

**Front sheet: Council of Governors**  
**Item number: 8**  
**Date: 25 February 2025**

<b>Private/ public paper:</b>	Public
<b>Report Title:</b>	Governance report
<b>Author(s) Accountable Director:</b>	Amber Wild, head of corporate assurance Dawn Pearson, associate director of communications and corporate governance
<b>Presented by:</b>	Dawn Pearson, associate director of communications and corporate governance
<b>Vision and values:</b>	The Trust vision is to ensure we work together for service users. Governance reporting supports the <b>commitment to quality</b> , ensuring we <b>work together to improve services</b> and <b>deliver outstanding care</b> .
<b>Purpose and key actions:</b>	This report provides key updates on governance matters for reporting to the Council of Governors
<b>Executive summary:</b>	<p>The report provides an update to the Council of Governors on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The report provides an update on the <b>annual process for receiving declarations</b> of interests, gifts and hospitality in preparation for a final report to the Audit and Risk committee and the Board in May 2025.</li> <li>• An update on the work with <b>Good Governance Institute (GGI)</b> who have been appointed by the Trust to conduct a developmental well-led review, using the CQC quality statements for key lines of enquiry.</li> <li>• An update on the action progress from the <b>annual self-assessment</b> from 2023- 24, and the upcoming process for annual self-assessment for 2024- 25. An update on progress against actions identified in the annual review are attached at appendix 1.</li> <li>• An update on <b>membership and engagement</b>, and the ongoing work with the Trust <b>strategy refresh which includes the Communication and Involvement Strategy</b>.</li> <li>• An update on the <b>South Yorkshire Mental Health Learning Disability and Autism (MHLDA) Provider Collaborative</b> governor session</li> <li>• <b>Governor elections</b> timeline and process for elections being held 2025-26</li> </ul> <p>Appendices included are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appendix 1 - Council of Governors self-assessment summary 2024</li> </ul>

<b>Which strategic objective does the item primarily contribute to:</b>				
Effective Use of Resources	Yes	<b>X</b>	No	

Deliver Outstanding Care	Yes	X	No		
Great Place to Work	Yes	X	No		
Ensuring our services are inclusive	Yes	X	No		
<b>What is the contribution to the delivery of standards, legal obligations and/or wider system and partnership working.</b>					
<p>The Health and Social Care Act 2022 enhances and amends the Health and Social Care Act 2012 Act, setting out the legal framework within which a Foundation Trust operates, which includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constitution (including Standing Orders for practice and procedures of the Board of Directors and the Council of Governors)</li> <li>• The Codes of Conduct.</li> </ul> <p>These documents together provide a regulatory framework for the business conduct of the Foundation Trust</p>					
<b>BAF and corporate risk/s:</b>	None specifically to this report.				
<b>Any background papers/ items previously considered:</b>	This report provides key updates on governance matters for reporting to the Council of Governors and is received at every meeting, with the last report received by in October 2024.				
<b>Recommendation:</b>	The Council of Governors is asked <b>to note</b> the updates provided and to <b>discuss key issues</b> raised.				



**Council of Governors  
Governance report  
25 February 2025**

**1. Purpose of the report**

The purpose of the report is to provide key updates on governance matters for the Council of Governors. The paper sets out:

- The background to the report
- An update on the annual process for receiving declarations of interests, gifts and hospitality
- An update on the work with Good Governance Institute (GGI)
- An update on the action plan progress for the annual self-assessment 2023- 24, and the upcoming process for annual self-assessment for 2024- 25
- An update on membership engagement and the ongoing work with the Trust strategy refresh including the communication and involvement strategy.
- An update on the South Yorkshire Mental Health Learning Disability and Autism (MHLDA) Provider Collaborative governor session
- Governor elections timeline and process for elections being held 2025-26

**2. Background**

The Governance report forms part of the annual work programme and provides a report at every meeting on all governance related matters that have taken place this quarter, as well as updates on key areas of focus. The report also provides assurance that arrangements are in place to support appropriate and timely governance and monitoring arrangements.

**3. Declaration of Interests 2024-2025**

As per our Managing Conflicts of Interest in the NHS policy all governors are responsible for ensuring that they are not placed in a position which risks, or appears to risk, conflict between their private interests and their governor duties.

A conflict of interest can relate to issues which may impact on your role with the Trust for example, if you work for another organisation, undertake private work (private practice) or have a family member who works in an NHS or partnership organisation with which we work. If you are unclear whether you have a conflict, please contact the associate director of communications and corporate governance for advice.

Every year we call in updated declarations of interest from Governors so that the registers can be updated and reported to the Audit and Risk committee, for onward reporting to the Board of Directors. The reporting schedule is such that we must provide updated declarations to the Audit and Risk Committee meeting in May 2025 and will be calling in updated declarations between now and the end of March 2025.

The head of corporate assurance will email all governors with a copy of their previous declarations, with a request to update these and return the forms to support this requirement for onward reporting to Audit and Risk Committee.

**4. Good Governance Institute (GGI) well led review.**

GGI has been appointed by Sheffield Health and Social Care NHS FT to conduct a developmental well-led review, using the CQC quality statements for key lines of enquiry.



