



South Central Ambulance Service **NHS**
NHS Foundation Trust

Get *involved*

Becoming a foundation
trust governor

a members guide



Get involved

Foreword from the chairman and chief executive

We are delighted to welcome you as an aspiring governor of our NHS foundation trust.

We know from the many people we have spoken to at events, that there is a passionate interest in what we do and as members you can represent the views of our communities and help us shape policies and services for the future.

Our goal is to be clinically-led and patient-focused and deliver the best possible service to our local communities.

The purpose of this document is to help aspiring governors understand their role, how they can add value to the Trust and to describe the role of the Council of Governors and explain how it interacts with the Board of Directors and the rest of the Trust.

Governors form a vital part of our NHS foundation trust to ensure we remain locally accountable and as such they play an important role in acting as the eyes and ears of the members. They have the opportunities to work on specific projects and to represent SCAS locally and nationally.

We hope you will find this handbook useful.

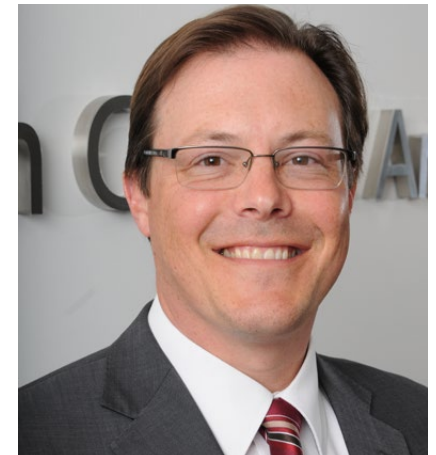
Further details are provided in the Constitution, please email getinvolved@scas.nhs.uk to obtain a copy.



Trevor Jones
Chairman



Will Hancock
Chief Executive



SCAS as a foundation trust

SCAS was awarded foundation trust status on 1 March 2012 and is now a public benefit organization with less central control and more local accountability. This is a real vote of confidence in your local ambulance service.

Becoming a foundation trust involved major changes in the way the Trust is governed, with our members and governors playing a vital role in this new governance structure.



$\times 3,250$ (ish)

To date SCAS has a public membership of around 13,100 members, drawn from across the South Central region. These people may have a personal or professional interest in SCAS, they may be a patient or a carer, or they may simply be members of the public who want to know more about their local ambulance service.

All our public and staff members are entitled to stand for election to the Council of Governors. Public members vote for governors in their geographical constituency and staff members elect governors according to their role, eg operational or non-operational.



Get involved

More public involvement

- As a member of our foundation trust, you have a recognised voice in our decision-making and can influence how we plan future services.

Staff development - There are more opportunities than ever before for our staff, including training, education and development, as well as opportunities for progression.

Better representation of our communities - We are better able to take into account the varied range of needs within our communities, by making sure our membership is representative.

Improved services - You have a greater say in helping us to develop a service which reflects the needs of local people - designing today the service that you want tomorrow.

Benefits of being a Foundation Trust

Competitive edge - As a foundation trust, we have more freedom to introduce new ideas, technology and techniques, thus enabling us to make decisions much more quickly.

Improved care for patients - As a foundation trust, we are able to introduce new technology and treatments much more quickly, and identify more clearly local education, training and development needs.

Autonomy - We don't have to get permission from other organisations, such as the Department of Health, to change and improve our services, which means we can respond better to our patients' changing needs.

Public engagement - We are able to work more closely with local communities to provide more advice and education on conditions such as stroke and heart disease, and helping local people learn how to save a life.

Financial freedom - We have the ability to increase our investment in new services, upgrading buildings and emergency vehicles, and developing our staff. Priorities are decided locally.

