Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS

Minutes of the meeting of the Council of Governors held in public on Tuesday 29 July 2025 at 15:00 MS Teams

Chair	Kath Smart - Deputy Trust Chair	
Public Governors	Debbie Benson Mark Bright Andrew Flynn Jackie Hammerton (Lead Governor) Lynne Logan Sheila Walsh	
Staff Governors	Mandy Tyrell Gavin Portier Kay Brown Vivek Panikkar	
Partner Governors		
In attendance	Rebecca Allen - Associate Director of Strategy, Partnerships & Governance Mark Bailey - Non-executive Director Hazel Brand - Non-executive Director David Northwood - Member of the Public Angela O'Mara - Deputy Company Secretary Richard Parker OBE - Chief Executive Jo Gander - Non-executive Director Lucy Nickson - Non-executive Director	
Governor Apologies:	Phil Holmes - Partner Governor Lynne Schuller - Partner Governor Joseph Money **-** Staff Governor	
Board Member Apologies	Suzy Brain England OBE, Chair of the Board Emyr Jones - Non-executive Director Zara Jones - Deputy Chief Executive	
		ACTION
COG25/07/A1	**Welcome, apologies for absence (Verbal)**	
	The Deputy Chair welcomed Governors to the Council of Governors and noted apologies for absence.	

COG25/07/A2	<u>**Declaration of Governors' Interests (Enclosure A2)**</u>	
	No new declarations of interests were presented to the meeting.	
	The Council: - ***Noted governors' current declarations of interests.***	
COG25/07/A3	<u>**Actions from previous meetings**</u>	
	Non-executive Director Lucy Nickson provided further information regarding action COG25/02/D1, concerning the increased volume of case management and the necessary resources to address it. She noted that reporting had grown in relation to case management and issues with capacity involving sickness absence management. It was reported that sickness absence management remained steady, with procedures in place for its oversight. Additionally, software has been implemented to assist with return-to-work processes and managing sickness-related matters. Lucy also confirmed that there were pay efficiency workstreams and actions linked to sickness absence, reviewing of policy and colleague support required. The Deputy Chair affirmed that a review of the internal control environment for absence management featured in the internal audit 2025/26 plan.	
COG25/07/B1	<u>**Chief Executive Update**</u>	
	The Chief Executive updated on the Trust's position and outlined the newly published 10-year health plan. He confirmed that the current changes to NHSE and the Integrated Care Boards would affect all organisations within the NHS, and that the 10-year plan included shifting more care into the community, moving towards digital systems, and prioritising prevention. As part of the 10-year plan, Staff Governor, Vivek Panikkar, asked about the impact of transferring care into the community and if consultants were required to work within General Practices. The Chief Executive Officer confirmed there was a requirement to reduce outpatient attendances and there were opportunities for initiatives like health on the high street within community hubs but there was a recognition that with current workforce constraints work would be required to design new models of care and reduce demand on Acute Hospitals. David Northwood asked whether the changes in the 10-year Health Plan would mean shelving plans for a new hospital. The Chief Executive confirmed that the focus had shifted to the major refurbishment of the East Ward block, with a business case for this nearing completion. There continued to be significant political support for a solution to the funding issues and there is an active programme of ongoing support and campaigns from local MP, Sally Jameson. Public Governor Mark Bright acknowledged the 10-year plan, which proposes eliminating the requirement for Foundation Trusts to have governors, and inquired about the Trust's stance on this matter. The Chief Executive Officer responded that, although final guidance has not yet been issued, the Trust recognised the positive contribution of its	

