

Become a Governor at the RUH, **where you matter**



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Introduction

Are you interested in representing the views of your local community or colleagues and making a positive difference?

Put yourself forward for election to the RUH Council of Governors.

The Trust is seeking six Public and three Staff Governors in 2026. If you have an interest in shaping services for the benefit of patients, members, staff and local communities, this guide will help you decide whether the role is right for you.

This guide is for people interested in standing as either a Public Governor or a Staff Governor. The core role is the same for all Governors, but eligibility requirements and responsibilities differ slightly depending on whether you are standing as a Public or Staff Governor.

The Government has said it may review the Foundation Trust Governor model, but the law has not yet changed. Until any new legislation is introduced, the RUH will continue to follow the current rules for Governors, including holding elections and maintaining a quorate Council of Governors.

In short, Governors help the RUH listen to members, staff and the public. They do not run the hospital, but they do ask questions, share views and help hold the Non-Executive Directors to account. If you are interested in your local hospital and want to help make sure people's voices are heard, this role may be for you.



1. About the RUH

At the RUH, people are at the heart of what we do. The Trust provides acute hospital and community services for people in Bath and North East Somerset, Wiltshire, Somerset and South Gloucestershire, as well as specialist services for a wider regional population.

Care is provided from the Royal United Hospital site in Bath, in community settings and through partnership working with NHS, local authority, voluntary and community partners to help people receive the right care in the right place.

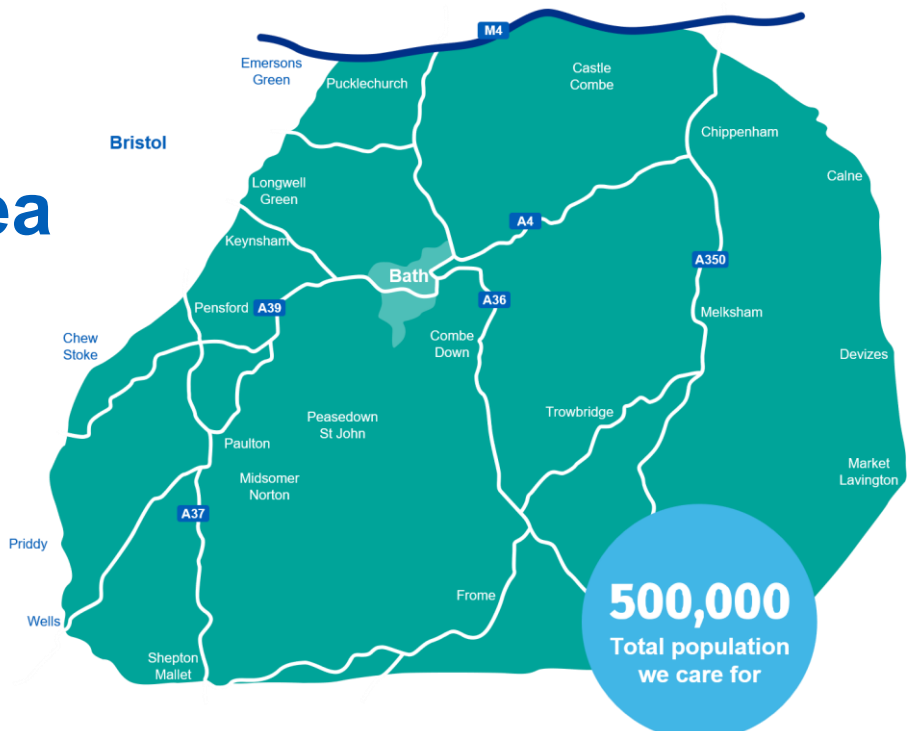
The Trust provides specialist services through the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases, including rheumatology, chronic pain and chronic fatigue syndrome/ME services. In 2021, the Trust also acquired Sulis Hospital Bath, which delivers planned diagnostic and surgical care for NHS and private patients, including through its Community Diagnostic Centre and the Sulis Elective Orthopaedic Centre.

