



GOVERNOR ELECTIONS – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

Q1. “What is the difference between a Foundation Trust member and a Governor?”

The majority of our Governors are elected from and by our members within their respective constituencies. The exceptions to this are Appointed Governors who are nominated by relevant pre-determined stakeholder partners).

As a member, you can have your say on how we run our services and ask questions of or provide feedback to Governors who will help represent your interests. You can keep informed by receiving updates on what’s happening at C&I and get involved by voting and standing in our Governor Elections, attending member exclusive events or volunteering. You can also attend our Council of Governors meetings and benefit from discounts on many products and services through the [Health Service Discounts](#) scheme.

As a Governor, you would be responsible for engaging with fellow members and the public and representing their voice and interests. You would also be responsible for holding the Non-Executive Directors to account for the performance of the Board of Directors. There are a number of other duties which can be found in the [NHS Foundation Trust Code of Governance](#) and some duties that we can decide locally at Trust level.

Appointed Governors are nominated by relevant pre-determined stakeholder partners and have the same responsibilities towards their constituents as do Elected Governors. The key difference in the roles

Q2. “What is the difference between the Board of Directors and the Council of Governors?”

The Board of Directors provides overall leadership to the Trust and is collectively accountable for all aspects of performance and management of the Trust’s activities, including clinical and service quality, financial performance and governance. C&I’s Board of Directors is made up of Executive and Non-Executive Directors. Each Board member brings a range of skills, knowledge and experience within their respective fields. They also exercise power and control on behalf of the Trust in line with the Trust’s Scheme of Delegation and collectively set the vision, strategic direction and values of the Trust.

The Council of Governors is the body of people that advises the Board of Directors of the views of the membership and local community, comments on the development of strategic plans and act in an ambassadorial role to make sure the Trust meets its obligations. The Council of Governors isn’t responsible for the day-to-day management of the Trust. Instead, it is responsible for holding the Trust to account by representing the interests of members and the local community and holding the Non-Executive Directors to account for the performance of the Board of Directors. As a group, Governors bring a wealth of expertise, knowledge, experience and perspectives which inform and enrich discussions on relevant matters and help contribute to the continued development of the Trust.



Q3. “I don’t know if I’m a member of C&I. How can I find out?”

If you’re unsure whether you are a member, you can contact our Corporate Affairs team at trust.secretary@candi.nhs.uk to verify this. You will need to provide your full name, postcode and contact details. After checking our membership database, we will be able to confirm if you are a registered member of the Trust and which membership constituency you are in.

If you are not currently a member and are interested in becoming one, you can register quickly and easily using our online form by [clicking here](#). Remember, membership is completely free and open to anyone:

- who is aged 16 or over, and who...
- has used C&I’s services, or cares for someone who has used C&I’s services, within the last five years, or
- who lives in the local area (Camden, Islington or any other borough within London)

Staff employed by C&I under a permanent contract of employment, on a fixed term contract of employment for a duration of 12 months or more, and those continuously employed by the Trust under a contract of employment for at least 12 months are automatically enrolled as members of the Staff Constituency without an application being made, with the opportunity to opt out if they so wish.

To find out more about eligibility requirements for becoming a member of the Trust, please refer to Appendix 3 above or see our Trust Constitution by [clicking here](#).

Q4. “I am eligible to be a member of more than one constituency. What should I do, and can I switch between constituencies?”

If you are eligible to be a member of a Public and Service User and Carer constituency, you can choose which you wish to be a member of. If however you are eligible to be a member of the Staff constituency, you may not become or continue as a member of any other constituency.

There will be situations where you may need to switch constituencies. For instance, you may move to a different area or perhaps stop being eligible (e.g. a period of five years may lapse from when a C&I service user last used the Trust’s services, or a staff member may leave the Trust). You may also want to switch constituency. In such cases, you can do so providing you are eligible by making an application. Please contact trust.secretary@candi.nhs.uk to submit such a request.

“Q5. Why does the Trust hold Governor Elections?”

The Trust holds Governor Elections each year to fill vacant seats on its Council of Governors and/or to open up seats to the wider membership in relation to those Governors whose term of office is coming to an end.



Q6. “Why are some Governors appointed rather than elected?”

Our Council of Governors is made up of 26 Governors and to ensure local accountability and key stakeholder representation, it is made up of both elected and nominated Governors.

Elected Governors represent members in our service user and carer, public and staff constituencies. Nominated Governors represent relevant pre-determined stakeholder partner organisations that we work with. At C&I, such organisations include our local councils (London Borough of Camden and London Borough of Islington), voluntary and community sector organisations (Voluntary Action Camden and Voluntary Action Islington), and an academic institute (University College London Medical School).

The majority of our Council of Governors (21 out of 26) is elected by our members.

Q7. “What are the duties of Governors?”

Governors have a number of statutory duties under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and the NHS Act 2006, many of which are outlined in the role description above and captured in the Trust’s Constitution. Please [click here](#) to access the comprehensive guide to statutory duties for NHS foundation trust governors published by Monitor, now part of NHS Improvement. There are also a number of other duties set out in the [NHS Foundation Trust Code of Governance](#) and some duties that we can decide locally at Trust level.

Q8. “Do I need any specific skills, knowledge or qualifications to become a Governor?”

No, you don’t need any specific skills, knowledge or qualifications to be a Governor. That said, we do need people who are passionate about the NHS and mental health and are committed to representing members and the public to the best of their ability. It’s also important that you have the necessary time to commit to the role.

The Governor role is exciting and may seem a bit daunting, but don’t worry – if you are elected or appointed, you will be offered relevant training and development opportunities which will be organised and paid for by C&I. We can also buddy you up with a more experienced Governor to ease you into the role.

Q9. “I am interested in standing for election as a Governor. What do I need to do?”

To stand and vote in the Governor Elections, you need to be a member of the Trust. As a member, you will be notified when elections are being held in your constituency. To stand for election, you will need to prepare and submit your nomination statement together with a photograph before the close of nominations, which also coincides with the deadline for registering as a member to vote in the elections. Providing that more nominations are received than the number of seats we are electing to, the election will move into the voting phase where members will be invited to view the nomination statements and cast their vote. After voting has closed, the results will be announced. In the event nominations received are equal to or less than the number of seats being elected to, eligible nominees will be automatically elected.



Q10. “If I am elected, do I need to re-stand when my term of office comes to an end or am I automatically re-appointed?”

Governors are elected or appointed for a three-year term. The exception to this would be if a by-election is to be held due to vacant seats, in which case the Governor in question would normally be elected or appointed for the remainder of the term of the outgoing Governor.

At the end of their term of office, Governors would be up for re-election or re-appointment up to a maximum of nine years. This would require Elected Governors coming to the end of their terms to re-stand in the Governor Elections and require Appointed Governors to be re-nominated by the relevant pre-determined stakeholder organisation.

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