NHS
Gloucestershire Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Membership Strategy

2024–2026

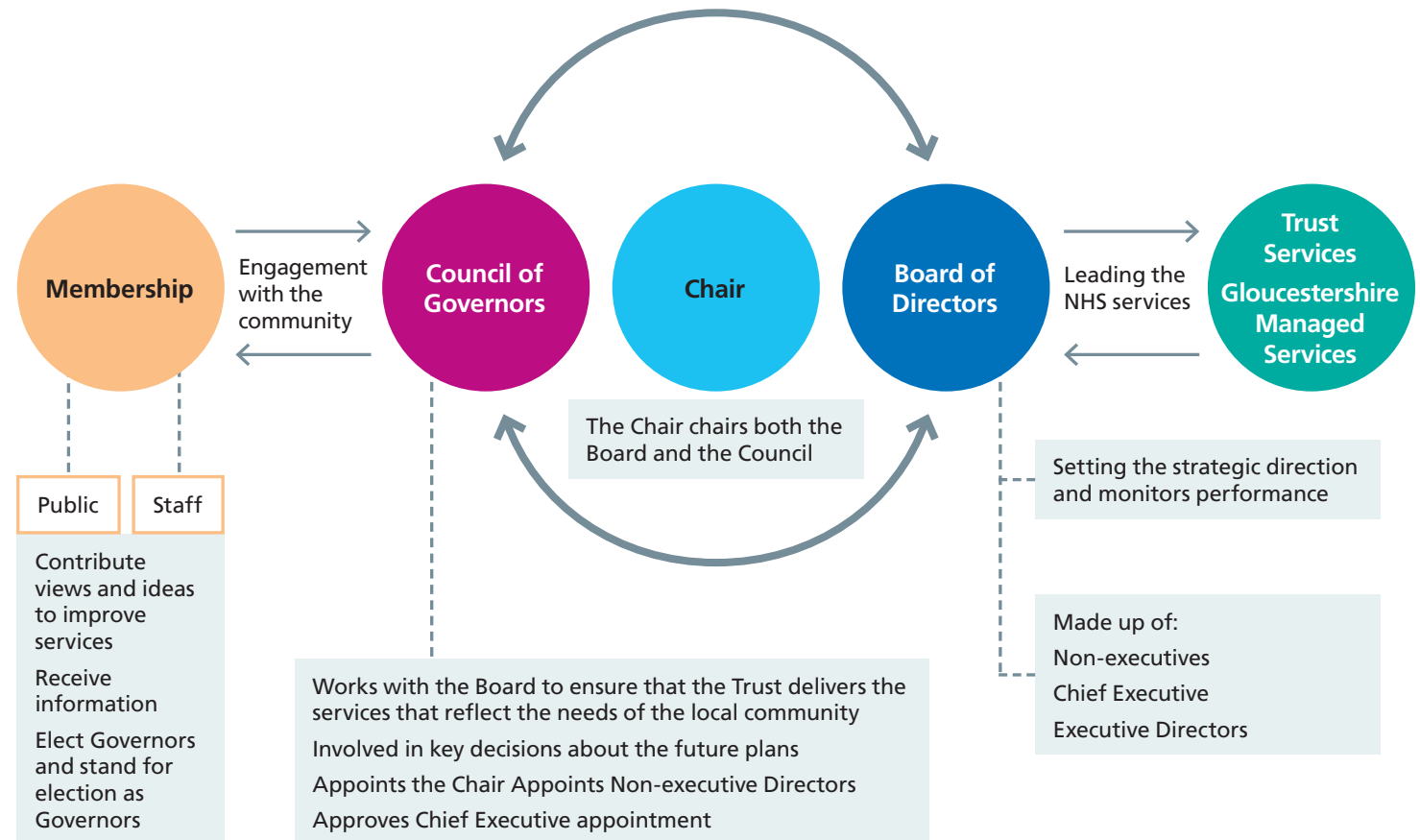the **Best Care for Everyone**
care / listen / excel

Introduction

As a Foundation Trust we are accountable to our local communities, our patients and staff, and enables us to listen to what matters most to people in our decision-making.

