

Membership matters

Foundation trust members newsletter – August 2026

News and updates from North Cheshire and Mersey NHS Foundation Trust (NCM).

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Welcome

Hello everyone,

Welcome to our summer members' newsletter. Recently, lead governors from across Cheshire and Merseyside were invited to share examples of how governors are making a difference within their organisations as part of discussions about the future of patient and public involvement in the NHS.

I was proud to have the opportunity to showcase the work of North Cheshire and Mersey NHS Foundation Trust's Council of Governors. The following infographics highlight some of the achievements and contributions made by governors during 2025-26, from supporting Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospital's integration with Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust to engaging with members, communities, patients and staff, and holding the Board to account on behalf of local people.

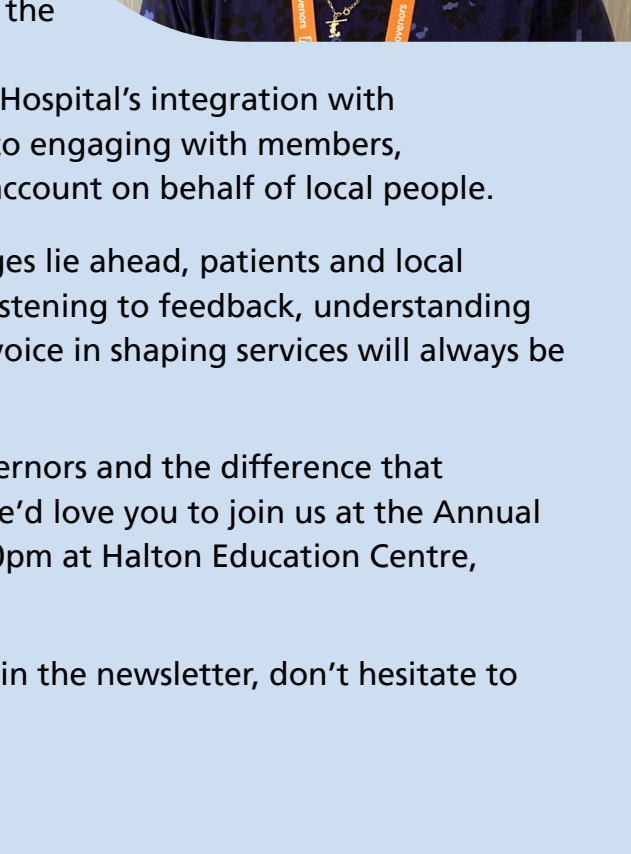
As the NHS continues to evolve, I hope that whatever changes lie ahead, patients and local communities will remain at the heart of decision-making. Listening to feedback, understanding people's experiences, and ensuring the public has a strong voice in shaping services will always be essential.

I hope you enjoy reading more about the work of your governors and the difference that member involvement continues to make across our trust. We'd love you to join us at the Annual Members Meeting on Wednesday 7 October, 3:30pm to 4:30pm at Halton Education Centre, Halton Hospital, WA7 2DA.

If you have any suggestions that you would like us to cover in the newsletter, don't hesitate to get in touch on ncm.foundation@nhs.net

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sue Fitzpatrick
Lead governor



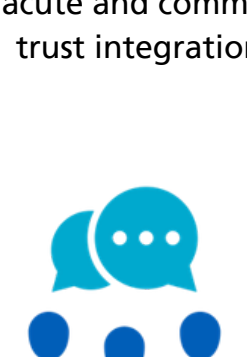
What difference do governors make?

Driving change across the trust

People often ask what governors do and how they contribute to the trust. As elected and appointed representatives, governors provide a vital link between the trust, its members, patients and local communities. Over the past year, governors have worked to ensure local voices are heard, provide constructive challenge to the trust's leadership, and support initiatives that improve services and patient experience.

The following sections highlight some of the key ways your governors have made a difference during 2025-26.