The project started in December 2024 and a findings and recommendation report will be finalised by March 2025.

GGI commenced using a desk top review of all relevant governance documentation, including work plans, attendance, terms of reference, corporate risk registers, policy governance as an example. This review was followed by observation of committees, Council of Governors, and the Trust Board. Several one-to-one interviews and focus group discussions took place in parallel, including a Governor focus group which took place on the 27 January 2025. Recommendations will be shared at a future Trust Board.

## **5. Annual Self-assessment**

The Council of Governors undertakes an annual review of effectiveness. The actions were agreed at the meeting April 2024 and an update on progress against actions identified in the annual review of 2023-2024 are attached at **appendix 1**.

Following the meeting, a review of effectiveness form will be circulated to all governors for completion by 21 March 2025. This can be completed either electronically (Microsoft forms) or via email (word document). Printed copied can also be posted, if required.

On receipt of all responses, the Chair and associate director of communications and corporate governance will take away key areas raised for further discussion with the lead governor and an update on proposed actions/reflecting on feedback received will be brought to the Council of Governors meeting in April 2025, as noted on the work programme.

## **6. Trust Strategy engagement**

An extraordinary Council of Governors meeting took place on the 4 December 2024 to provide opportunity for governors to get to know each other, to present items that had been deferred from the October meeting, and to provide an update on the development of the 10-year NHS plan.

Work to **develop a refreshed Trust strategy** has started and the Trust has gained feedback from key stake holders and hosted conversations on the 10-year plan. Feedback from the development session with the Governors held in December 2024 has been fed into the process. In addition, the Trust will also be finalising a **Communication and Involvement Strategy** at the same time. This is a continuation of the work that began on 4 June 2024 with service user and carer governors who were invited to meet with Desire Code to help with communications strategy. The timetable for conversations and for governors to be able to have input and influence both strategies will be:

- An opportunity to discuss at **Governor drop-in sessions with the corporate assurance team between now and the end of March 2025**.
- A **dedicated governor workshop** which will take place on: **Thursday 6 March 1:30-4:30pm**

For those who cannot attend either then **an email with a link to a short survey will be circulated to all governors**. All members will also receive a letter in March asking for feedback. This letter will include a survey link.

Feedback will inform the development.



The Board of directors have participated in the strategy refresh discussions at their private Board sessions in October, November and a further session is planned in February 2025. The refreshed Trust Strategy and draft Communication and Involvement strategy will be received by the Council of Governors in May 2025 prior to Trust Board sign off.

## 7. Membership and engagement

There is a **full Governor development programme** in place which is detailed on the governor calendar. This is regularly shared with governors at each formal meeting, and updates are made in between meetings. Governors are asked to provide feedback on any issues of particular interest they would like to be reflected in the development programme.

A reminder of what has taken place during 2024-25 is provided below:

- A workshop with Philip Gowland, director of corporate governance, Rotherham Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust (RDASH) support understanding on the **governor role** in how best to **effectively question and challenge** in March 2024
- A **Finance workshop** led by Owen McLellan, non-executive director on 20 May 2024
- A workshop on **Statistical Process Control (SPC) Charts** on 2 July 2024
- A workshop on **wellbeing and recruitment** from Mark Dundon, non-executive director and Chair of People committee, Olayinka Fadahunsi-Oluwole, non-executive director and NED wellbeing champion, supported by the executive lead and staff from the People directorate
- **New governor induction** workshop which was open to all Governors and took place on 2 July 2024. This session provided an opportunity for all governors to meet each other and provided information to help with understanding the role and responsibilities of governors.
- **Values into behaviours session** on 24 August 2024 led by the organisational development team
- **Staff governor leadership and organisational development activity** from June to October 2024, including participation in the scope for growth pilot, line management supervision and training development of new material, and wellbeing and engagement operational group.
- Observation of **board sub-committee's meetings**
- Observation of the **public Board of Directors meetings**

**Other engagement opportunities** for the governors have included:

- SHSC Least restrictive practice conference on 30 April 2024
- NHS Providers Governor Focus conference 2024

Wider system engagement has included the **South Yorkshire Mental Health Learning Disability and Autism (MHLDA) Provider Collaborative** governor workshop. This last took place in June 2023 and a collective meeting of our respective Governors is being planned for 2025. Further details will be emailed to Governors when they are available.

Regular **drop-in sessions** take place with the Chair separately for staff, public governors, service user and carer governors. There is also a monthly drop-in session with the associate director of corporate governance (the Trust Secretary) and the head of corporate assurance. This provides an opportunity to support issues raised by governors and to support them in their engagement.

A new **membership database** was put in place during 2023-2024. This provides an opportunity to engage across the whole membership and by area. This tool continues to be



explored to support engagement with constituencies on key topics including through joint working with the Trust's engagement team.

## 8. Governor elections

Planning for the Governor elections for 2025 -2026 is underway. The **timetable for the elections will take place from 28 March until 18 June 2025**, and the outcome will be reported to Governors at its meeting on 19 June when the results have been published.