We do this by encouraging people to become a Trust 'member' which provides a range of benefits, but importantly ensures that people have a say in how services will be designed and delivered. In addition, members can elect Trust Governors, who perform a vital role in holding non-executive Board members to account for the performance of the Board. Members can stand for election to become a Governor.

It is important that we have an involved, informed, and representative membership, ensuring we continue to listen and respond to the needs of the community in delivering the best care and services.

The way in which membership and governors influence the Trust is illustrated through the diagram below (adapted from NHS Providers):

Membership

Engagement with the community

Council of Governors

Chair

Board of Directors

Leading the NHS services

Trust Services Gloucestershire Managed Services

Public | Staff

Contribute views and ideas to improve services

Receive information

Elect Governors and stand for election as Governors

The Chair chairs both the Board and the Council

Works with the Board to ensure that the Trust delivers the services that reflect the needs of the local community
Involved in key decisions about the future plans
Appoints the Chair Appoints Non-executive Directors
Approves Chief Executive appointment

Setting the strategic direction and monitors performance

Made up of:
Non-executives
Chief Executive
Executive Directors

Developing a membership strategy

The overall picture for the NHS emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic is one of change, with continuing operational and financial pressures.

This means we must be creative in how we strengthen and engage with our membership. We must also ensure that our membership and Governors, are representative of the diverse communities we serve across the county.

Despite the deep and lasting impact of the pandemic, the Trust and partners continued to successfully complete an ambitious programme of public engagement and consultation on our Fit for the Future Programme and our Centres of Excellence vision for our hospitals.

Health provision continues to evolve and it is essential that local people are directly involved in developing new models of care and in understanding any changes, and our membership remains an important part of that work.

There is strong collaboration across the One Gloucestershire health and care system, including working with partners in the voluntary and community sector, to ensure local people are involved in shaping health services and have opportunities to share their experiences.

The joined-up system working also gives rise to future opportunities in developing different, potentially shared, models of membership. As a result, this strategy will only cover the next two years.

This strategy therefore seeks to:

▷ Underline the Trust's commitment to membership

▷ Outline our vision for the next two years up to 2026

▷ Understand our current membership picture and the challenges

▷ Identify actions to ensure we meet the challenges.

This strategy was codesigned with Governors and Trust staff who were part of a workshop on 8 June 2023. It has also been shaped through engagement with members of the public at events over the summer and our Young Influencers Group.

It also draws on the Foundation Trust Code of Governance and best practice identified nationally.

Why does membership matter?

Our strategy sets out our vision and commitment for engaging and involving our Foundation Trust members, Governors and, with them, our communities. Their involvement is important in helping us to be a great place to work and receive care.

Membership helps to give local people across Gloucestershire a voice in shaping health and care and building our plans for the future.

Our vision is to develop a representative membership that means something to local people so they can be actively engaged in shaping services and how we work. Our work with members should enable people to better understand what we do, understand what matters to them and build confidence in our work. Over the next two years, we want to improve how we engage and involve members, and ensure that we reflect the diversity of our amazing communities.

What is an NHS Foundation Trust?

NHS Foundation Trusts were created to devolve decision making from central government to local organisations and communities. They provide and develop healthcare according to core NHS principles – free care, based on need and not ability to pay.

What makes NHS Foundation Trusts different from NHS trusts?

As a Foundation Trust we are not directed by Government so have greater freedom to decide, with our governors and members, our own strategy and the way services are run.

We can also retain our financial surpluses and borrow to invest in new and improved services for patients and service users. This enables us to invest directly in the care of our patients.

Importantly, this means that as a Trust we are accountable to:

▷ our local communities through ur Members and Governors

▷ our commissioners who contract our services on behalf of the community

▷ Parliament (every Foundation Trust must lay its annual report and accounts before Parliament)

▷ the Care Quality Commission (through the legal requirement to register and meet the associated standards for the quality of care provided); and NHS England.

As a Foundation Trust we can be responsive to the needs of our local communities. One way that we achieve this is by recruiting Trust members, who are represented by governors. Members of the trust elect the Council of Governors to represent their views. Governors then work with the Trust's board of directors to agree the future plans of the organisation, which take into account the needs and wishes of the local community.

