



# ...Patient Focus...

## The Patients' Newsletter

Foundation Trust  
Election Special  
January 2007

WELCOME to this foundation trust "election special" issue of Patient Focus. As many of you will already know, following an enthusiastic response to our consultation and membership recruitment drive, we are well on our way to becoming an NHS foundation trust. Our formal application was submitted to the Department of Health last year and we have now been put forward for the final stage of assessment by the independent foundation trust regulator, Monitor.

This rigorous assessment will take place from January onwards and, if we are successful, we could be granted NHS foundation trust status as early as April this year.

We are delighted that more than 11,000 patients, carers, members of the public and staff have already signed up to become members of the Royal Brompton & Harefield NHS Foundation Trust.

Now we need to ask members to go one step further and consider standing as governors in the forthcoming elections. This is a crucial role which will help shape the future of Royal Brompton and Harefield hospitals.

17 governors will be elected from among the membership – 5 from our staff, and 12 from our patient, carer, and public members. A diverse selection of candidates will create a robust election and result in the appointment of a strong council of governors. This will help us continue to set the pace in heart and lung research and treatment, to benefit our patients now and in the future.

Any foundation trust member can stand for election as a governor and the process is quick and easy. We know from existing NHS foundation trusts that governors find the role rewarding and relish the chance to make a difference.

Thank you for your interest and support. We very much look forward to continuing our work with members from around the country.

**Robert Craig – foundation trust project director**  
• [r.craig@rbht.nhs.uk](mailto:r.craig@rbht.nhs.uk) •



## Governors needed

WOULD you like the chance to influence the future running of the Royal Brompton & Harefield NHS Foundation Trust and represent the views of members? Then why not apply to join the council of governors?

Any foundation trust member can put themselves forward as a governor – regardless of background or level of experience. All that is needed is enthusiasm, good communication skills and a commitment to attend several meetings each year.

The council of governors will be made up of 12 patients, carers and members of the public, five staff representatives and six members from partner organisations such as Imperial College and local Primary Care Trusts (PCTs). As our hospitals serve the whole country, many roles will be divided into geographical constituencies to ensure nationwide representation.

Governors will be elected by foundation trust members and will oversee the board of directors who are responsible for the running and planning of hospital services.

Governors will also appoint the future chairman and non-executive directors of the board. Nominations for governors close on February 9. Elections will be overseen by Electoral Reform Services Ltd.

If you are interested in standing as a governor or would like more information, simply contact the Foundation Trust Office to ask for an information pack:

[foundation@rbht.nhs.uk](mailto:foundation@rbht.nhs.uk) or 01895 828 631. Details will also be available on the Trust website:  
<http://www2.rbht.nhs.uk/foundation/governor>



### As a foundation trust, we aim to:

- Develop new specialist treatments for heart and lung diseases using emerging technology
- Invest more than £100 million in buildings and equipment at both sites over the next five years
- Build on our impressive track record of leading-edge research, developing new alliances and relationships with academic and commercial partners
- Attract clinical and academic experts who will become future leaders in the UK and beyond

### The 23-member board of governors

#### 4 elected public members

1 from North West London, 1 from Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire, 1 from South of England, 1 from rest of England and Wales

#### 8 elected patients/carers

2 from North West London, 2 from Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire, 1 from South of England, 2 from rest of England and Wales, 1 carer anywhere in England and Wales

#### 5 elected staff members

3 from Royal Brompton, 2 from Harefield

#### 6 members appointed from RB&H's partner organisations

1 from Kensington & Chelsea PCT, 1 from Hillingdon PCT, 1 from Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea, 1 from London Borough of Hillingdon, 1 from National Heart & Lung Institute, 1 from Imperial College

## A voice for local people

BARNSELEY Hospital was one of the first to gain NHS foundation trust status and its lively group of governors plays a key role in shaping future services. As one of the governors, Jan Anderson says that the most satisfying thing about the role is being able to represent the voice of those who use the hospital. She says: "I attend a lot of local events and meet many hospital patients.