Comprehensive promotion of the elections will take place during 28 March 2025 and 29 April 2025 when **nominations** are open and this will be supported from SHSC Communications team, the Board of Directors, senior staff within the Trust and partnership organisations. Governors are asked **to promote the elections** within their constituencies and to offer their support to the prospective governor drop-in sessions which will be held again this year, following the success of these sessions previously.

Nomination forms will be sent to all eligible members via the election provider and our membership engagement database (including details of the drop-ins) and the details for applying will also be available on the Trust website *and other Trust social media sites*. Once confirmed, the dates of the prospective governor drop-in sessions will be forwarded to all governors.

The following **governor seats** will be included in the **2025-26 elections**:

- Public NE, one seat
- Public NW, two seats
- Service user, seven seats
- Young service user / Carer, two seats
- Carer, four seats
- Staff, medical and clinical - one seat
- Staff, psychology - one seat
- Staff, clinical support worker - one seat
- Staff, social worker - one seat

New Governors will go through due diligence (completion of the declarations of interest and fit and proper persons test processes and review of detail received) before being formally appointed. Following successful completion of the due diligence process they will be able to join the Council of Governors at the Annual Members Meeting in September, and the next formal Council of Governors meeting in October as well as any other meetings or development events.

## 9. Recommendations

The Council of Governors is asked **to note** the updates provided and to **discuss key** issues raised.

## Appendices

- Appendix 1 Council of Governors self-assessment summary 2024

## Appendix 1

### Council of Governors self-assessment summary 2024

Governors were invited to participate in the review of effectiveness for 2023-2024. Responses were collated and details are provided below. 17 responses were received from 28 Governors serving at that time.

The comments raised are noted below and progress against the agreed actions are noted in blue text.

Governors Review of Effectiveness amalgamated form – 2023-24					
<i>Proposed actions for receipt at Council of Governors April 2024. Progress against the actions has been updated in blue text as of February 2025.</i>					
THEME 1 – PURPOSE AND SCOPE					
<b>1</b>	<b>The council of governors has clearly laid out purpose and scope</b>				
	Strongly agree – 8	Agree 8	Unable to say	Disagree 1	Strongly disagree
Comments from the survey	Response / Proposed actions				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have received information and training in our role as governors. We are regularly refreshed and advised on these issues.</li> <li>The Council of Governors (CoG) has a huge remit, having oversight of our mental health Trust NHS Sheffield Health and Social Care. Given all the circumstances the CoG performs quite well.</li> <li>There has been a concerted effort to align Governors to the Trust values.</li> </ul>	No further action required.				

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thorough meetings report discussion</li> </ul>					
<b>THEME 2 - WORK PLANS AND ACTIVITY DURING THE YEAR</b>					
<b>2a</b>	<b>There is a structured forward plan in place and agendas reflect this.</b>				
	Strongly agree - 8	Agree - 7	Unable to say 1	Disagree 1	Strongly disagree
<b>Comments from the survey</b>			<b>Response / Proposed actions</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have a strategic plan to meet the outcomes of the service and action plan that is amended regularly</li> <li>• Work plans of building the capacity of CoG members is an ongoing process which takes place continuously throughout the year.</li> <li>• Agendas are concise and timing in meetings is good</li> <li>• Reports</li> <li>• There is an annual work plan which is provided with the agenda and papers for each meeting.</li> <li>• Dates for all meetings including CoG and development days are organised in advance and are on the governor calendar.</li> <li>• There is an annual work plan which is provided with the agenda and papers for each meeting.</li> <li>• Dates for all meetings including CoG and development days are organised in advance and are on the governor calendar.</li> </ul>			<p>No further action required.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dates for all meetings including CoG and development days continue to be organised in advance and communicated via email and the governor calendar. The annual work plan continues to be regularly reviewed and updated and this is shared with Governors at each formal meeting.</li> </ul>		
<b>2</b>	<b>Reports, presentations, briefings and verbal updates are high quality. They clearly outline:</b>				



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the 'ask' of the governors</li> <li>• they are user friendly</li> <li>• they provide the right level of information to support decision making</li> </ul>						
Strongly agree - 5		Agree - 9		Unable to say	Disagree 2	Strongly disagree 1
<b>Comments from the survey</b>				<b>Response / Proposed actions</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of reports over-long, there is still a reliance on acronyms and the sheer volume of reports to wade through at (relatively) short notice is not always conducive to effective meetings</li> <li>• I have put agree as most are, but some are not.</li> <li>• CoG members are given numerous opportunities to engage in at the level they choose. On most issues we are kept fully informed.</li> <li>• Difficult to compare - no previous experience of this</li> <li>• It is a challenge in any organisation to present documents that align with the recipient's knowledge and needs. Sometime more in-depth info is required, although discussion often allows for this.</li> <li>• Includes zoom meetings, catch ups discussions and reports, feedback, easy accessibility</li> </ul>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Board Update report is received at each of its meetings with key items from the Board of Directors meetings highlighted and feedback on improvements from governors is acted on following each meeting.</li> <li>• Slide presentations are used wherever possible to provide information in a more accessible and user-friendly format.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A glossary of what anacronyms and terms mean is attached to the CoG agendas for formal meetings, and this continues to be developed as required. Some governors have fed back that they have found this useful.</li> <li>• Quality checks of papers are undertaken to ensure acronyms are not used and/ or explained.</li> <li>• Focus continues on accessibility of papers. A new front sheet template has been developed to highlight key areas of focus from papers and slide presentations are used where appropriate. Feedback from the October</li> </ul>		