Governors also have the duty to appoint the Trust's chairperson and non-executive directors.

Who can be a member?

Our members are our staff colleagues, our patients, and people from across the diverse community we serve.

Public Members

Membership is free and open to anyone 16 years of age or older living in Gloucestershire. Our public members include patients, volunteers and all other members of the public who wish to become involved in supporting the Trust. Members come from our six constituent districts.

The Trust also have members who use services, but are 'out of county' and they play an equally important role in sharing experiences and feedback, as well as electing the out of county Governor.

Members are represented by a Council of Governors comprising elected public members (who are elected by members), together with representatives of partner organisations, local authorities and Commissioners in the local community.

Staff Members

Our staff colleagues are also members of the Trust. Any staff colleagues employed by the Trust on permanent or fixed term contract of 12 months or longer are automatically enrolled as a member, but have can 'opt out'.

Staff colleagues employed through Gloucestershire Managed Services are also eligible to become members.

Staff members are represented on the Council of Governors by five elected staff governors members (who are elected by staff).

Our Council of Governors

A driving force behind our Trust is the active involvement of members of the public, patients and staff through our Council of Governors.

Our governors represent the views and interests of Trust members and the local community, to ensure our Trust is rooted in its community needs and the things that matter most to our staff.

Governors are responsible for holding the Non-executive Directors, individually and collectively, to account for the performance of the Board of Directors, and for representing Trust members. Governors are members who stand to be elected or are appointed.

Our Public Governors

Public Governors have a primary responsibility to represent the interests of the members who elected them as well as their local constituent communities.

We have 13 Public Governors and they provide an important link between the hospital and the local community, enabling us to gather views from local people and to feedback what is happening within the Trust.

Public Governors are made up of two elected individuals from each of the six districts and one from 'out of county' (which represents those who use our services from outside of Gloucestershire). They reflect members' interests and work on their behalf to improve health services for the future. By passing on ideas and suggestions Members also can help Governors carry out their role effectively.

Our Staff Governors

Staff Governors have the same role as Public Governors and are elected to represent the members of the staff constituency, as well as the wider membership and local communities. Staff Governors represent four key groups: allied healthcare professionals; medical and dental staff; nursing and midwifery; other and non-clinical staff.

As employees of the trust, Staff Governors bring a unique understanding of the issues faced by an NHS Foundation Trust, which they should seek to use in representing their members' interests and holding the non-executive directors to account for the performance of the board.

Our Appointed Governors

The Trust has four Appointed Governors who bring a wide range of experience in representing the views from their appointing organisations, which for Gloucestershire include:

▷ NHS Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board;

▷ Gloucestershire County Council;

▷ Healthwatch Gloucestershire;

▷ Age UK Gloucestershire.

Why become a member?

The core benefit of becoming a member is to have a voice, helping to shape the way services are provided.

Members also contribute to the future direction of the organisation, and ensure the Trust is responsive to the needs of local people and communities.

Alongside this, membership provides opportunities to show support for the Trust and its work.

Becoming a member gives the opportunity to learn more about what we do and to be involved in shaping services and sharing your views.

As a member you will:

✓ Be part of a community interested in the development of health and care services across Gloucestershire

✓ Be kept up to date about our plans for the future and give us your views and opinions

✓ Be invited to events and Annual Members Meeting;

✓ Receive a quarterly newsletter, keeping you up to date with news and developments

✓ Benefit from discounts on many purchases through Health Service Discounts

✓ All members aged 16 or over are able to stand as a Governor or vote for a Governor

✓ Learn about volunteering opportunities and other ways you can get involved

Our membership objectives 2024–2026

Our vision is to develop a more representative membership.

Gloucestershire Hospitals has been an NHS Foundation Trust since 2004 and we have a combined public and staff membership of around 12,000 members.

Our vision is to develop a more representative membership that means something to local people so they can be actively engaged in shaping services and how we work. Over the next two years, we want to improve how we engage and involve members, and ensure that we reflect the diversity of our amazing communities.

