

MEETINGS OF THE BOARD IN PUBLIC:

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Board meetings of Somerset NHS Foundation Trust are open to the press and public. This sheet provides some information about how Board meetings work and how you can get involved.
- 1.2. Name plates for each board member are displayed on the table in front of the member to enable you to identify board members. Depending on the venue, a microphone and speaker system is used at Board meetings and access to a hearing loop, which links into the system, will need to be requested at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.

2. AGENDA AND PAPERS

- 2.1. The agenda and papers for the meeting may be inspected from three days in advance of the meeting by visiting the website [Somerset NHS Foundation Trust - Trust board meetings](#) or by contacting the Board Secretary and Corporate Services Manager or the Management Office (see below). Hard copies of the agenda and papers are not available at the meeting but can be requested in advance of the meeting – please allow at least 24 hours for this request to be processed.
- 2.2. Some items are confidential (for example if they concern an individual) - these are dealt with in part B of the meeting, and the Board will pass a resolution requiring the public to withdraw.

3. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

- 3.1. All members of the Board are required to declare if they have any interests which are relevant to the work of the Trust and these are recorded in a register which is noted at the start of each Board meetings - it is also published on the website. Members are also required to state at the start of the meeting if they have an interest in the items under discussion. Special rules govern whether a member who has declared an interest may take part in the discussion.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

- 4.1. A slot for Public Questions is set aside during the meeting where you can ask questions or make comments on matters within Somerset NHS Foundation Trust's areas of responsibility. To ensure that the Board can complete its agenda, the opportunity for questions will be time limited and questions should therefore be succinct (and to a

maximum of two minutes). Questions and comments must be directed through the Chair. You may not take direct part in the debate.

- 4.2. In order to respond as fully as possible, questions should be emailed to julie.hutchings1@somersetft.nhs.uk by midday on the Thursday preceding the meeting. If it is not possible to provide an answer during the meeting, an answer will be given at the next meeting or provided in writing as soon as possible.
- 4.3. The Chair reserves the right to refuse any written question that is: confidential or sensitive; an individual complaint or matter relating to an individual's healthcare, deemed to be overly political, defamatory or vexatious; or substantially the same as a question that has previously been answered.
- 4.4. If a group of people wish to make the same point, this will be dealt with by the Chair asking subsequent speakers whether they simply agree with what the first speaker has said, or whether there is anything that they wish to add. If the Chair considers that a point is being unnecessarily repeated they may ask the speaker to finish.
- 4.5. If there are many people present at the meeting for one particular item on the agenda for that meeting, the Chair may adjourn the meeting to allow views to be expressed more freely. If a large number of people attending the meeting wish to present a view on a particular item on the agenda, a representative should be nominated to present the views of the group. An issue will not be deferred because members of the public cannot be present for the meeting. If the Chair considers that the business of the Board is being disrupted by members of the public, the Chair has power to require the individuals to leave the meeting.

5. DEBATE

- 5.1. The Board considers the items on the agenda in turn. Each paper includes a recommendation as to what the Board should decide. For some items there may be a presentation; for others this may not be necessary. The Board may not actively discuss every item - this does not mean that they have not received careful consideration; it means that no-one wants to challenge the recommendations. A formal vote will not be taken if there is a general consensus on a suggested course of action.

6. MINUTES

- 6.1. A record of the issues discussed and decisions taken at the meeting will be set out in the minutes, which the Board will be asked to approve as a correct record at its next meeting. The minutes as presented to the next meeting of the Board for approval are added to the website at the same time as the papers for that meeting. Prior to that, details of the decisions taken can be obtained from the Board Secretary and Corporate Services Manager at the Management Office (see below).

7. CONTACT DETAILS

7.1. For further information, please contact:

Board Secretary and Corporate Services Manager
Somerset NHS Foundation Trust
Barton House South
Musgrove Park Hospital
Parkfield Drive
Taunton
Somerset
TA1 5DA

Email: julie.hutchings1@somersetft.nhs.uk

Tel: 07768 008235

or

Management Office
Somerset NHS Foundation Trust
Tel. 01935 384896

Website: www.somersetft.nhs.uk