		meeting highlighted the positive improvements and commended the presentational format of the some of the items.			
3	<b>The Council of Governors are asked to reflect on the meeting, what has worked well and less well, to support continuous learning</b>				
	Strongly agree - 4	Agree – 7	Unable to say	Disagree 3	Strongly disagree 2
<b>Comments from the survey</b>			<b>Response / Proposed actions</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meetings are busy, discussions can be long and complex, often run over time. There is no time for reflection.</li> <li>• I can't think of an occasion when we have specifically done this as a group, although the Chair does take and consider all suggestions made.</li> <li>• This may have something to do with the individual Governors on how active and responsive they are on the issue present to reflect on.</li> <li>• Not explicitly covered on CoG agendas at the moment</li> <li>• Informal feedback is regularly sought from governors</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflections on the meeting effectiveness and consideration of any preferences or unconscious bias that could have influenced decisions/discussions has been added as an item to agendas to ensure that time for reflection is factored into meetings.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The work programme and planning on agendas have continued to be reviewed to ensure appropriate timing for discussion and reflection.</li> <li>• Following further feedback from the Governors, the meeting schedule for 2025-26 has gone back to 6 meetings per year (including the annual members meeting).</li> </ul>		
<b>THEME 3 ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS AND SUPPORT</b>					
4	<b>Meetings are well managed in terms of venue/or via Teams</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please comment if you feel hybrid is working well or not.</li> </ul>				

	Strongly agree – 7	Agree - 10	Unable to say -	Disagree -	Strongly disagree
<b>Comments from the survey</b>			<b>Response / Proposed actions</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I feel the hybrid works well for those who cannot attend in person (but my preference is for wholly in-person meetings)</li> <li>• Hybrid works well.</li> <li>• Hybrid usually seems to work well.</li> <li>• I feel hybrid works best for the CoG, as many CoG members are at work when CoG meetings and associated subgroups take place.</li> <li>• always very well supported and communicated</li> <li>• I feel that hybrid is working ok at the moment.</li> <li>• The COG has been utilising teleconferencing technology and is experimenting with different layouts and positioning of the system leading to some improvements. I believe we could do better with a little more support from IT with regards to prioritising the network stream from the owl</li> <li>• Well managed venue, zoom meetings email texts, calls, reports</li> <li>• Hybrid meetings have been introduced</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governors were polled on the approach to Council of Governors meetings for 2023-24 and more than half of the responses opted for a hybrid approach. There have been technical difficulties where meetings have taken place off-site.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All formal meetings and some development meetings for 2024-25 have taken place as hybrid sessions and have been booked to take place on an SHSC site to ensure that technical difficulties remain at a minimum.</li> <li>• Additional technical equipment (two meeting owls) is now used to improve sound and visibility.</li> </ul>		
<b>5</b>	<b>Papers, agendas, action logs, minutes, forward plan and papers are circulated within adequate timescales prior to the meeting.</b>				
	Strongly agree – 7	Agree – 8	Unable to say	Disagree 2	Strongly disagree

Comments from the survey		Response / Proposed actions			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There have been some glitches with papers but, generally, these are circulated with adequate timescales.</li> <li>• The sheer numbers of reports / length of these to go through is a challenge in just a short timeframe - either reduce size of reports, number of reports or give longer lead-in prior to meeting</li> <li>• This is usually the case although sometimes timescales are rather short.</li> <li>• Most of the time CoG meeting papers arrive at least one week prior to the meeting. There have been occasions where due to circumstances, some papers arrive one or two days before the meeting, but this mainly occurs regarding sub-group meetings.</li> <li>• While the hybrid sessions are not as good as being there in real life, they are a great way of attending the meetings when other duties mean that you would miss the meeting</li> <li>• Yes, if not extra copied available to share</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dates for all meetings for the year are shared in advance. Dates for meetings and development events are included on the agenda for each meeting.</li> <li>• There will be extraordinary additional meetings required at times to meet business need</li> </ul> <p><b>Action:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The development of an electronic hub page/electronic portal for sharing information with Governors has continued to be explored</li> <li>• Authors are encouraged and supported by the corporate assurance team to keep their papers and presentations concise.</li> <li>• Presenters are encouraged to use a presentation style of papers instead of lengthy narrative to encourage accessibility and focus</li> </ul>			
<b>6</b>	<b>The governor calendar works well to keep me informed of governor meetings and how to be involved.</b>				
	Strongly agree 6	Agree - 9	Unable to say -	Disagree 1	Strongly disagree –