To achieve this vision, our strategy for 2024-2026 sets out four core aims:

1 Develop a membership that is representative of our diverse communities

2 Support the Council of Governors to be reflective and representative of our diverse communities

3 To improve the quality of engagement and communication with members

4 Make new investments which reduce future spend

Develop a membership that is representative of our diverse communities

We recognise that the value of membership lies in the quality of engagement, not solely in the numbers.

We want to organically build and recruit members from our six districts to ensure that it is representative of our diverse communities, and in turn enables wider representation on our Council of Governors.

To achieve this, we will:

▷ **Simplify the process for becoming a member.** We will make the process of applying simpler, more accessible and well publicised, including promoting the use of our online membership application form.

▷ **Proactively engage areas with low membership and demographic gaps.** We will use our database to understand where we have low representation and which demographic groups are also underrepresented.

▷ **Develop targeted campaigns to recruit members from under-represented areas.** We will work with partner organisations to explore and develop new ways of promoting membership to those who may not have considered becoming a member.

▷ **Promote membership opportunities to younger people in our community.** We will work with partner organisations to encourage membership from young people, and enable them to get involved in a wide range of ways with the Trust.

▷ **Refresh the membership pages on the Trust's website.** We will improve our webpages and link to our 'Get Involved' section to ensure information is engaging and appealing, with links to newsletters and event details. This will include

making it clearer to public and staff members how they can get in touch with Governors.

▷ **Post regular messages on social media.** We will post regular information about membership, and information, news and links which our members will find useful.

▷ **Promote more clearly the benefits of membership.** We will re-define how we promote the benefits of membership, and explore the language we use to describe what membership means, to make it more relevant to our communities.

▷ **Refresh our membership recruitment material.** We will review our recruitment material to make this more impactful and engaging. This will include developing new membership posters, postcards and other materials to assist in recruiting new members.

▷ **Develop a schedule of community events.** We will build into our engagement programme attendance at a wide range of events to promote membership and encourage people to sign up. This will be targeted to key areas where uptake can be strengthened.

Support the Council of Governors to be reflective and representative of our diverse communities

We need to work with the Council of Governors to ensure they are representative and reflective of the diverse communities we serve.
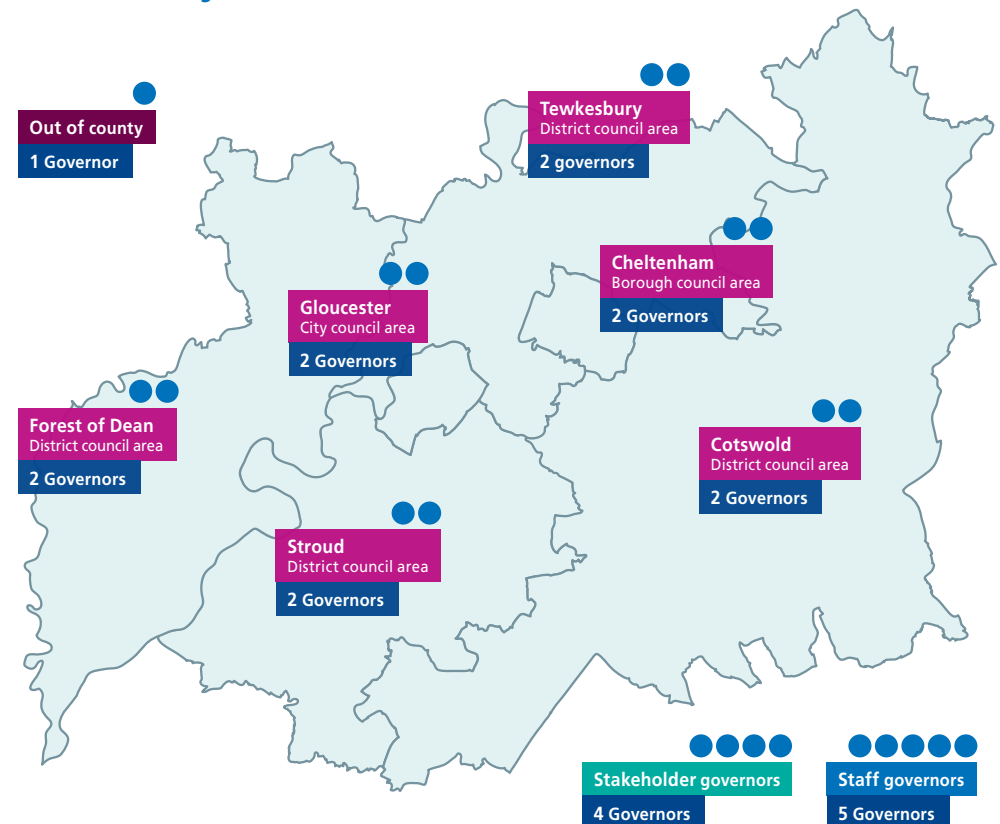
Where some groups are less well represented, we will try new ways of engaging with them to encourage them to become members and stand for election. This includes many of our seldom heard communities and young people.