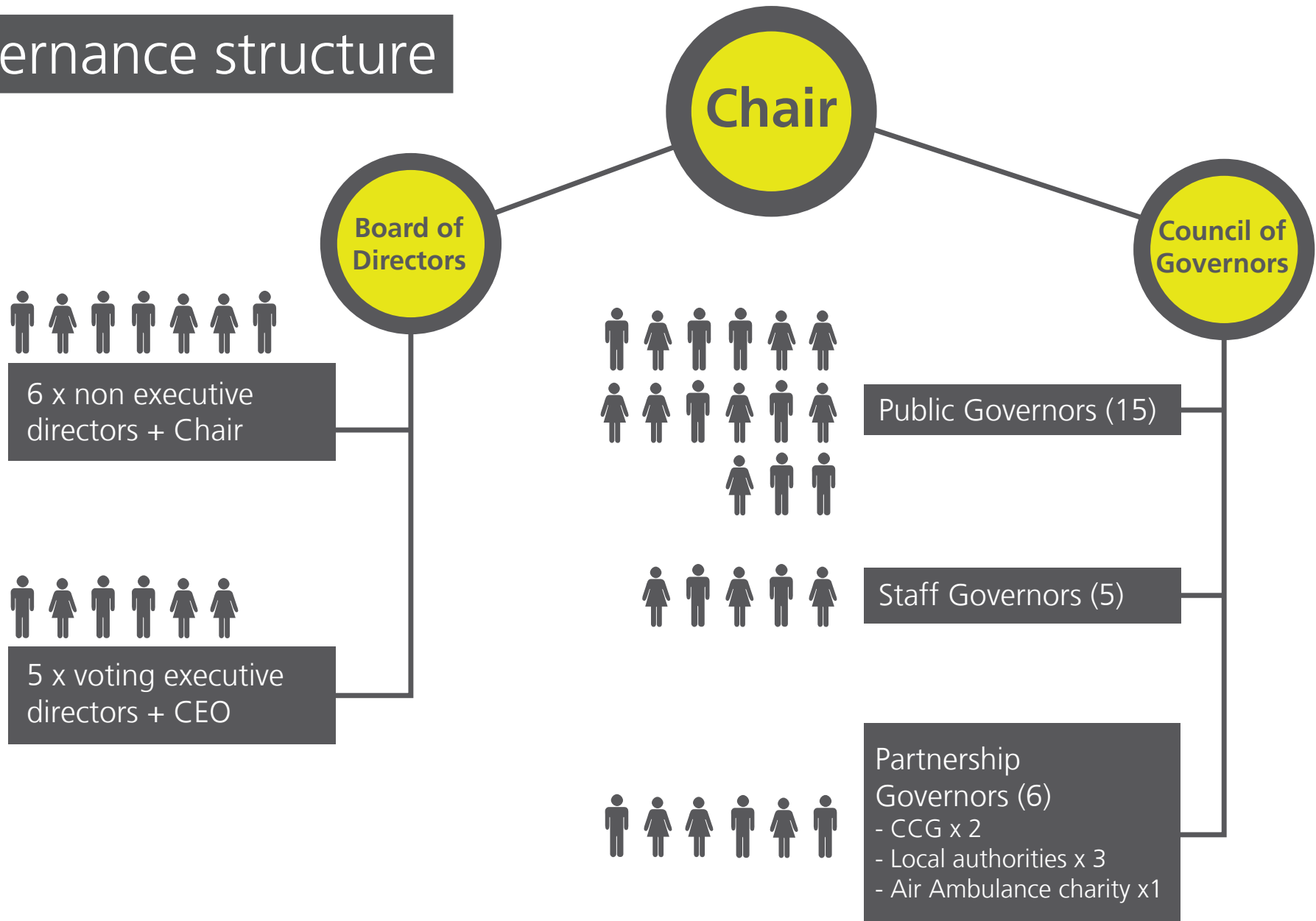
The Council of Governors

The Council of Governors works in conjunction with the Trust's Board of Directors to steer the Trust forward and is involved in developing its plans for the future, as well as advising on local health issues.

The Council is made up of 26 governors, plus a chair, who is also the chair of the Board of Directors. There are 15 elected public governors, five elected staff governors, and six partnership governors appointed by local organisations that SCAS works closely with.



Governance structure





CLAMP EQUIPMENT STORAGE

INVACARE

INVACARE

CLEAR

Get involved

Why become a governor?

If you have an interest in, and are committed to, improving public health, increasing the public's understanding and awareness of the ambulance service, and want a challenging role that can make a difference, then becoming a SCAS governor may be for you. You do not need to be a health specialist.

SCAS does not choose its public or staff governors – they are elected by our members – but we do have an idea of what we'd like our Council and governors to be like.

We are looking for an active, engaged and challenging Council of Governors; one that truly engages with members and ensures their views are heard and considered in the development of services.

SCAS has a long history of involving patients and the public, and as a foundation trust we ensure this happens formally through the governance structure. Governors represent the voice of the people in their constituencies, protect and promote their interests, and make and scrutinise decisions to ensure they are in the best interests of patients.