Governor achievements 2025-26



Supported the acquisition of Bridgewater Community Healthcare, delivering one of the fastest acute and community NHS trust integrations



Strengthened community partnerships and supported seamless patient pathways



Approved constitutional changes



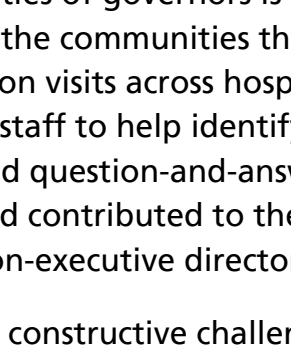
Supported 'Experts by Experience' events, sharing knowledge and recruiting engaged members



Participated in patient-led PLACE assessments



Appointed a new chair for North Cheshire and Mersey NHS Foundation Trust

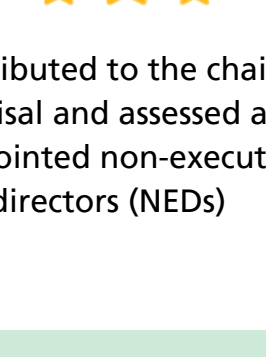


Helped refresh the Governor Handbook, presentation materials and video resources

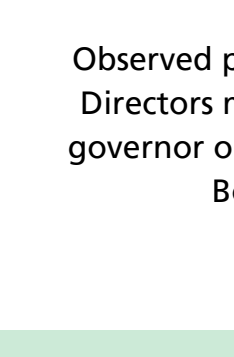
Holding the Board to account

One of the most important responsibilities of governors is to ensure the Board of Directors remains accountable to the public and the communities the trust serves. Throughout the year, governors have taken part in observation visits across hospital and community settings, gathering feedback from patients and staff to help identify opportunities for improvement. They have also participated in enhanced question-and-answer sessions at Council of Governors meetings, observed board meetings and contributed to the appraisal of the trust chair and the appointment and reappointment of non-executive directors.

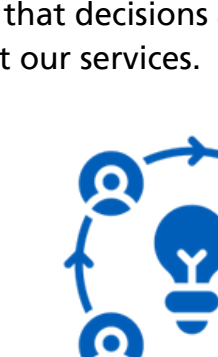
By providing independent scrutiny and constructive challenge, governors help promote transparency, good governance and a continued focus on delivering high-quality care.



Governors have gained greater influence, resulting in longer Q&A sessions at Council of Governors meetings to discuss priority issues



Governor-led observation visits across acute and community services enabled candid staff and patient feedback, with actions tracked and monitored through to completion via the Patient Experience Subcommittee



Contributed to the chair's appraisal and assessed and reappointed non-executive directors (NEDs)



Hold quarterly constituency meetings to collate member feedback and frame questions for Council of Governors

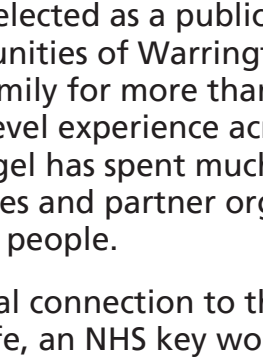


Observed public Board of Directors meetings (lead governor observes private Board)

Connecting with members and communities

Governors are committed to ensuring that members and local communities have a meaningful voice in the development of trust services. During 2025-26, governors supported membership recruitment and engagement events, worked with schools and apprentices to encourage younger people to get involved, and helped improve communication through the refreshed members newsletter. They also contributed to targeted outreach activities designed to engage underrepresented groups and ensure a diverse range of voices are heard.

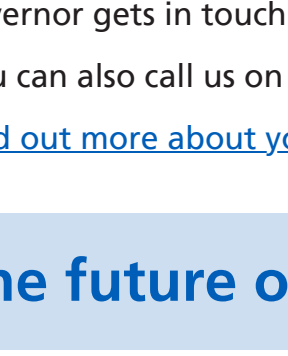
Listening to members and our communities remains at the heart of the governor role, helping to ensure that decisions are informed by the experiences and views of the people who use and support our services.



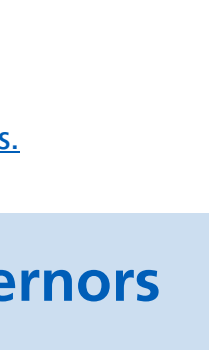
Helped shape future membership opportunities through quarterly Governor Engagement Group meetings



Promoted membership growth through community engagement events and member recruitment stands



Increased engagement with underrepresented groups through targeted community outreach



Revamped the quarterly member newsletter, improving visibility, transparency and member engagement



Engaged schools and apprentices to promote membership and amplify younger voices

Hello from your governor

Nigel Richardson

Nigel was elected as a public governor in 2022 and represents the communities of Warrington and Halton, where he has lived with his family for more than 25 years. With over two decades of board-level experience across both the public and private sectors, Nigel has spent much of his career working with local communities and partner organisations to improve services for vulnerable people.