To achieve this, we will:

▷ Proactively engage members to stand for election. We will use the membership engagement programme to listen and enable individuals to stand for election, in particular from seldom heard groups and young people.

▷ Promote how to become a Governor to younger people. We will work with our Young Influencers and partner organisations to encourage young people to stand for Governor.

▷

▷ Support training and development for Governors. Ensure training and support is available for Governors to ensure they are empowered and successful in the role.

▷ Refresh the Governor pages on the website. We will improve our Governor webpages, sharing the role and importance of the Council of Governors. This will include simplifying how people can get in touch with Governors.

Our Council of Governor constituency areas

Out of county
1 Governor

Tewkesbury
District council area
2 governors

Cheltenham
Borough council area
2 Governors

Gloucester
City council area
2 Governors

Forest of Dean
District council area
2 Governors

Cotswold
District council area
2 Governors

Stroud
District council area
2 Governors

Stakeholder governors
4 Governors

Staff governors
5 Governors

To improve the quality of engagement and communication with members

We aim to build our membership organically, ensuring we are representative of the communities we serve.

We recognise that we want a more engaged and active membership rather than a large but passive one. Improving the quality of our engagement with our members is therefore a key priority.

We want to create real two-way engagement between the Trust and its members and provide meaningful opportunities for members to engage in issues. Members should feel involved in the organisation and supported to add value to the Trust. It will also help us to support our Governors in representing the interests of members and the public.

By 2026, we want to develop a partnership culture between members, Governors and the Trust to ensure more effective relationships in shaping decision-making.

▷ **Refresh existing communication channels with members.** We will improve how we communicate and engage with our members in order to provide the information that members want in an accessible way. This will include the systems and tools used to manage communication.

▷ We will use a range of different channels to target different groups; create an ongoing dialogue with members; provide opportunities for information sharing, discussion, and feedback from members; and celebrate Trust achievements so that members can share in this success.

▷ **Promote the work of Governors.** We will promote ways for members to get in touch with Governors, make the process simpler, so that ideas and issues can be shared. We will improve how we feedback on issues Governors have raised on members' behalf.

▷ **Explore alternative newsletter tools.** The Trust currently sends a quarterly newsletter electronically to members. However, the technology and system are now out of date and difficult to use. We will work with the Trust Charity and Communication Team to identify other options, that are better quality and value for money.

▷ **Build partnership engagement.** We will work with voluntary and community partners to increase our reach in sharing information, news and how people can get involved in working with the Trust, including membership.

▷ **Develop a programme of community engagement events.** We will develop a schedule of community engagement where the Trust will be present or leading, with support from Governors, so that members and the public have a range of opportunities to get involved where they live, and engage directly with their elected Governors.

▷ **Improve opportunities for members to give their views.** We will strengthen the ways members can engage with the Trust, for example through participation in events, community focus groups and surveys.

To keep accurate and informative databases of members and tools to engage with people.

The Trust uses a membership database, which holds a range of contact and demographic information for all members, in line with data protection legislation.

However, this needs a review to ensure that the best systems are in use that provide a range of options to engage members and share information.

Explore alternative database systems.

The Trust has a third-party database, which is costly and is difficult to use.

It also only has limited functionality, meaning alternative ways of communicating with members and Governors is not available (i.e. such as SMS).

Maintain an accurate membership database.