Comments from the survey	Response / Proposed actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Governor Calendar works especially well, particularly regarding the use of colour coding for each type of sub-group meeting. I feel it would be useful for all CoG members to receive the calendar on a monthly basis on say the 7th of each month.</li> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• It may be a side effect of the systems used but I often get multiple requests for schedule when I have already accepted.</li> <li>• Yes, emails and phone calls texts, as I don't see members daily.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Governor calendar of events for 2024-2025 has been produced. This is updated and circulated to all Governors regularly and suggestions for improvement are happily received and acted on.</li> <li>• Calendar invites for meetings and development days are sent well in advance of the meetings, and reminders are sent again closer to the event to all governors to ensure they all receive the reminders.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A more systematic approach to send the calendar on a set date has been considered. The calendar is sent to governors after it is revised to ensure that multiple versions are not in circulation and to ensure that any changes are acknowledged.</li> <li>• Reminders for events and meetings are systematically sent to Governors.</li> </ul>
7	<p><b>I feel supported to fulfil my role; I have access to advice, support, and engagement opportunities such as</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• drop-in sessions with the Chair (often attended by FSTU guardian and experience team)</li> <li>• drop-in sessions with head of corporate assurance and director of corporate governance</li> <li>• governor peer support system (previously buddying scheme)</li> <li>• Finance Worksop</li> <li>• Quality Workshop</li> <li>• Membership &amp; Engagement Workshop</li> <li>• Service change workshops (Primary Care,</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operational plans drop in</li> <li>Governor induction</li> <li>MHLDA provider collaborative session on new accountabilities for governors</li> <li>service user and carer experience groups and events</li> <li>PLACE visits</li> <li>health-based place of safety visits,</li> <li>presentations from external audit</li> <li>SHSC and NHS Providers events e.g. NHS 75, let's talk about race conference, governwell, focus conference.</li> <li>opportunity to observe board and sub committees</li> <li>standing item on agenda for governor feedback</li> <li>Governors Pre-meets</li> </ul>				
<b>Has this improved over the last year?</b>				
Strongly agree – 8	Agree - 6	Unable to say - 1	Disagree - 1	Strongly disagree
<b>Comments from the survey</b>		<b>Response / Proposed actions</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are numerous options for governors to be involved or supported in their role and these are well communicated. I do think this is an area of improvement over the past 1-2 years, for example the introduction of drop-in sessions.</li> <li>We do have access to all these but it can be difficult to participate regularly and properly engage due to time scales and the commitment required.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There have been a range of opportunities available to governors throughout 2023-24, as listed above.</li> <li>Development sessions on areas of interest are planned following feedback from Governors at Council of Governos meetings.</li> <li>Recent development sessions have been considered as a hybrid session to support governors being able to attend.</li> </ul>		

- I receive adequate information in my role as a CoG member. I am able to contact a NED if I require further information or to pursue an issue which has been brought to my attention as Governor.
- I feel that this has much improved over time, there are plenty of opportunities to develop as a Governor, the sessions have helped shape the role and my understanding of my role.
- The drop-in sessions are a great source of support as well as the ability to air any concerns etc.
- Since the appointment of the new chair, there has been a very marked increase in both Governor participation at COG and finding opportunities for individual Governors within the Trust that enable them to contribute more to the organisation and the COG meetings. However, some individuals within the organisation seem to stand in the way of developments due to either little time or a reluctance to follow up on requested actions. Example – I recently could not log onto the sunrise meeting. The usual organiser has left, and the duties pass to another individual. No invitations or documentation was sent. On the day I emailed for an invite but up until today I have had no response. This means I cannot feed back to the COG.
- Yes, there are many opportunities: very valuable sessions with more knowledgeable expert professionals

- Drop-in sessions with the Chair and with the associate director of communications and corporate governance, and head of corporate assurance provides further opportunities for governors to raise questions and has highlighted connections for further engagement
- Questions raised at Council of Governors meetings, drop-in sessions, and at development sessions are followed up with responses from the appropriate Executive and Non-Executive directors.
- To support ensuring all Governors feel able to ‘have a voice’ the Lead Governor and Deputy Lead support Governor pre-meetings prior to formal Council of Governors meetings

**Action:**

- Development sessions on areas of interest highlighted by the Governors have continued to be provided throughout 2024-25.
- Pre-meetings prior to formal Council of Governors meetings are held as hybrid to allow all governors to access this support.
- Governor drop-in sessions with the Chair and the associate director of communications and corporate governance has taken place and this will be considered as part of the planning for 2025-26.

