

Our governors

Governors are volunteers who represent you when thinking about health services. They make sure you get the very best service from your NHS and that your voice is heard when the trust is deciding on future health services.

Message from Lead Governor Sonja Bigg.

"During the past 12 months, we have been out and about speaking to you about your local health services to get an understanding of your experiences of all organisations that provide health services.

There were a few changes to the Council of Governors in 2017/18. We sadly waved goodbye to a few and no-one will be missed more than Jo Naismith – the publicly elected governor for Sevenoaks – who had been with the team from day one. Jo had served with us on the shadow council and completed three full years as a governor. When her term of office came up for re-election Jo decided not to stand again. However, she is still supporting us as chair of the League of Friends at Edenbridge hospital.

It has been a busy and productive year, working with you and the trust to make sure you get the best services possible for you and your family."



Out and about with our governors

It was a jam-packed year for our governors as they all rolled up their sleeves to get stuck into their duties.

All governors are elected by the public and staff members and some governors are appointed by local organisations, such as Kent County Council, Age UK, the Kent Head Teacher Association and Kent universities. All these people give their time freely to make sure you get the very best service from your NHS.

In September, we held an event in Sevenoaks, called "Let's discuss diabetes", attended by more than 160 people. A number of services that help people to prevent and control diabetes, were on hand to give advice to help people to manage their diabetes effectively. The governors were there, alongside members of the public and representatives from other organisations.

Jo Naismith, governor in Sevenoaks at that time, gave a warm welcome to a range of speakers, including Geoff Whittington from Fixing Dad who had been diagnosed with diabetes and managed to reduce his symptoms, thanks to adopting a healthier lifestyle. This event was held in conjunction with our Annual Members' Meeting and Annual General Meeting and attracted a great deal of interest and produced some excellent feedback.

Governors met our foundation trust members and others to see how they felt about our services. They caught up with

a cross section of staff who work hard to provide them. These are tough times financially so it's essential for governors to understand the challenges staff are experiencing and, just as importantly, appreciate the amazing achievements they have made in improving the lives of the people they care for.

Governors attended a number of community hospital visits and saw first-hand the way in which staff care deeply for their patients. Hospital environments were found to be very good. The wards, clinics and waiting areas were clean with clear signposting (although some adjustments have been made as a result of visits). Privacy and dignity of care is high up on our agenda. The care of patients with dementia was a large focus for the trust this year and the governors were impressed with this work.

Governors realise that recruitment and retention of staff is an ongoing challenge and all NHS staff are feeling some pressure due to staff shortages and increasing workloads. The ever increasing elderly population and a lack of increased funding to compensate are huge challenges for KCHFT staff. Once again though, the governors praise the dedication of staff who provide services so well, despite these challenges.

Sonja said: "The council and the governors themselves have benefited hugely from another year of experience. We are committed to ensuring your voice is heard and your interests are always the main consideration."



Working in partnership

The first Kent and Medway governor network meeting took place this year – a useful event for KCHFT governors to meet governors from East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust, South East Coast Ambulance Trust, and Medway Foundation Trust.

Governors from these four organisations also enjoyed a successful local conference; a second conference will be held later this year.

It's been a busy year:

This year, your governors also took part in:

- trying to find a new chair for the trust, as well as the non-executive director appointment process
- appointing the trust's auditors
- our 'We care' programme reviewing services
- PLACE visits
- formal consultations
- the staff awards judging panel
- public events and celebrations
- reviewing the trust's engagement strategy.

Governors work behind the scenes in various ways:

- We meet as a full Council of Governors in public four times-a-year.
- We serve on committees of the council.
- We get involved in clinical commissioning group (CCG) and local GP patient experience groups.
- We make connections by meeting with other organisations which provide healthcare to local people.
- We take part in quality safety visits, covering a wide range of services, to make sure the trust is providing safe and quality services in an appropriate environment in a caring and supportive way.

Key to photos:

Public governors

- A Ashford** John Fletcher
B Dartford Avtar Sandhu
C Canterbury Mary Straker
D Dover/Deal Carol Coleman
E Maidstone David Price
F Gravesham Pete Sutton
G Sevenoaks John Harris
H Shepway Jo Clifford
I Thanet Jane Hetherington
J Rest of England Anthony Moore

Swale, Tonbridge and Malling and Tunbridge Wells are currently vacant.

Staff governors

- K Adult Services** Dr Amy Heskett
L Adult Services Sonja Bigg
M Children's Services Maria-Loukia Bratsou
N Corporate Services Jan Allen
O Health and Wellbeing Services Claire Buckingham

Appointed governors

- P Universities** Dr Susan Plummer
Q Public Health Andrew Scott-Clark
R Age UK Nigel Stratton
S Kent Association of Head Teachers Matthew Wright

Contact us by phoning 01622 211908 or emailing kcht.governors@nhs.net

You can find out more information about the role governors play and being a member of our trust at www.kentcht.nhs.uk/governors