Our membership records need to be up to-date and meet regulatory requirements, but we also rely on this to identify which groups may be underrepresented or to identify trends in membership.

The database will help us target recruitment initiatives to best effect and be linked to the trust website.

Delivering the strategy and evaluating success

We aim to build our membership organically, ensuring we are representative of the communities we serve.

Through this strategy, we want to change and improve our engagement with members and we recognise the importance of measuring its impact and evaluating its success.

Implementation

We will develop an action plan which will set out the steps we will take each year to deliver the strategy. The action plan will evolve and develop as the strategy is implemented and we learn more from what local people tell us they need.

We will take a phased approach over two years to deliver the strategy, with the first year focused on refreshing existing systems and processes as well as developing the plans for our community engagement.

Evaluating success

The Council of Governors is responsible for the delivery of the strategy, and Governors will take an active role in monitoring the implementation and regular reports will be made to the Council on progress. There should also be a process to evaluate how Governors engage with communities.

The principal ways in which we will assess the success of the strategy will include:

▷ Reviewing the Trust's Membership
▷ Measuring Involvement
▷ Measuring Impact

Reviewing the Trust's Membership

We will conduct a biannual review of the profile of the Trust's public membership to identify any under-represented groups.

This will help us to understand whether our targeted recruitment campaigns have been successful and whether we are succeeding in ensuring our membership is reflective of the diversity of our communities.

The reviews will look at the following factors:

▷ Demographics: This includes age, gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and geographic location.
▷ Interests: This includes the types of activities that members are interested in, such as volunteering, advocacy, and specific service or health areas.
▷ Engagement levels: This includes how often members attend events, participate in discussions, and contact the Trust.

The results of the analysis will be used to make our changes work, and we will also use the information to help support diversity and inclusion across our membership.

Measuring Involvement

To ensure that our efforts to promote a more active and involved public and staff membership have been successful, we will regularly measure the following metrics:

Readership of the membership newsletter

Track the number of members who open and read the newsletter, as well as the clicks on links within the newsletter and the content;

Attendance at engagement events

We will track the number of members who attend our engagement events, as well as the level of participation in discussions and activities.

Issues that members have responded to

We will track the number of times members have contacted us about specific issues, as well as the nature of their concerns.

Surveys of all members

We will conduct regular surveys of all members to assess their views on our work and their level of involvement, and engagement with Governors.

This data will help us to understand how well we are connecting with members and to identify areas where we can improve.

Measuring Impact

Our annual Engagement and Involvement Review includes a key focus on membership and governor engagement.

However, we also need to understand and evaluate the wider impact of our membership work.

This includes how we recruit and retain a representative membership, which is reflected in the make-up of the Council of Governors.

We also need to demonstrate what has changed within the Trust as a result of members' views and activities. To do this, we will use a variety of methods, including:

Surveys

We can survey members to gauge their satisfaction with the Trust's engagement work and to identify areas where we can improve;

Data analysis

We will analyse data on membership demographics, engagement levels, and satisfaction levels to identify trends and patterns.

This information will help us to understand the impact of our membership work and to make changes to ensure that it is meeting the needs of our members.

Appendix 1: Membership Strategy Action Plan

The following action plan sets out how the vision and objectives set out in our Membership Strategy 2024–2026 will be delivered. This will be reported to Council of Governors.

Objective	Aim	Actions to deliver the objective	
		Year 1	**Year 2**
Develop a membership that is representative of our diverse communities	Simplify the process for becoming a member	Review processes for signing up, streamline information.	Ensure system is well publicised and printed version available.
	Proactively engage areas with low membership and demographic gaps	Analyse membership data and map out areas of low representation	Campaign to target key areas and organically grow membership by up to 10% per year.
	Develop targeted campaigns to recruit members from under-represented areas	Analyse membership data and map out areas of low representation	Work with partner organisations and VCS Alliance to build membership
	Engage with patients and relatives on membership	Work with the Patient Experience Team to identify how membership can be promoted to patients and carers within the hospitals	Materials and approaches in place to engage and recruit members via patient experience.
	Promote membership opportunities to younger people in our community	Co-design membership information with Young Influencers and young people	Work with partner organisations to recruit members under 25 years of age and link with Young Influencers.