	Governors and would maintain its elected Council of Governors until official national policy indicates otherwise. The Chief Executive introduced the new national segmentation process for NHS trusts and shared that South Yorkshire Trusts, including Doncaster and Bassetlaw, had received an indicative segment 3 rating (Segment 1-best to Segment 5-worst). This rating included a financial override as a result of the financial deficits, despite otherwise strong performance, he confirmed 3 was the highest achievable score if a deficit plan was in place. He noted the Trust's score benchmarked well in South Yorkshire. The Chief Executive detailed the Trust's new strategy, which had been led by the Deputy Chief Executive, and confirmed that it had been widely consulted on and would remain adaptable to national changes. The Strategy identified four priorities: patients, people, partnerships, and Pounds (financial stability), and set out the ambitions such as modernising digital infrastructure and tackling health inequalities. He underlined the importance of culture and staff engagement, highlighting the DBTH Way and the ongoing statutory external well-led and the additional culture review. The Trusts financial pressures for the year, included a 6.1% cost improvement programme (CIP) and new approaches to efficiency, utilising the newly formed DBTH improvement (DBTHi) team. The Trust's emergency department had benchmarked well in South Yorkshire, and diagnostics performance averaged at 81.6%, though audiology remained a challenge. Elective care had exceeded plans for several months, with long waits in orthopaedics and ENT being the primary areas of focus. Cancer performance was performing well in comparison to national standards. The Chief Executive Officer confirmed that 37% of resident doctors had participated in industrial action and arrangements had been made to cover services to mitigate impacts on urgent, emergency, and cancer care, while the national pay negotiations were ongoing. Non-executive Director, Hazel Brand, asked what impact industrial action had on patient activity. The Chief Executive Officer confirmed figures had not been finalised in respect of lost activity, but there would be some impact on waiting times and income, however there were no reported patient safety issues. The Trust was on plan against its deficit position, but the South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board was not, resulting in NHSE withholding of deficit support funding pending a review at month five. He confirmed that the Trust had delivered consistent cost improvement throughout the year to date and had met the commitment to have no unmitigated CIP risk by the end of June 2025. The Chief Executive Officer provided updates on the Trust's anti-racism journey, describing ongoing work in messaging, recruitment, and workforce training. He highlighted the opening of the state-of-the-art Stroke Rehab Gym at Mexborough, featuring robotic rehabilitation, and described its significance for patient care and future community service development.	

	Public Governor, Sheila Walsh, asked for further information on the Stroke Rehab Gym and if it was shared with other Trusts. The Chief Executive Officer confirmed the pathway allowed for patients from Barnsley and Rotherham Trusts to receive appropriate Stroke therapy on the ward, however robotic therapy was currently only used as an inpatient model. Public Governor, Debbie Benson, enquired about the gym's opening hours, the Chief Executive Officer confirmed the gym operated dependant on resource and expansion to a seven-day service would require further funding. He concluded with an update on the electronic patient record (EPR) journey with Oracle Health, which Sheffield Teaching Hospitals had recently implemented across their hospitals. Doncaster and Bassetlaw aimed to implement this in September 2027, pending capital funding approval. Early work had begun on digital infrastructure improvements that would be needed to facilitate its implementation.	
	The Council of Governors: - ***Noted the Chief Executive Update – Performance to year end***	
COG25/07/B2	**<u>Trust Strategy 2025</u>**	
	The Chief Executive Officer confirmed that the Strategy was a complex piece of work which was enclosed in the papers. Key areas of the Strategy were covered within the Chief Executive Update; however, if Governors had questions these could be sent to the Trust Board Office and would be responded to outside of the meeting.	**CoG**
	The Council of Governors: - ***Noted the Trust Strategy 2025.***	
COG25/07/C	**<u>REPORTS ON ACTIVITY, PERFORMANCE AND ASSURANCE</u>**	
COG25/07/C1.0	**<u>Suzy Brain England OBE - Chairs Report</u>**	
	The above report was enclosed within the Council of Governors papers and noted by the Council, no queries were raised.	
COG25/07/C1.1	**<u>Lead Governor Updates</u>**	
	The Lead Governor provided an overview of recent Governor activities and confirmed alongside two others they had attended an online NHS Providers training session, which included a presentation from Gloucestershire Trust. Public Governor, Andrew Flynn confirmed he had contacted Gloucestershire Trust to receive their Governor dashboards documents and was reviewing them with a view to discussion with Trust Board Office on implementing a similar system at the Trust for ease of access. The Lead Governor confirmed the training had also included a presentation on youth councils but confirmed that Governors were not currently able to commit to such an initiative, though acknowledged the importance of involving younger service users. Public Governor, Debbie Benson, confirmed she had attended a Voluntary Action Doncaster event focused on stroke awareness, where she worked with a stroke nurse practitioner to distribute information on governor and membership awareness.	