<b>8</b>	<p><b>I have support, where I need it to engage with my constituency (if not please say what support you would find helpful). Such as:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drop-in sessions with the Director of Corporate Governance</li> <li>• Drop-in sessions with the Chair</li> <li>• Calendar of events</li> <li>• Workshop on membership engagement- continuing with membership working group</li> </ul> <p><b>Has this improved over the last year?</b></p>				
	Strongly agree - 5	Agree 7	Unable to say – 2	Disagree 1	Strongly disagree 1
<b>Comments from the survey</b>			<b>Response / Proposed actions</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did not know this support existed nor do I know how I would use it effectively.</li> <li>• I am still not clear on the best methods of engagement.</li> <li>• I feel Governors who choose, should be supported to have constituency services and awareness events in their local area.</li> <li>• These are all great improvements to the governor experience and an enormous support.</li> <li>• My personal interaction with my constituency has been a challenge, since I no longer provide psychoeducational training. My point of reference has changed to using current research to look at the needs of Service User Individuals.</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Membership and Engagement development sessions have taken place during 2023-24.</li> <li>• Governors have been asked to volunteer to participate in a membership working group to review the membership strategy.</li> <li>• The Annual Members Meeting is an opportunity for Governors to engage with the membership more generally.</li> <li>• A new Membership database is in place which allows emails campaigns to be sent to members</li> <li>• The Trust is engaged in a very wide variety of partnership work with regular updates received at Board meetings and at Council of Governors. This includes participation in Sheffield Place and leading the Mental Health Learning Disability and Autism Provider</li> </ul>		



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calendar events have been provided to join the availability, very good workshops and group events and discussions. There is an improvement this is to be continued.</li> </ul>	<p>Collaborative and there has been opportunity to participate in the South Yorkshire MHLDA Provider Collaborative Governors Workshop.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback from governors reporting back from their constituencies is included on the workplan and is a standing item on the agenda</li> <li>• Governors have the opportunity to input their constituent feedback at Governor development workshops</li> </ul> <p><b>Action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities for joint membership engagement activity will continue to be explored with neighbouring trusts (Sheffield Teaching Hospitals and Sheffield Children’s Hospital).</li> <li>• It is for Governors (<i>working with SHSC</i>) to determine the best way of engaging to meet the needs of their ‘constituencies’ and if Governors need support or guidance on this the team is available to do so and to offer support.</li> <li>• The Trust will be finalising a Communication and Involvement Strategy. This is a continuation of the work that began on 4 June 2024 with service user and carer governors who were invited to meet with Desire Code to help with the communications strategy. Further opportunity for Governors to be involved will take place at the drop-in sessions between now and</li> </ul>
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	<p>the end of March 2025 and a dedicated workshop will take place in March 2025.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An email with a link to a short survey will be circulated to all governors. All members will also receive a letter in March 2025 asking for feedback. This letter will include a survey link.</li> <li>• The Membership database will continue to be used to support governors to engage with members.</li> </ul>
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#### THEME 4 – COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS LEADERSHIP

<b>9</b>	<p><b>The Chair has a positive impact on the performance of the Council of Governors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meetings are chaired effectively with clarity given on those papers requiring most discussion,</li> <li>• the Chair ensures an appropriate flow for discussions whilst ensuring all elements have sufficient and appropriate time.</li> <li>• everyone has the opportunity to ‘have a voice’ and contribute to the debate</li> </ul>				
	Strongly agree - 10	Agree - 5	Unable to say 1	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<b>Comments from the survey</b>			<b>Response / Proposed actions</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our CoG Chair ensures that all views are aired and works on an inclusive basis to resolve various problems which do arise.</li> <li>• Discussion is encouraged with some questions for further discussion. There is opportunity for people’s discussions</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No further actions</li> <li>• Opportunities for Governors to have their voice heard has continued during 2024: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Chair drop-in sessions</li> <li>○ Chair 1:1 meeting with Governors</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Governor drop-in sessions with the associate director of communication and corporate governance</li> <li>○ Governor feedback as a standing item on every Council of Governor agenda</li> <li>○ Governor development sessions</li> <li>○ Feedback February session following the February 2025 Council of Governor meeting.</li> </ul>				
10	<b>Each agenda item is closed off appropriately and there is clarity on the conclusion, next steps.</b>					
	Strongly agree - 5	Agree - 7	Unable to say -	Disagree - 2	Strongly disagree -	
<b>Comments from the survey</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The odd is closed off but then resurfaces shortly afterwards, and the historical information is sometimes lost or not referenced.</li> <li>• Appears so but I'm not close enough to the detail to be confident</li> </ul>			<b>Response / Proposed actions</b> No actions required. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agendas and papers received are structured to support discussions and the Chair provides a summary following each item.</li> <li>• Actions from each meeting are captured on an action log and the log is reviewed at each meeting and closure of actions agreed by the Council of Governors.</li> </ul>			
<b>THEME 5 – NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND ASSURANCE</b>						
11	<b>The Chair and Non-Executive Directors effectively engage with the Council of Governors</b>					
	Strongly agree - 6	Agree - 9	Unable to say - 1	Disagree - 1	Strongly disagree	
<b>Comments from the survey</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chair engagement is positive, NEDs less-so</li> </ul>			<b>Response / Proposed actions</b>			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feel I am able to approach any NED with any issue if the need arises.</li> <li>• Appears so but I'm not close enough to the detail to be confident</li> <li>• Questions are answered in a concise and knowledgeable manner.</li> <li>• Through events discussions meeting, emails, texts phone calls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non- Executive Directors (NEDs) are attending some/all formal Council of Governor meetings.</li> <li>• NEDs attend and have led some of the Governor workshops, attend Governor lunches and present updates on their committee work to the Council of Governors at meetings.</li> <li>• There is opportunity for Governors to observe NEDs at board committees and at the Board of Directors meetings.</li> <li>• Governors have been given the opportunity to take part in PLACE visits and a visit to the new Health -based Place of Safety.</li> <li>• Non-Executive Directors follow up on questions presented to them by Governors during meetings.</li> </ul>				
12	<b>I am assured by the NED reports/presentations on their leadership of Board sub-committees</b>				
Strongly agree - 5		Agree - 9	Unable to say - 1	Disagree - 1	Strongly disagree
<b>Comments from the survey</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whilst there is feedback from the sub-committees etc and reports on workplans, I am uncertain on the level of challenge to the executives</li> <li>• My contact with the NEDS is they have provided as much information as they can ensure transparency and that progress in dealing with issues is not held up.</li> </ul>			<b>Response / Proposed actions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is opportunity for Governors to observe NEDs at board committees and at the Board of Directors meetings, where key alert, advise and assure items are presented from their committees. The NED's also present to the governors' examples of NED challenges at the committees.</li> </ul>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NED’s present updates on their committee work to the Council of Governors at meetings. Following feedback from Governors, the format of the presentations have been updated so that more in-depth information on the committee is provided as background reading, and the presentation for discussion at the meeting focuses on the key alerts and issues addressed by the committee, and examples of key NED challenges at the committees.</li> </ul>				
<b>13</b>	<b>The Chair and Non-Executive directors are operating effectively in holding the Executives to account at the Board and its sub committees</b> <b>Please answer if you have observed these meetings</b>				
	Strongly agree - 5	Agree - 5	Unable to say - 5	Disagree - 1	Strongly disagree
<b>Comments from the survey</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This is very hard for me to assess. I don't have time to attend Board or sub-committees. Although we have the opportunity to ask questions about assurance at CoG, this is not something that NEDs tell us about unprompted. It might be helpful if they could come prepared with examples of where they had held Exec to account.</li> <li>I am unable to answer as I have not observed these meetings.</li> <li>Whilst there is feedback from the sub-committees etc and reports on workplans, I am uncertain on the level of challenge to the executives</li> </ul>	<b>Response / Proposed actions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NEDs provide an update at the Board of Directors meetings, of key alert, advise and assure items from their respective committees.</li> <li>Non-Executive Directors follow up on questions presented to them by Governors during meetings and present a slide of examples of key NED challenges at the committees.</li> </ul>				