In 2024, the Dyson Cancer Centre opened at the RUH, bringing together many of the Trust's cancer services in a single purpose-built facility. The centre is home to oncology, chemotherapy and radiotherapy services, alongside inpatient care, pharmacy, research, nuclear medicine and medical physics teams. It also includes the Macmillan Wellbeing Hub, which provides dedicated support for patients and their families.

Like many NHS organisations, the RUH works in a challenging environment, with sustained demand for urgent and emergency care, pressure on planned care, workforce constraints and financial pressures. The Trust remains focused on patient safety, quality of care and operational recovery.

The RUH remains an active partner across Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire and continues to develop its role within the BSW Hospitals Group. Each organisation remains statutorily independent, while working together to support shared planning, operational delivery and aligned leadership arrangements.

The local area we cover



Our vision

The RUH, where you matter

Our values

Our values and behaviours are central to how we will deliver our Trust vision.



Everyone matters

We will be kind and caring

We will treat everyone as an individual



Working together

We will support each other

We will actively listen



Making a difference

We will share ideas and speak up

We will be responsive and efficient

These values guide how we work with patients, families, colleagues, members and local communities. Governors help keep these voices connected to the Trust by listening, asking questions and sharing views through the Council of Governors.

2. About our Council of Governors

Governor composition

The Council of Governors includes people who are elected or appointed to represent members, staff and partner organisations. Together, they help the Trust stay connected to local people and the communities it serves.

- **Public Governors** - elected by Public Members and represent local constituencies.
- **Staff Governors** - elected by Staff Members and represent staff across the Trust.
- **Stakeholder Governors** - appointed representatives of partner organisations.

It is a legal requirement that more than half of the Governors are elected from the public constituency.

What does being a member mean?

The RUH is here for patients, staff and local people. Members have a way to share their views through the Council of Governors and help influence how the Trust develops. Public members must be aged 16 or over and live in England or Wales.

Governors and members

The Council of Governors represents the views of members in helping to shape the way services are delivered. Governors support communication and engagement with members through the Membership and Outreach Working Group, the Membership Office and other appropriate engagement routes.

Public constituencies

The public constituency is divided into the following constituencies. Members are automatically allocated to a constituency based on their postcode.

Public constituency	Number of public Governors
City of Bath	2
North East Somerset	2
North Wiltshire	2
South Wiltshire	2
Mendip	2
Rest of England and Wales	1

3. Which Governor role are you interested in?

Public and Staff Governors share the same core statutory role as members of the Council of Governors.

The main difference is who they represent and how they are eligible to stand for election.

Public Governors

Represent public members and the wider public in their constituency.

May speak with members, local people, and community groups.

Should signpost individual complaints to the Patient Support and Complaints Team.

Staff Governors

Represent staff members and bring widely held staff views to the Council of Governors.

May listen to staff views and share information about the work of the Council.

Should signpost individual employment matters to HR, staff side or another appropriate route.



4. Governors play an important role

Governors help the Trust hear from the people it serves. They bring views from members and the public into the Trust and help check that the Board is acting in their interests. Their role is set out in the Trust Constitution.

Governors do not manage the day-to-day running of the Trust. They do not investigate or handle individual complaints, or make decisions about care or services. If someone raises a concern, Governors should listen and signpost them to the right Trust team.

The Governor role in practice

Governors hold the Non-Executive Directors to account by asking informed questions, seeking assurance and testing whether the Board is acting in the interests of members, patients, staff and the wider public. Governors do not direct operational services, instruct staff, investigate individual complaints or act as operational decision-makers.