The role of the governor will develop over time as we work with our governors to ensure their skills and commitment are effectively channelled for the benefit of patients.

What are the roles and responsibilities of governors?

In addition to engaging with members and ensuring their voice is heard, governors have certain statutory duties that they are expected to perform as part of their role.

What are the statutory duties of governors?

The statutory responsibilities of governors as a collective are:

- » Hold NEDS to account for the performance of the Board
- » Represent the interests of the members of the Trust as a whole and the interests of the public
- » Appoint and, if necessary, remove the chairman and non-executive directors
- » Set the pay levels and conditions of employment for the chairman and non-executive directors
- » Approve the appointment of the Chief Executive (the Council does not appoint the chief executive)
- » Receive the Trust's Annual Report and Accounts and the Auditor's Report
- » Appoint or remove the Trust's Auditors
- » Approve significant transactions.

When preparing the SCAS Business Plan that sets out our plans for the coming years, legislation also states that the Trust Board of Directors "must have regard to the views of the Council of Governors". In practice, this means that the Council have a role to play in influencing and shaping the development of the Business Plan.

Governors should not incur personal expense in discharging the role of governor, and will be reimbursed for all reasonable expenses.

Additional responsibilities

Governors are expected to be committed to the goals, aspirations and philosophy of the Trust.

Public governors are also expected to make a time commitment to the Trust in the region of three days per month (minimum). The time will be spent undertaking the various responsibilities of a governor, including attending the formal Council of Governors meetings which take place at least four times a year. In addition, the Council have working groups, of which some governors are members, which meet on a regular basis to help the full Council fulfil its statutory and engagement duties. From time to time, governors are also required to attend training events, seminars and community events. Every effort is made to ensure venues are accessible and that the locations of meetings vary in order to ensure fairness and equity of opportunity as far as possible.

Adviser

Being a governor is not about 'rubber stamping' decisions made by the Board of Directors. The Council of Governors advises the Board of Directors as to public opinion and are guardians of the public interest. They make suggestions and when necessary question Board decisions.

As the key link between the Trust and the community we serve, public governors advise the Trust about the needs of patients and the community at large, as well as suggesting ways of involving patients and the public in developing and delivering services. The staff governors adopt the same advisory role on behalf of our workforce. All governors are expected to ensure that the views of the constituencies they represent are heard and fed back to the Trust. SCAS will work on a regular basis with governors to support them to do this effectively, for example by providing meeting venues and a dedicated area of the SCAS website.



