of the conduct of an NHS trust in relation to all financial matters
SHMI	Summary Hospital Level Mortality Indicator	reports mortality at trust level across the NHS in England using standard and transparent methodology
SID	Senior independent Director	a non-executive director who sits on the board and plays a key role in supporting the chair; the SID carries out the annual appraisal of the chair, and is available to governors as a source of advice and guidance in circumstances where it would not be appropriate to involve the chair
SIRO	Senior Information Risk Officer	a senior manager who will take overall ownership of the organisation's information risk policy
SITREP	Situation Report	a report compiled to describe the detail surrounding a situation, event, or incident
SLA	Service Level Agreement	an agreement of services between service providers and users or commissioners
SoS	Secretary of State	the minister who is accountable to Parliament for delivery of health policy within England, and for the performance of the NHS
SRO	Senior Responsible officer	A leadership role which is accountable for the delivery and outcome of a specific project
STP	Sustainability and Transformation Partnership	In 2016 partnerships formed between local councils and NHS services to help plan and run services, and agree system-wide priorities. Replaced by Integrated Care Systems since 2021

SUI	Series Untoward Incident / Serious Incident	A serious incident which resulted in one or more of the following: unexpected or avoidable death, a never event, a prevention of organisation's ability to continue to deliver healthcare services, abuse, or loss of confidence in a service
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats	a structured planning method used to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats involved in a project or in a business venture
SC	Secondary Care	NHS health service provided through hospitals and in the community

T

TTO	To Take Out	medicines to be taken away by patients on discharge
TC	Tertiary Care	healthcare provided in specialist centres, usually on referral from primary or secondary care professionals

V

VTE	Venous Thromboembolism	a condition where a blood clot forms in a vein. This is most common in a leg vein, where it's known as deep vein thrombosis (DVT). A blood clot in the lungs is called pulmonary embolism (PE)
VfM	Value for Money	used to assess whether or not an organisation has obtained the maximum benefit from the goods and services it both acquires and provides, within the resources available to it

W

WLF	Well Led Framework	a set of indicators that seek to identify how well led an organisation is, also used as a framework for board governance reviews
WRES	Workforce Race Equality Standard	a metric to demonstrate progress against a number of indicators of workforce equality, including a specific indicator to address the low levels of black and minority ethnic (BME) board representation
WTE	Whole-time equivalent	See FTE

Y

YTD	Year to Date	a period, starting from the beginning of the current year, and continuing up to the present day. The year usually starts on 1st April for financial performance indicators
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