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I have not observed any board meetings as yet.</li> <li>• Most of the times this happens. However, I am aware of issues which have been raised with the NED, that NED has attended a Board of Governors Executive and has not raised the issue with the Exec.</li> <li>• Appears so but I'm not close enough to the detail to be confident</li> <li>• Accountability, discussion, risk assessment, public health, service improvement</li> </ul>					
<b>14</b>	<b>The Nominations and Remuneration Committee effectively fulfils its role and provides the Council of Governors with appropriate reports to support discussion and decision making</b>				
	Strongly agree - 7	Agree - 5	Unable to say - 4	Disagree - 1	Strongly disagree
<p><b>Comments from the survey</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NRC remains slightly shrouded in mystery!</li> <li>• The NRC works effectively when this sub-committee sits. There is a slight lack of clarity as to the frequency of NRC meetings.</li> <li>• Appears so but I'm not close enough to the detail to be confident</li> <li>• As a member of this Committee, it is inappropriate for me to answer this question.</li> <li>• Decision making based upon trust accountability confidentiality discussion and risk assessment</li> </ul>	<p><b>Response / Proposed actions</b></p> <p>The detail received at NRC is generally confidential personal information related to the NEDs for example around appraisal or as part of recruitment processes. The NRC is a required committee with delegated authority and it provides a report to governors at each Council of Governors meeting.</p> <p>Detail is provided in reports from the NRC on key areas of consideration and challenge in reaching recommendations made to the Council of Governors, for every Council of Governors meeting.</p> <p><b>Action:</b></p>				

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The NRC has carried out its review of effectiveness and review of the terms of  reference and this has been presented to the Council of Governors. Governors have been encouraged to put themselves forward for this important role, and the membership of the committee has increased.</li> </ul>				
15	<b>The external auditors, to the best of my knowledge, are working effectively with the Trust and have provided the Council with their report on the Annual Report and Accounts</b>				
	Strongly agree - 6	Agree - 9	Unable to say - 1	Disagree -	Strongly disagree -1
<b>Comments from the survey</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Am fully dependent on the financial team for reassurance and guidance in this matter. I trust the officers and NEDs to provide over site of the trust's finances.</li> <li>I feel the external oversight of Trust finances is fit for purpose and robust. Potential financial problems are brought to our attention during Financial Performance Committee meetings (FPC). The external audit details the true financial position of our Trust, alongside any risks we face.</li> <li>to the best of my knowledge</li> <li>to my knowledge unless otherwise unknown</li> </ul>			<b>Response / Proposed actions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Independent auditing of the Trust accounts takes place via our external auditors and reports are received at the Audit and Risk Committee.</li> <li>A report is received annually from external audit to the Council of Governors related to the Annual Report and Accounts.</li> </ul>		