"Being a governor means that if I find out that someone has had a difficult time, I can do something about it. I can also pass on praise for the hospital and services to the operational team."

The governors at Barnsley work closely with the operational team and have raised and tackled a broad range of issues such as the branding of the hospital, its no smoking policy, and how to involve young people. Jan, who is a trained minister and is studying maths at the Open University, previously worked in advertising and as a freelance writer. She urges anyone interested in becoming a governor to have a go.

She says: "It was the first time that I had stood for any public office and I enjoyed the whole process, including the fun of the election."



Jan Anderson, governor at Barnsley Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

## Becoming a governor: your questions answered



FOUNDATION trust project director Robert Craig answers some common questions about becoming a governor.

### What is a governor?

This is a new role under NHS foundation trust (FT) status and every trust is required to set up a council of governors. Under our proposals, we will have a council of 23 governors – 17 elected and six appointed from partner organisations.

### What does a governor do?

Governors represent the interests of the foundation trust members who elect them. They advise the board of directors on setting the Trust's direction and strategy and hold them to account by ensuring that they comply with legal requirements and deliver agreed plans. Governors are also responsible for appointing the chairman and non-executive directors of the board.

### How much time will it take?

It's hard to predict, but the main duty is to attend around four meetings of the council of governors a year. These will probably take place at both sites – the Royal Brompton in Chelsea and Harefield in the borough of Hillingdon, Middlesex. Some governors will volunteer for committee duties on top of this and there will be opportunities to attend other more informal events. In addition, every governor will need to stay in touch with members' views on an ongoing basis. Induction and development programmes will be held to help governors understand the work of the Trust and their role in more detail.

### Will I get paid?

The Health & Social Care Act 2003 does not allow governors to be paid. However, expenses will be paid for travel to and from meetings and other out-of-pocket expenses, such as childcare.

### How do I become a governor?

Anyone who is a foundation trust member can stand for election to the council of governors by contacting the Foundation Trust Office (see details below). Governors are elected for a period of no more than three years, but can stand for re-election when their term of office ends.

### How do the elections work?

The elections will be run by postal ballot and overseen by Electoral Reform Services Ltd (ERS). Once the nominations are in, ERS will – at the end of February – issue ballot papers and a list of candidates and their statements to every foundation trust member. Ballot papers need to be returned by March 21 and the results will be announced by March 23.

### How do I find out more?

E-mail [foundation@rbht.nhs.uk](mailto:foundation@rbht.nhs.uk), call the membership office on 01895 828 631, or visit the website at <http://www2.rbht.nhs.uk/foundation>.

## RB&H foundation trust timetable

### FROM JANUARY:

Detailed assessment of Trust's FT application carried out by Monitor

### BY JANUARY 25

Election candidate nomination forms available

### FEBRUARY 9

Closing date for return of candidate nomination forms to Electoral Reform Services Ltd (ERS)

### END OF FEBRUARY

Ballot papers sent to members

### MARCH 21

Closing date for return of ballot papers

### MARCH 23

Announcement of the appointment of governors

### FROM APRIL

Possible authorisation of the Royal Brompton & Harefield NHS Foundation Trust

## Get involved: be a governor

*As governors, we really feel we are contributing towards planning for the future, improving the patient experience, and that the trust is listening to the community.*  
Anne Sewell, governor, Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust

*It's becoming our hospital. The whole ethos of consultation, sharing and patient focus is cascading down from the top.*  
Ian Mason, governor, Stockport NHS Foundation Trust

## RB&H: Leading the field

- Royal Brompton & Harefield NHS Trust is the largest centre for cardio respiratory care in the country and the leading provider of complex thoracic surgery
- In the most recent independent guide to hospitals in England and Wales, our hospitals were ranked as two of the top three hospitals for heart disease
- We serve over 80,000 outpatients and 26,000 inpatients each year
- Our Heart Attack Centre at Harefield has pioneered the use of primary angioplasty for the treatment of heart attacks
- Our services for children were given the highest possible rating in the most recent Healthcare Commission survey