Get involved

Ambassador and guardian

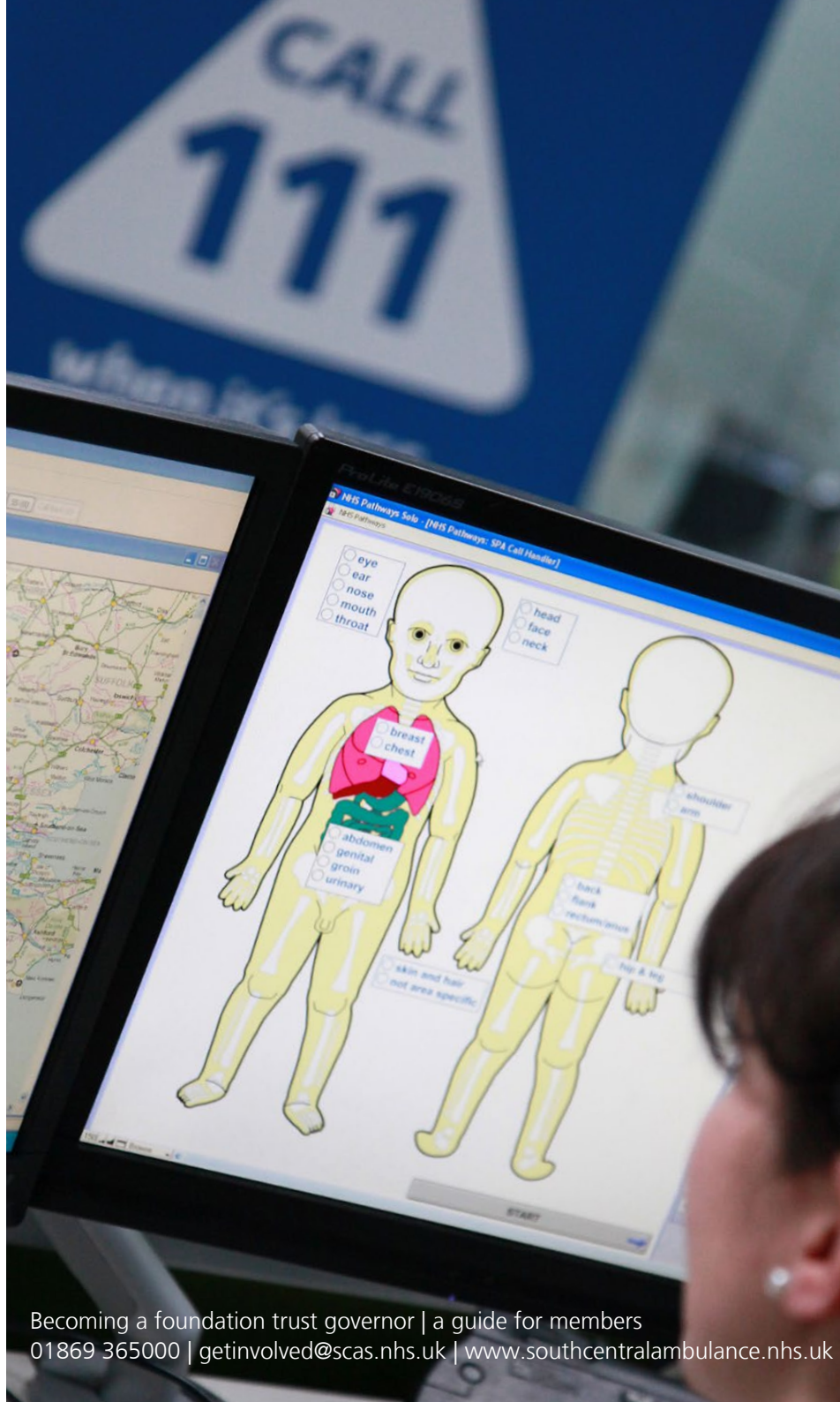
As ambassadors, governors promote the work of the Trust within their constituencies and also current health awareness campaigns. This may involve attending and/or speaking at local events or holding local surgeries for patients, member of the public or staff. Governors should be keen to recruit more people as members of the Trust so the widest possible range of views can be heard. As guardians, governors must ensure that the Trust is run in a way that reflects its purpose, and complies with the obligations placed on it as a foundation trust. Governors receive comprehensive training to enable them to carry out this responsibility.

Governor Code of Conduct

As ambassadors and guardians for the Trust, governors should conduct themselves in ways that is fitting for a public role. All governors must sign a declaration stating that they agree to follow the Trust's Code of Conduct for governors. In brief, this states that governors should:

- » Contribute to the workings of the Council of Governors in order for it to fulfil its role and functions
- » Act in the best interests of the Trust and its members
- » Adhere to the Trust's rules and relevant policies and support its objectives, in particular those of retaining foundation trust status
- » Actively support the vision and aims of the Trust
- » Not use the role to pursue personal or political agendas
- » Recognise that the role is a collective one. Governors exercise collective decision-making on behalf of all patients, members, local public and staff.
- » Note that the functions allocated to governors are not of a managerial nature
- » Recognise that, other than when attending meetings and events as a governor, governors have no rights or privileges over any other member of the Trust or member of the public
- » Value and respect other governors and all members of staff
- » Respect the confidentiality of information received in the role
- » Attend meetings of the Council of Governors, members' meetings and training events, on a regular basis, in order to carry out the role
- » Abide by the "Nolan Principles of Public Life": Selflessness; Integrity; Objectivity; Accountability; Openness; Honesty and Leadership.





Representing members

As mentioned earlier in this handbook, one of the key roles governors play is to ensure that the voice of members is heard in SCAS.

We're not planning to exclude people who are not governors or members from consultation and communication – far from it – but governors' input provides a clear and formal structure for listening to and involving patients, the public and staff. SCAS has a strong track record of effective involvement and we wish to work with our governors to build on this as a foundation trust.

Foundation trusts use various methods to enable governors and members to interact, such as the web, email, constituency meetings, seminars and surgeries.

Governors should also be seeking to increase the number of members in their constituency in line with the Trust's target membership. Having a broad and diverse membership will help us be sure we're listening to all groups within our communities, including those that are seldom heard.