Statutory responsibilities

The main statutory responsibilities of the Council of Governors are:

- **To hold the Non-Executive Directors individually and collectively to account for the performance of the Board of Directors.**
- **To represent the interests of members of the Trust and the interests of the public.**

The Council of Governors also has statutory powers and duties relating to the appointment and removal of the Chair and Non-Executive Directors, approval of the Chief Executive appointment, appointment and removal of the external auditor, receipt of the annual report and accounts, and approval of significant transactions, mergers, acquisitions, separations or other major organisational changes where required by legislation or the Trust Constitution.

Governors should also understand that the RUH works with other health and care organisations. This includes local partners, provider collaboratives and Integrated Care System arrangements. This wider context helps Governors think about how Trust decisions affect patients, members and the public.

Non-statutory responsibilities

Governors may become involved in activities that are locally determined and not compulsory, such as holding constituency meetings, working with local representative bodies, supporting membership engagement and giving talks to interested stakeholders.

Governor working groups

The Council of Governors has reviewed its working group structure to make sure Governor time is used well. The current model focuses on statutory decisions, membership and public engagement, and regular assurance discussions with Non-Executive Directors.

Nomination and Remuneration Committee	Membership and Outreach Working Group	Governor and Non-Executive Director Forum
The statutory committee supporting the appointment and remuneration of the Chair and Non-Executive Directors.	Supports Governors to engage with members and the public, including membership development and communication with constituencies.	A quarterly forum where Governors can speak with Non-Executive Directors, ask questions about Board performance and identify any training or assurance needs.

Current Governor framework, role summary

Holding to account: Governors collectively hold the Non-Executive Directors to account for the performance of the Board of Directors by seeking assurance, asking informed questions and using the Governor and Non-Executive Director Forum, Council meetings and relevant reports to understand how the Board is discharging its duties.

Representing members and the public: Governors bring constituent insight into the Council of Governors, the Membership and Outreach Working Group and other appropriate engagement routes. They should also consider the wider public interest, including the needs of patients, communities and the wider population served through local system working.

Statutory decisions: Governors have formal responsibilities for some decisions, including Chair and Non-Executive Director appointments, remuneration, external audit, significant transactions and other decisions reserved to the Council of Governors by law or the Trust Constitution.



5. Who can become a Governor?

No formal qualifications are required. Prospective Governors need enthusiasm, a willingness to ask questions, openness to ideas and a desire to make a difference by getting involved in their local hospital.

All prospective candidates will need to:

- Be aged 16 or above and be a member of the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust
- Be willing to represent the views of constituents and shape the way services are delivered.
- Be willing to act and behave in the interests of the membership.
- Be an enthusiastic ambassador for the hospital.
- Have time, energy, enthusiasm, and a strong desire to be involved.
- Be able to understand the role of a Governor, including the main legal duties and how the Trust works with other health and care organisations.
- Keep pace with strategic issues affecting the Trust.
- Contribute towards the future plans of the hospital using member feedback.

Public Governor eligibility

Public Governor candidates must be public members of the Trust, be aged 16 or over and live in England or Wales. Public members are allocated to a constituency based on their postcode.

Staff Governor eligibility

Staff Governor candidates must be staff members of the Trust. Staff can stand if they are on a permanent contract or on a fixed-term contract of at least 12 months, provided they have not opted out of Foundation Trust membership. Staff who have opted out can opt back in at any time.

Staff Governor candidates should speak to their line manager before putting themselves forward. This helps make sure the time needed for agreed Governor duties can be planned and supported.

Very limited eligibility restrictions apply. These are summarised in Appendix 1.

6. Support for Governors



Induction programme and training

The Trust recognises the importance of Governors and supports them to work effectively. The Membership Office works closely with Governors to provide access to administrative resources and information, and is the first point of contact for support.

Once elected, successful candidates will be invited to attend induction and will receive ongoing training throughout their term as required. This begins with the induction programme, which includes:

- Governor information pack.
- Formal corporate induction session with the Trust, including mandatory training.
- Bespoke RUH Governor induction, including mandatory training.
- Disclosure and Barring Service check.
- Specific training relevant to individual Governor needs, where appropriate.