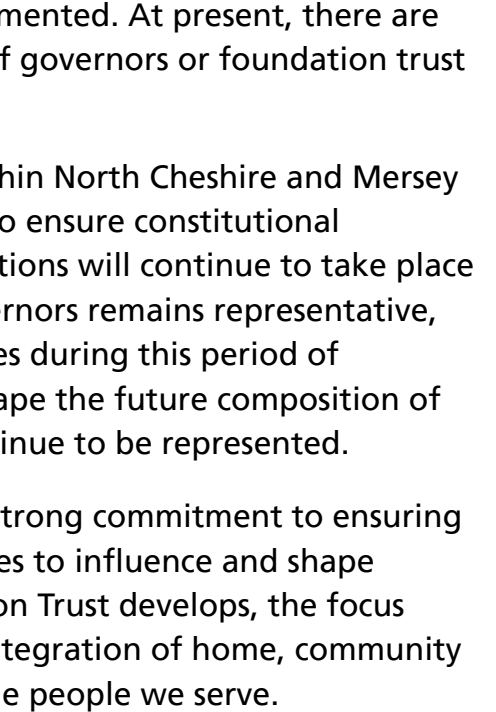
His personal connection to the NHS is equally important. Nigel and his wife, an NHS key worker, have seen first-hand the difference NHS services can make through the support provided to their two daughters, who have both lived with type 1 diabetes from a young age. Passionate about ensuring local people have a voice and that healthcare services continue to meet the needs of the communities they serve, Nigel is committed to helping make our NHS 'fantastic for us all'.

[Read more from Nigel.](#)

If you want to contact your governors, please email ncm.foundation@nhs.net with your query or with a request for them to contact you, include your location so that we can ensure the correct governor gets in touch with you.

You can also call us on [01925 662139](tel:01925662139).

[Find out more about your local governors.](#)



The future of our governors

You may have seen recent national announcements following publication of the NHS 10-Year Health Plan and references in the King's Speech to future legislation that could affect NHS Foundation Trust governance arrangements, including foundation trust membership and Councils of Governors.

Whilst these announcements provide an indication of the direction of travel, any changes would need to progress through Parliament before they could be implemented. At present, there are no confirmed timescales and no immediate changes to the role of governors or foundation trust membership arrangements.

As a result, governors will continue to play an important role within North Cheshire and Mersey NHS Foundation Trust whilst national proposals are considered. To ensure constitutional compliance and maintain effective representation, governor elections will continue to take place during 2026. These elections will help ensure the Council of Governors remains representative, quorate and able to continue fulfilling its statutory responsibilities during this period of transition. They also provide members with an opportunity to shape the future composition of the council and ensure local communities, staff and patients continue to be represented.

Whilst the national picture continues to evolve, there remains a strong commitment to ensuring patients, staff, members and local communities have opportunities to influence and shape healthcare services. As North Cheshire and Mersey NHS Foundation Trust develops, the focus remains on delivering safe and effective care through stronger integration of home, community and hospital services, improving outcomes and experiences for the people we serve.

The trust will continue to monitor national developments and keep members informed as more information becomes available. In the meantime, governors will continue to support the trust through this period of change, ensuring local voices remain at the heart of the organisation and helping to shape the future of healthcare across North Cheshire and Mersey.

Further information about the 2026 governor elections will be shared with members in due course.

News at NCM

News and updates from the trust are available to view on the [latest news pages](#) on our website.

Events at NCM

For more information on events that NCM are involved with or arranging visit the [events section](#) on the NCM website or contact ncm.engagement@nhs.net

Work at NCM

If you are interested in a role in healthcare and with us, check out our latest vacancies.

[Click here to view our current vacancies.](#)

Get involved

Support vital research work at NCM by signing up to take part in clinical research as part of the Pathway to Research programme.

[Find out more.](#)

Experts by Experience (EbyEs) are volunteers with lived experience, who help us to understand how it feels to either access services, or to care for someone who does.

Signing up takes just a minute or two. Just fill in the form at [here](#) and we'll be in touch.

For more information, please email ncm.engagement@nhs.net

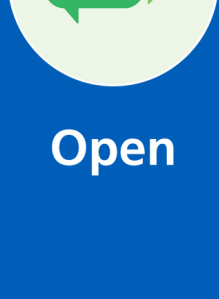
Your governors

For more information on the role of governors at NCM, from some of our current governors, please watch our [YouTube video](#).

For more information on North Cheshire and Mersey NHS Foundation Trust visit www.northcheshireandmersey.nhs.uk/



Kind



Open



Fair



One team