

Meeting Title	Council of Governors	Date: January 2024
Report Title	Chair's Report – Governance and Development	Agenda Item Number: 6
Lead Director	<i>Chair, Alison Davis</i>	
Report Author	<i>Kate Jarman, Chief Corporate Services Officer</i>	

Introduction	<i>This paper sets out governance frameworks around access and meetings, and proposes development for Governors in fulfilling their statutory duties</i>		
Key Messages to Note			
Recommendation <i>(Tick the relevant box(es))</i>	For Information <input type="checkbox"/>	For Approval <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	For Review <input type="checkbox"/>

Strategic Objectives Links <i>(Please delete the objectives that are not relevant to the report)</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Keeping you safe in our hospital 2. Improving your experience of care 3. Ensuring you get the most effective treatment 4. Giving you access to timely care 5. Working with partners in MK to improve everyone's health and care 6. Increasing access to clinical research and trials 7. Spending money well on the care you receive 8. Employ the best people to care for you 9. Expanding and improving your environment 10. Innovating and investing in the future of your hospital
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Report History	<i>None</i>
Next Steps	<i>Actions to be taken forward through the CoG in documented meetings</i>
Appendices/Attachments	<i>Papers follow</i>

Chairs Report

Council of Governors - Governance and Development

Context

The Council of Governors has recovered normal working practices with in-person or hybrid meetings, and Governors wish to play a full part of hospital and community life within the requirements of their role. As such, it is timely that appropriate governance - including how meetings are run and facilitated, required administrative support and access to hospital buildings - are re-stated so that there is both a shared understanding of the Trust's requirements and the opportunity to raise any questions or concerns in a formal meeting.

Access to Trust Premises

Access to hospital buildings is necessarily controlled for the safety of everyone using Trust premises, and particularly to safeguard the vulnerable patients in our care. Access is governed both by legal frameworks, including Care Quality Commission statutory requirements and regulations, and by the Trust's security policies.

Public (and Stakeholder/ Nominated) Governors all have access to the main hospital building and to Oak House (in order that they can easily access the Trust Secretariat, Chairperson, Chief Executive and other Non-Executive and Executive Directors). Access to hospital buildings is logged and can be audited.

Governors are granted access to Trust premises and hospital buildings in accordance with their role. This access is provided via a 'swipe' card, which Governors sign for upon their induction (the 'ID Badge Request Form'). Public (and Stakeholder/ Nominated) Governors should all have the same access rights. It was recently identified that some Public/ Stakeholder/ Nominated Governors may have had differential access rights and consequently cards have been reset to ensure all Public/ Stakeholder/ Nominated Governors have the same access to hospital buildings.

Staff Governors have access to hospital buildings in accordance with their substantively employed role. When carrying out their role as Governor, Staff Governors should not access nor enable access to hospital buildings out with the access afforded to all Governors. That is to say, Staff Governors must not allow access to buildings to other Governors where those Governors could not ordinarily gain access independently. This is required to ensure the safety and security of the site; the safeguarding of patients; and parity amongst Governors.

Should Governors require access to parts of the Trust where they cannot gain access via a swipe card, they should inform the Trust Secretariat who will facilitate access safely and appropriately.

Meetings

As a general principle, where Governors meet to discuss Trust business, whether formally or informally, meetings should be facilitated by the Trust Secretariat and a record taken to ensure that actions or issues are captured and can be taken forward. This is to ensure good governance and the smooth running of the Council and its subgroups, and to ensure that Governors are supported to fulfil their statutory duties.

If Governors and NEDs meet socially - which they are free to do - it should not be to discuss Trust business. For the avoidance of doubt, this includes the role of Governor and the administration of the Council of Governors and its subgroups.

This reasons for this are self-evident - discussing Trust business in a public, social setting is inadvisable, particularly if sensitive or personal information is disclosed (this may constitute a breach under the Trust's information governance and security policies). It also means issues and actions are not captured in a structured way, risking lack of action; and it risks potentially important issues not being known about by those who were unable or uninvited to attend.

Earlier this month Governors met socially with NEDs at an informal dinner which subsequently resulted in formal feedback through the NEDs to the Board. This feedback was not documented - presumably because it was received at a social gathering - but nevertheless Governors have raised issues around their roles and function which require action and resolution.

Governors are respectfully requested to ensure that any social events arranged are just that, and that Trust business is not discussed.

Where Governors or Governors and NEDs (or Executive Directors) meet informally as a group to discuss Trust business, the Trust Secretariat must be in attendance to document the meeting, taking a relevant record, including actions. All formal meetings will be formally minuted and recorded.

If Governors have any questions or concerns about this approach, they are asked to raise them with the Chair or Chief Corporate Services Officer.

Administration, Support and Development

Governors have expressed the desire for more development and support around their roles. With this in mind I am proposing the following:

1. The further informal meeting of Governors and NEDs planned for February 6th is administrated by the Trust Secretariat and includes the Chief Corporate Services Officer as the Executive Lead for governance
2. The GovernWell programme is re-commissioned for Trust Governors, providing independent, external training for Governors on their roles and responsibilities
3. The Chair will work with the Governors, NEDs, Chief Corporate Services Officer and Trust Secretariat to formalise a wider programme of Governor meetings, development and engagement for 2024/5

Governors are asked for their support for the requirements and actions set out in this paper.