Special requirements and support

The Trust encourages people from all backgrounds to become Governors. If a Governor needs support to carry out the role, the Membership Office will help coordinate this.



Ongoing support and training

Governors will be supported in communicating with their constituencies and encouraged to hold sessions which members can attend to raise issues or receive information. Ongoing training and information will be provided, including Governor-specific courses where appropriate.

Training will help Governors understand their role, read reports, ask useful questions and know the difference between strategic oversight and day-to-day management.

The Trust recognises the importance of enabling Staff Governors to attend Council of Governors meetings and other agreed Governor duties. These duties are treated as part of normal working time, but the role remains voluntary and unpaid.



Payment and expenses

Governors are not paid a salary, but they can claim limited travel expenses for Governor duties. Expense claims must follow the Trust policy.

7. Terms of office and commitment

Terms of office

Governors attend Council of Governors meetings, take part in induction and training, and may join other Governor meetings or engagement activities. The time needed can vary, but candidates should expect to set aside time to read papers, attend meetings and speak with members, staff or local people.

Public Governors may spend time speaking with members or local communities. Staff Governors may spend time listening to staff views and sharing information about the Council of Governors.

Governors are elected for a three-year term of office unless stated otherwise. For the 2026 elections, successful candidates will take up office from 1 November 2026 until 31 October 2029.

Governors may stand for re-election at the end of their first term, subject to the Trust Constitution. The maximum term-of-office for each elected Governor without a break is nine years.

Commitment

As a Governor, you will be expected to:

- Attend Council of Governors meetings and the Annual General Meeting or Annual Members Meeting.
- Attend induction and training sessions in relation to the role of Governor.
- Develop effective methods of communicating and engaging with members.
- Participate in membership recruitment and development.
- Help the Corporate Governance team understand where membership may not fully represent the local population and support plans to improve this.
- Act as a champion for recruitment within your constituency.
- Take part in Governor activities where you can, such as the Membership and Outreach Working Group, the Governor and Non-Executive Director Forum or other relevant Governor work.

Vacancies amongst Governors

If an elected Governor leaves before the end of their term, the Trust Constitution explains what happens next. The Trust may invite the next highest polling candidate to take the seat, leave the seat vacant until the next scheduled election, or hold a new election. The route will depend on how much time is left in the term.

8. How do I stand for election?

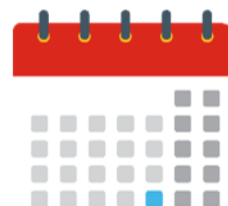
If you would like to stand for election as a Public or Staff Governor, you will need to make sure that you are a member of the Trust and meet the eligibility criteria for the role you are interested in. If you are unsure, please contact the Membership Office.

Before you start, check that you are a member of the RUH, meet the eligibility criteria, understand the role and can meet the time commitment. Staff candidates should also speak to their line manager before completing a nomination form.

1. Check that you are a Trust member and meet the eligibility criteria for the role you want to stand for.
2. Read this guide and consider the role, responsibilities, time commitment and eligibility requirements.
3. Request or complete a nomination form through Civica Election Services once nominations open.
4. Prepare your election statement, declaration of interests and candidate declaration.
5. Submit the nomination form by the published deadline.

9. Elections

Civica Election Services will run the election for the Trust and act as the Returning Officer. This means they will manage the election process and make sure it follows the rules in the Trust Constitution. Governors are elected using the First Past the Post voting system.