Objective	Aim	Actions to deliver the objective	
		Year 1	Year 2
	Refresh the membership pages on the Trust's website	Refresh membership pages on the Trust website to make them more accessible and informative.	Keep content of membership web pages up to date with new content
	Post regular messages on social media	post regular information about membership, and information, news, events and links which our members will find useful	Use social media to target potential members and promote events and how to get involved.
	Promote the benefits of membership	Review how we promote the benefits of membership, and explore the language we use to describe what it means.	Explore 'Friends of' approach in promoting membership.
	Refresh membership recruitment material	Undertake review of existing membership recruitment and engagement material. Design new material (e.g., posters, flyers).	Review impact of the new materials through feedback from members and engagement events and refresh this where appropriate.
	Develop a schedule of community events	Build a monthly planner of engagement events and activities. Share with Governors to encourage support and attendance	Ensure all engagement activity is published on the website and social media and including in the Engagement Tracker. Log and share Governor attendance and involvement.

Objective	Aim	Actions to deliver the objective	
		Year 1	Year 2
Support the Council of Governors to be reflective and representative of our diverse communities	Proactively engage members to stand for election as Governor	Refresh information on what being a Governor involves and why to stand for election	Use analysis and data to highlight areas and representative groups to encourage individuals to stand of election.
	Promote how to become a Governor to younger people	We will work with our Young Influencers and partner organisations to encourage young people to stand for Governor.	Elect at least one Governor who is under 25.
	Support training and development for Governors	Review training and support is available for Governors.	Ensure all Governors are able to access and complete training that supports their role.
	Refresh the Governor pages on the website	Review and refresh Governor webpages. This will include simplifying how people can get in touch with Governors.	Ensure that profiles and Governor experiences are used on the website and shared via social media.
	Staff Governor information	Review information for staff on what membership means, profile Staff Governors and how to contact them	Ensure staff understand the role of Staff Governor and people are empowered to stand for election.
	Staff Governors	Establish a Staff Governor engagement group with People & OD Leadership so provide support and advocacy for staff engagement	Ensure wide and robust promotion of Staff Governor elections – ensuring a wide range of candidates and increase the number of staff voting.

Objective	Aim	Actions to deliver the objective	
		Year 1	Year 2
To improve the quality of engagement and communication with members	Refresh existing communication channels with members	Survey members on communication channels and information that is shared.	Undertake analysis of which issues and stories have been read most in the membership newsletters and via social media.
		Develop new approaches based on feedback.	Launch second member survey.
	Promote the work of Public Governors	Promote ways for members to get in touch with Governors.	Feedback on issues Governors have raised on members' behalf.
		Promote events and activities where Governors will be present	
		Review process of how to get in touch with Governors to ensure it is simple to use.	
	Build partnership engagement	Work with voluntary and community partners to increase our reach in sharing information, news and how people can get involved in working with the Trust, including membership.	Regular Trust features, including promotion of membership, shared by community partners.
	Develop a programme of community engagement events	Publish a schedule of community engagement where the Trust will be present or leading, with support from Governors.	Track the number of members who attend our engagement events, as well as the level of participation in discussions and activities

Objective	Aim	Actions to deliver the objective	
		Year 1	**Year 2**
	Improve opportunities for members to give their views	Promote ways in which members can engage with the Trust, including participation at events, community focus groups and surveys.	Increase member turnout at Annual Members Meeting (incl face to face, virtually and number of views of AMM YouTube videos)
To keep accurate and informative databases of members and tools to engage with people	Explore alternative database systems	Review Trust Membership Database.	Provide regular reports to Council of Governors on key trends and developments in membership numbers and patterns.
	Maintain an accurate membership database	Ensure that our database is updated with all the latest contact and has the latest information and is complete	Use the database to help target events, engagement and initiatives to best effect and be linked to the trust website to promote.
	Explore alternative newsletter tools	Review newsletter systems to improve the quality of communications and analysis.	Track the number of members who open and read the newsletter, as well as the clicks on links within the newsletter and the content

NHS

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**Membership
Strategy**

2024–2026