	The Lead Governor confirmed recruitment process for two Non-executive Directors had been undertaken with positive responses, and appointments were due to be recommended to Council shortly. The Lead Governor confirmed governor pre-meets had changed to include an open Q&A to Non-executive Directors about their committee work and projects, with Non-executive, Mark Bailey, being first to take part. Email exchanges were sent from the Lead Governor to Barnsley and Rotherham's Lead Governors but had still yet to meet.	
COG25/07/C1.2	**Kath Smart – Audit and Risk Committee**	
	The above report was enclosed within the Council of Governors papers and noted by the Council, no queries were raised.	
COG25/07/C1.3	**Jo Gander – Quality and Effectiveness**	
	The above report was enclosed within the Council of Governors papers and noted by the Council, no queries were raised.	
COG25/07/C1.4	**Mark Bailey – Finance and Performance Committee**	
	The above report was enclosed within the Council of Governors papers and noted by the Council, no queries were raised.	
COG25/07/C1.5	**Lucy Nickson – People Committee**	
	The above report was enclosed within the Council of Governors papers and noted by the Council.	
COG25/07/C2	**Governor Questions**	
	Lead Governor asked Non-executive Director, Lucy Nickson, for further information in respect of the IHP workforce and radiography concerns. Non-executive Director, Lucy Nickson, confirmed there were Trust and national workforce issues within both diagnostic and therapeutic radiography which required a deep dive and would be frequently reviewed and received by the People Committee.	
	The Council of Governors: - ***Noted the respective Chairs Assurance Updates***	
COG25/07/C3	**Minutes of the Council of Governors held on 15 May 2025**	
	The Council of Governors: - *Approved the minutes dated 15 May 2025.*	
COG25/07/C4	**Governor Questions Database**	
	The Governor Questions Database was enclosed within the Council of Governors papers.	

COG25/07/D1	**<u>Any Other Business</u>**	
	The Associate Director of Strategy, Partnerships and Governance confirmed that the number of governors for the Trust had been a recurring topic and emphasised the need to address governor numbers to ensure that engaged governors were present and able to make decisions, noting that this would impact quorum requirements. She clarified that the current Constitution did not reference a quorum but instead specified decision-making percentages, with 75% of governors present required for decisions. She highlighted inconsistencies between the Council of Governors Standing Orders and the Constitution, referencing a previous review that had identified these issues and outlined her plan to review both documents, engage with governors on proposed changes, and noted that any reduction in governor numbers would alter the proportion of constituents per governor, which would require approval at an annual members meeting. She stated that the next annual members meeting was scheduled for September and suggested the review and changes be completed for that date. Public Governor, Mark Bright, asked of the mechanism for reducing the number of governors, specifically whether seats would not be advertised again once current terms ended. The Associate Director of Strategy, Partnerships and Governance confirmed that this would be part of the process, using natural attrition to reduce numbers, and explained that changes to the proportion of constituents per governor would need to be agreed as part of the constitutional amendments. She referenced the attendance list published with each agenda, noting that some governors were highly engaged while others were less so, and described the approach as pragmatic given the current engagement levels and the uncertainty of future requirements. The Lead Governor highlighted that the Constitution did not address expectations for governor attendance or engagement. She suggested that the review considered including provisions for attendance and engagement to prevent situations where governors were not participating in meetings or activities. She questioned the value of retaining governors who were not actively involved and recommended that this issue be part of the broader conversation about constitutional changes. The Deputy Chair sought clarification on the timeline for the proposed changes. The Associate Director of Strategy, Partnerships and Governance confirmed that the Constitution would be circulated and reviewed via email, noting that approval would be required from the Board of Directors, Council of Governors, and at the Annual Members Meeting. She confirmed that the aim was to complete this process during September 2025. The Lead Governor emphasised streamlining the process and proposed that the working party, which had previously reviewed the Constitution, should be the first to examine the proposed changes before circulated to the wider Council of Governors. The Associate Director of Strategy, Partnerships and Governance agreed that the process could be collectively agreed, as long as governors were kept informed and satisfied with the outcome.	
COG25/07/D2	**<u>Items for Escalation to the Board of Directors</u>**	
	No items for escalation were reported.	

	<u>Date and time of next meeting (Verbal)</u>		
	Date: Time: Venue:	**AMM and 13 November 2025** **15:00** **Microsoft Teams**	
COG25/07/E	Meeting Close:	**16:22**	

Suzy Brain England OBE
Chair of the Board
13 November 2025