SCAS provide lots of support for governors. The Company Secretary is the first point of contact for governors once they are elected, and supports governors in their role. The Trust's membership and engagement officer is also available to support membership recruitment and engagement activities. Governors may also choose to work together, particularly in constituencies where there is more than one governor, to inform people about SCAS, membership, and to engage with existing members.

Am I eligible to become a governor?

All SCAS FT members are eligible to nominate themselves for election to the Council of Governors, with the following exceptions. You may not become an elected governor if:

- » You have been declared bankrupt;
- » You have been sentenced to prison for three or more months within the preceding 5 years;
- » You are under 16 years old on the nominated date;
- » You are the spouse, partner, parent or child of a member of the Board of Directors of the Trust;
- » You are a member of a local authority's scrutiny committee covering health matters;
- » You are a governor or director of another NHS foundation trust or NHS trust;
- » You have been dismissed from paid employment with a health service body in the previous two years (not including redundancy);
- » You are required to register under the Sex Offender Act 1997 or considered unsuitable (by the Board of Directors) on the basis of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. DBS checks will be undertaken.

You may also wish to consider your suitability to become a governor if:

- » You have been previously employed by the Trust;
- » You have been seconded to the Trust / provided services on a voluntary basis;
- » You are employed by an organisation likely to have contractual relationships with the Trust;
- » You are involved with partnership organisations.



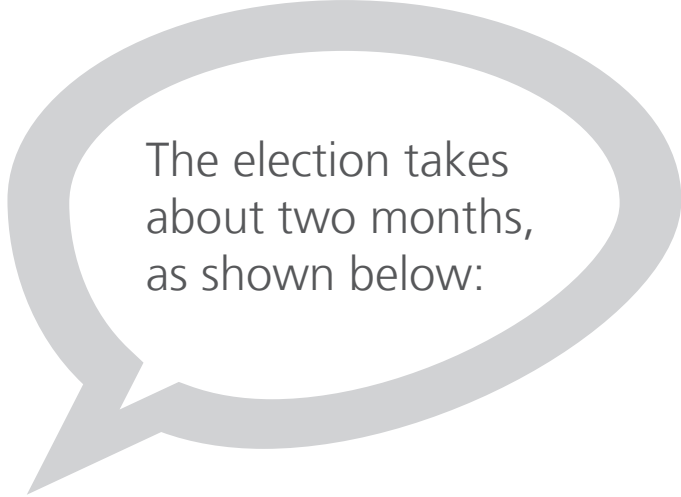
Governors are expected to be in post for up to three years (ne term). After the term, they can choose to stand for re-election for up to a further three years. After two terms they are no longer eligible for re-election. Governors can resign at any time, but will be encouraged to see out the full term of their appointment where possible.

Get involved

How do governor elections work?

Candidates will be given the opportunity to write a brief statement about why they are standing for election, to introduce themselves to members and encourage people to vote for them.

An external agency is used to run the governor elections, to ensure that they take place completely impartially. Nominations and ballot papers are handled by this external agency, and the agency sends out information to all members to enable them to vote.



The election takes about two months, as shown below:

Week 1 - 3

Notice of elections and nomination papers for members to nominate themselves to stand as a governor are made available to all members

Week 4

Nomination forms to be returned to election agency.

Week 5 - 7

Nomination statements from candidates made available to all members, along with ballot papers

Week 8

Close of election and date by which completed ballot papers must be returned to the agency.

Week 9

Publication of results.

What should I do if I decide to stand for election?

Checklist:

- ✓ **Have you registered as a member of our Trust?**

Remember - You cannot vote or stand for election unless you are a member. If you want to become a member, please contact our Membership officer getinvolved@scas.nhs.uk

- ✓ **Have you applied to be a governor?** If you wish to stand for election, or would like further information, please email getinvolved@scas.nhs.uk as soon as possible.

Once the Governors Election process starts, you will be sent a nomination form which you will need to complete, together with an Election Statement, and return to the address shown on the nomination form.

- ✓ **Have you received all the necessary paperwork through the post?** All members will be sent ballot forms inviting them to vote in the election. This form will include brief information about every candidate, including their election statement.

Staff Governors are not expected to undertake significant electioneering.

- ✓ **Have you read this handbook carefully and understood the time and effort required to undertake the governor's role?**

- ✓ **Upon receipt of your nomination form - Have you completed and returned it to the Election Agency within the notified deadline?**

If you have already expressed an interest in being a governor, we will contact you shortly.

If you have not, but are interested, please email getinvolved@scas.nhs.uk or call us on 01868 365000.

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