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Nominations open for Trust's first governor elections

Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust is asking its 7,500 public members to take an even more active role in helping set its future direction by standing for election to its first Council of Governors.

Nominations for the public election open on Wednesday and all members of the Trust are entitled to put themselves forward and to vote for the candidates.

More than 1,000 people expressed an interest in becoming a governor when signing up for membership, and more than 450 have attended a series of information sessions run by the Trust.

A total of 16 places on the Trust's first Council of Governors will be contested in the public election. A further six will be elected by members of staff and the remaining nine will be appointed by Western Sussex Hospitals' partner organisations.

The Trust has been given the go-ahead to hold its election after reaching the final phase of its application to achieve NHS Foundation Trust status, which was confirmed by the Secretary of State for Health, Andrew Lansley, earlier this month.

The Council of Governors will act as a link between the Trust Board and its membership and plays a key role in helping the organisation become more responsive to the health care needs of its community.

Trust Chairman Mike Viggers said: "We have been delighted by the interest in becoming a governor shown by so many of our members already and by the numbers who attended our information events. That shows just how much people care about their hospitals and how important it is that they can have a greater say in setting their priorities and objectives.

"Being a governor is a hugely rewarding role and one in which you can really help make a difference to patient care. I would urge anyone thinking of standing to find out more on the Trust website and put their name forward now."

All existing members are being written to by the Trust, to invite them to get involved in the election. Those members who wish to stand to be a governor simply need to contact the Electoral Reform Services (ERS) organisation to request a nomination form. The deadline for people to put themselves forward is 5pm on 1 August, 2012.

Notes for editors

Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust Chairman Mike Viggers is available for interview on the election and the role governors can play in helping set the Trust's priorities.

More information about the Council and its role is available on the Trust website at <http://www.westernsussexhospitals.nhs.uk/about-us/foundation-trust-application/membership/governors/>.

For more information about Western Sussex Hospitals' Foundation Trust application, see <http://www.westernsussexhospitals.nhs.uk/about-us/foundation-trust-application/>

Only existing members are eligible to stand in this election. However, people who become members in future will be eligible to stand and vote in future elections.

Ends
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