General observations on areas of good practice and improvements made in the last year	Response / Proposed actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is ongoing appropriate low-level meeting, workshops, key guest speaker at meetings, which act to increase the capacity and learning of CoG members. The regular Governor Development workshops are especially useful.</li> <li>• The COG has been utilising teleconferencing technology and is experimenting with different layouts and positioning of the system leading to some improvements. I believe we could do better with a little more support from IT with regards to prioritising the network stream from the owl.</li> <li>• Regular interactions and feedback many suggestions to improve services.</li> <li>• Tries to cover a lot of material I wonder if shorter more frequent meetings might be more effective?</li> <li>• We're doing so much better than we used to, but we ought never to be complacent. There's harmony and consensus now. Our lead governor deserves a great deal of credit, as does the chair. We're lucky to have them both.</li> <li>• The effectiveness of the CoG in holding NEDS to account is largely dependent of the information provided to it - which does appear to be comprehensive - or on governors becoming more involved beyond the main CoG meetings. While an appropriate part of the role, attending sub-committees or workshops does make the governor role quite substantial and demanding - communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governors have been given opportunities to get involved in key pieces of work and there has been feedback through additional meetings or at formal meetings.</li> <li>• Feedback from Governors received during meetings is used to plan development sessions.</li> <li>• <b>Action:</b></li> <li>• <b>Governors have been continued to provide their feedback to support the improvement of development sessions and engagement session, and presentation of reports.</b></li> <li>• <b>The calendar continues to outline the range of opportunities available to governors.</b></li> <li>• <b>Following further feedback from the Governors, the meeting schedule for 2025-26 has gone back to 6 meetings per year (including the annual members meeting).</b></li> </ul>



and support for governors does seem proportionate to this though.

- Hybrid meeting appear to be working well and help governors attend more easily (e.g. without travel time).
- I like that the COG actively develops its governors to fully understand their role and how they can add value
- As governors we only know what we are told by the officers and the NEDs. We have very limited opportunity to view operations or the board. Given these limitations the council of governors is effective.
- The overall effectiveness of CoG has improved hugely.
- The Council of Governors are functioning quite well. There is an issue regarding CoG members who rarely attend any meetings and contribute anything.
- I believe the effectiveness of the Council of Governors has greatly improved since Sharon Mays became Chair. There is a greater understanding of the role and much more involvement.
- CoG has always been well informed of the current issue and upcoming events that may have effect on the role of the CoG.
- Since the appointment of the new chair there has been a marked increase (in my view) in the effectiveness of the COG. She has made the COG a more cohesive body and has encouraged individuals to further get involved with the Trust, allowing for better insight into the workings of the institution.

- Workshop and events enable effective collaboration for discussion. Key areas- research, service improvement, group work, Zoom meetings, drop in chair
- It has been positive to see more governors regularly reporting from their constituencies into CoG meetings and into the Chair and Corporate Governance drop ins
- Good attendance and contributions at the governor workshops and development sessions
- Governors are increasingly more involved and regularly feedback and influence in a number of ways including attending service user and carer groups, service re-design meetings, governors' development meetings etc
- There are more opportunities for governors to get involved if they wish.
- Inclusive
- The CoG meetings are well attended and very well chaired. They are inclusive and engaging. This is to the great credit of our chair.
- CoG appears open and engages well with all governors to receive feedback from their constituencies, whether broader points or specific details. Feedback or learning points appear to then be appropriately taken on board or otherwise appropriately communicated to other Trust staff.
- There is a broad base within the CoG for differing voices from across the population and engagement is generally good
- regular meetings

- engages with its constituents
- makes the chair and governance leads available
- Has clear structures and processes
- is warm and welcoming
- The CoG is good at challenging and seeking clear information from the officers and NEDs. This can be difficult and feel like governors are being challenging. sometimes officers avoid answering difficult questions by deferring to long complex reports. I'd like to hear much more about how the NEDs are holding the Exec to account. We know that all is not well in the NHS and in our Trust. we face a perfect storm of falling clinical standards and financial deficit. When this has happened before, great harms have been wrought to patients due to the top-down (and dare I say hectoring) nature of the NHS as a system in which financial balance is prioritised over care and compassion. I would like to know what actions, by way of holding to account, NEDs are taking (on a daily basis and outside of the CoG) to prevent this from happening again.
- Challenge and seek clarity.
- Governor Development events: Presentations form mental health related guest speakers.
- Communicate well but little information is put out as to what has been achieved
- CoG does participate well on the discussion at hand that pertains to its role and views always being taken on every matter involved.
- Feedback on events and meeting within the Trust.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Zoom meetings enable regular discussion, if you are unable to attend in person. Group work to collaborate ideas and discussion.</li><li>• Research to make informed choices based on risk assessment and public health.</li><li>• The voice of service users and carers is strong in the CoG</li><li>• Governors are increasingly feeding back from constituencies.</li></ul> |  |
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