

March 2020

Dear Chairs, Company Secretaries and Governor Leads,

Thank you for downloading the GovernWell Induction toolkit from NHS Providers. This is a free resource which we hope will provide an efficient and effective basis for a comprehensive induction for new foundation trust governors.

The purpose of our work with governors is that a committed, knowledgeable and effective council of governors is one of the cornerstones of a foundation trusts success. It has a key role to play in the future of the NHS in providing support and challenge to the board helping shape the organisation's future strategy.

Research shows governors who had participated in early induction and training were more likely to say that they were clear about their roles and responsibilities. They were also more confident in their ability to represent the needs of the community and hold the trust board to account via the non-executive directors.

The toolkit has been designed with local delivery in mind, allowing the trust team members with whom the governors will be working most closely to lead the process. However, we can also assist with delivery of all or any part of the programme if that suits you and your trust better – please don't hesitate to contact me if you would like to discuss this further.

You will find in the Appendix some preparatory information for you to think about and use to brief your governors on how to get the best from their induction. We would recommend reviewing these suggestions a couple of months ahead of the announcement of your election results, so that you can be ready to swing into action as soon as your new governors are identified. You will probably also want to think about the timing of the induction sessions well in advance, and book rooms and slots in some of your colleagues' diaries if you are going to invite them to make themselves available at key points during the induction phase to be introduced to your new governors.

GovernWell is a programme intended to support governors throughout their term of office, and you can find out more about the full range of courses and development resources we offer on our website

[www.nhsproviders.org/governwell](http://www.nhsproviders.org/governwell)

I believe very strongly that this toolkit and similar support projects, combined with GovernWell's track record of quality training will provide the bedrock for the excellent governance that we are all aiming for, and ultimately contribute to improving the overall quality of healthcare in the NHS.

Yours sincerely,

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## APPENDIX

### Instructional information on using the toolkit

The toolkit has been prepared for use in both established and newly authorised trusts. If you are in a newly established trust, you may have quite a number of new governors to induct at once, and you will need to take this into account when thinking about timings. Established trusts with only a few new governors to induct after an election or round of stakeholder organisation appointments may be able to deliver the induction training in slightly less time, given that there will be fewer people present to ask questions. The programme is very interactive, with plenty of group work, so the number of participants might affect the duration quite significantly.

The chapters are not uniform in length, so we would suggest that you consider how and when to deliver each one quite carefully. The first chapter is relatively brief and focuses on how the rest of the programme will work, so it could easily be combined with a tour of the trust or an “ice-breaker” type activity with existing governors (in established trusts) and key staff. You might also want to cover other admin tasks, such as taking photographs, explaining expenses and getting ID badges and car park permits, or setting up buddying/ mentoring arrangements on the same day.

The other four chapters are fairly substantial, and we would probably not recommend trying to deliver them all in one go. You might find that two other sessions to cover chapters two and three, then four and five would be a more realistic approach, especially with a large group. However, the intention is that the toolkit is flexible and adaptable to the needs of each trust and group of governors, so take some time to think about what would work best for your trust and plan accordingly.

### Preparatory work for you

The PowerPoint presentation for Chapter 2 needs some attention prior to delivery. We have provided for each trust to insert its own mission/strategic objectives for explanation and discussion, and the same goes for each trust’s values. The slides are very simple in format, so we hope that this will not be an onerous task at all, and will help to make the presentation relevant and engaging. Other than the few in Chapter 2 which needs some minor adaptation the PowerPoint slides are all ready to go.

The workbooks are for use by your governors for reference and to make notes in and you will need to print one for each participant. With regard to other materials that you will need to deliver the programme, we suggest that you have the following additional documents available for consultation during the induction sessions:

- The trust constitution
- The trust’s code of conduct
- The latest annual report and accounts, including quality accounts
- Monitor’s\* *The NHS foundation trust code of governance* (last updated July 2014)
- Monitor’s\* *Guide to the statutory duties of foundation trust governors* (Aug 2013)
- Details of the geographical area covered by the trust and constituency boundaries
- Trust strategy/operational plan
- Membership strategy
- Structure charts
- Board member biographies

\* Monitor became part of [NHS Improvement](#) in April 2016

## Preparatory work for the governors

You will no doubt have given prospective candidates for election to the council some background about the trust prior to their declaration of intention to stand as a candidate, but appointed governors may not have had that opportunity. In any event, it's probably worth making sure that your new governors have been provided with some more detail in advance of the induction programme, and encouraged to prepare for it.

We would suggest that a copy of the last Annual Report and Accounts and Quality Account is a suitable document for this purpose. It's a manageable size and comprehensive in its scope, so it should give your new governors a good picture of the trust and the information that they will need to answer some of the questions in the induction workbooks. You can send a copy out with your letter of welcome to the trust or include a link to where it can be found on the trust website.

## Pre-course information

Governors who are new to the role will have a lot of questions, so it's important to ensure that they feel well informed about the first few weeks of their new role.

Key details to set out in your letter of welcome include:

- Names and contact details for the team with whom they will be liaising most frequently (e.g. company secretary, governor lead etc.)
- Dates, times and venues for council meetings for the rest of the year
  - Encourage governors to let you know if they need special facilities in order to participate in council and other meetings, such as large-print documentation, translation services, a T-loop or wheelchair access (and respond to such notifications promptly, assuring the governors that you will do your best to meet these needs)
- Dates, times and venues for the induction programme
  - Include information about likely duration and refreshments – invite requests to accommodate special dietary needs
  - Mention plans for site tours and whether or not this will involve walking long distances or taking stairs – encourage governors to let you know if they have any special access needs
- Dates, times and venues for any other relevant meetings, such as one-to-ones with the chair or member engagement events coming up
- Trust location maps, site plans and information about car parking and public transport
- Location maps and parking/public transport details for any off-site meeting venues
- Arrival instructions – how do the governors get into the building in which the meeting will be held?
- Do they need to report to anyone specific?
- Any relevant dress code (including bare-below-the-elbow rules for visits to clinical areas)

## At the end of the induction

Now that the new governors have got to know each other a little they will probably be more than happy to share information with their colleagues and with the trust. You might want to carry out a skills and development audit to

find out what special knowledge and experience your governors are bringing into the trust, and in which areas they feel they need further training.

Make sure that you act on the results of the audit though – it's important to ensure that the momentum that has built up during the induction phase is maintained and you let the governors know when they will next be meeting and about other upcoming opportunities for engagement.