Governor seats in 2026

Constituency or seat type	Governor seats due for election in 2026
North East Somerset	1
Mendip	2, including 1 existing vacancy
North Wiltshire	1
South Wiltshire	1
Rest of England and Wales	1
Staff Governors	3

Key dates

Notice of Election and nominations open	Monday 10 August 2026
Nominations deadline	Tuesday 8 September 2026
Summary of valid nominated candidates published	Wednesday 9 September 2026
Final date for candidate withdrawal	Friday 11 September 2026
Electoral data to be provided by Trust	Wednesday 16 September 2026
Notice of Poll published	Tuesday 29 September 2026
Voting packs despatched	Wednesday 30 September 2026
Close of election	Friday 23 October 2026
Declaration of results	Monday 26 October 2026



How to request a nomination form

From **10 August 2026**, eligible Public and Staff Governor candidates will be able to request or complete a nomination form through Civica Election Services.

The easiest way to complete and submit a nomination form is via the election website: www.cesvotes.com/RUH2026

Alternatively, you can request a paper form using the contact details in the next section.



The nomination form

All prospective Governors will be expected to provide:

- **An election statement of no more than 250 words.**

Your election statement should explain why you want to be a Governor, what experience or perspective you would bring, and how you would listen to members, staff or the public. Keep it clear, personal and focused on the role.

- **A declaration of interests, including whether the candidate is a member of a political party or has a financial or other interest in the hospital.**
- **A candidate declaration confirming eligibility to stand for election.**



Uncontested seats

Sometimes Governor seats may be uncontested. Where there is only one candidate for a seat, Civica Election Services will inform the Trust before ballot papers are distributed, and the Trust will inform the candidate that they have been successful.



Notice of poll and voting packs

A Notice of Poll will be published before the start of the ballot. Voting packs will be issued to eligible voters and voting will close at 5pm on the published closing date.



Election results

When the ballot has closed, Civica Election Services will assess the results and provide the Trust with a breakdown of the outcome. The 2026 results are due to be declared on Monday 26 October 2026.



Canvassing

Candidates must follow the election rules on canvassing and spending. Informal canvassing with neighbours, colleagues, family and friends is allowed, and candidates may encourage eligible members to vote.

10. Contact details

Please contact the Membership Office or Civica Election Services using the details below.

Membership Office

RUHmembership@nhs.net

01225 821262

FREEPOST RSLZ-GHKG-UKKL
RUH Membership Office (D1)
Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust
Combe Park, Bath BA1 3NG

www.ruh.nhs.uk/membership/elections

Civica Election Services

fnominationenquiries@cesvotes.com

0208 889 9203

Civica Election Services
The Election Centre
33 Clarendon Road
London
N8 0NW

www.cesvotes.com/RUH2026

11. Appendix 1, eligibility to become or remain a Governor

Eligibility and disqualification criteria are set out in the Trust Constitution. Candidates should read the current Constitution before standing and contact the Membership Office if they are unsure whether they are eligible.

A person may not become or continue as a Governor of the Trust if any of the following apply:

- In the case of an elected Governor, the person ceases to be a member of the constituency or class within the constituency represented.
- In the case of an appointed Governor, the sponsoring organisation withdraws sponsorship.
- The person is a Director of the Trust or holds a conflicting role with another Health Service Body or relevant body corporate, unless permitted by the Constitution.
- The person has been a Director of the Trust in the preceding three years.
- The person has refused without reasonable cause to undertake required Governor training.
- The person is a member of a local authority Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- The person is an immediate family member of a Governor or Director of the Trust.
- The person has failed to repay monies properly owed to the Trust without good cause.
- The person has failed to sign and deliver the required statement confirming acceptance of the Governor Code of Conduct.
- The person is considered inappropriate on the basis of information revealed through a criminal record certificate or enhanced criminal record certificate.
- The person has failed to make, or has falsely made, any required declaration.
- The person is included in a barred list or is the subject of a disqualification order under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986.
- The person has received a written warning from the Trust for verbal or physical abuse towards Trust staff.
- The person has been expelled from the post of Governor of another NHS Foundation Trust.

Where a person becomes disqualified or is removed from office, they must notify the Secretary in writing as soon as practicable and, in any event, within 14 days of first becoming aware of the matter. The Secretary will take the steps required by the Constitution.