Ashford and St. Peter's Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS
7th December 2022

TITLE	**Council of Governors – Effectiveness Survey Evaluation**
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	The report provides a summary of the findings of an effectiveness survey undertaken during November 2022. It is good practice to undertake an annual evaluation of meeting effectiveness and the last one was conducted in May 2021. In total 23 out of 24 Governors completed the anonymous survey. Overall the feedback was positive across the five domains although there were some areas highlighted which may benefit from further review or support and these have informed the recommended actions. The survey questions are included at Appendix 1 and a detailed breakdown of responses can be found at Appendix 2.
The Council is asked to:	Note the report and approve the recommended actions.
Submitted by:	Sal Maughan, Associate Director of Corporate Affairs and Governance
Date:	December 2022
Decision	For approval

1. Introduction

This report is intended to summarise the results of a survey undertaken by the Council of Governors to evaluate their own effectiveness in performing their duties and that of the Council of Governor meetings.

It is the third survey of its kind to be undertaken by the Council.

2. Methodology

The survey was undertaken electronically and all responses were anonymous.

The questions were divided into five sections:

1. Roles and responsibilities
2. Council of Governors meetings
3. Effectiveness of Council of Governors
4. Working with the Trust
5. Skills, knowledge and development of Governors

Respondents were asked to respond to a series of statement with:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Don't know

The full list of questions can be found at Appendix 1.

In total, there were 23 responses and most of the questions were responded to. Furthermore, 12 out of 23 Governors provided feedback in the free text box at the end. A detailed breakdown of responses can be found at Appendix 2.

3. Summary of results by section

Section 1: Roles and responsibilities

There was overall agreement that Governors understood their role with regard to the Health and Social Care Act, apart from three Governors responding “neutral” and two Governors disagreeing with this statement. There was overall agreement that Governors understood what was meant by holding the Non-Executive Directors of the Trust to account, apart from three Governors responding “neutral” and one disagreeing with this statement. There was also good agreement that the Council adopts a rigorous appointment process of Non-Executive Directors (NEDs) with only one Governor disagreeing with this statement. There was good agreement that the Trust adopts a rigorous process for the appraisal of the Chair and NEDs from 18 of the 23 Governors that had responded, although one disagreed and four “did not know”.

Section 2: Council of Governor Meetings

There was overall agreement that Governors were able to contribute to agenda topics for Council meetings and strong agreement that papers were circulated in good time and were of good quality so as to enable full participation in the meeting. There was also strong agreement

that the meeting was chaired effectively, with only one disagreeing and that the meeting was held frequently enough and that overall, meetings were productive with only two Governors disagreeing with this statement.

Section 3: Effectiveness of Council of Governors

Whilst there was general agreement that Governors communicate and engage with and represent members' views, one respondent disagreed, two responded "don't know" and four responded "neutral". More than half agreed that the Council held Non-Executive Directors to account, although one Governor disagreed, one strongly disagreed and eight responded "neutral".

Only five Governors agreed that Governors were able to influence the direction of the Trust's future, with 11 responding "neutral", three disagreeing, two strongly disagreeing and two responding "don't know" to this statement. There was better agreement that the Council of Governors was the appropriate size to effectively carry out its statutory duties, with only one disagreeing and one strongly disagreeing.

There was overall agreement that the relationships within the Council were constructive and worked effectively with only one disagreeing with this statement.

When asked if the Governors played an active role in developing the Trust's membership strategy, nine agreed, 10 were "neutral" and two strongly disagreed.

Section 4: Working with the Trust

There was strong agreement that Governors could approach the Chair with a query or issue with only one respondent disagreeing. There was also agreement that the Board of Directors was supportive of the Council of Governors with only one disagreeing. Seven Governors agreed there was sufficient contact with NEDs, but eight responded "neutral" and six disagreed and two responded "don't know". The majority of Governors considered the opportunities to support their understanding of the business of the Trust were sufficient with only three Governors responding "neutral".

Section 5: Skills, knowledge and development of Governors

The majority of the Governors agreed that the opportunities to support their understanding of the business of the Trust were sufficient and that they were provided with sufficient information to perform their roles, with only three disagreeing in response to whether the new Governors' induction programme met their initial familiarisation needs.

Free text comments are provided at Appendix 2.

4. Conclusion

Overall there was good agreement from Governors that they understood their statutory role and meetings were effective in helping them undertake their duties. However, it is clear that some of the more recently elected Governors may still be developing in their roles, also some areas of understanding, such as the process of recruiting the non-executive directors and their appraisal processes may need further clarification. There were some responses of strong disagreement around these processes and due to the survey being anonymous it has not been possible to seek further clarification around this key driver for this.

A significant proportion of Governors were either neutral or considered it was not possible to influence the direction of the Trust future strategy, despite the first strategy refresh having taken place in 2022 with targeted Governor/member events. This is worthy of further exploration as to what could be done differently in the future.

A large proportion of Governors also felt they do not have sufficient contact with the non-executive directors. It is anticipated this will improve following the introduction of walkabouts and governor observer roles at sub-committees; both offering opportunities to observe the non-executive directors in their role without adding further undue burden upon the non-executive directors of additional meetings.

5. Recommendations

The following actions are recommended:

1. Review and refresh the membership of both the nominations and appointments committee and the remuneration and appraisal committees, with a clear explanation of the duties and time commitment of each provided to Governors ahead of the membership review.
2. Continue the programme of Board walkabouts and sub-committee attendance – with all Governors encouraged to participate in these opportunities to see non-executive directors in action.
3. Continue to keep the format of the Governor/Non-Executive Directors meetings under review to ensure impact of these sessions is optimised.
4. Seek further views of newly elected Governors regarding the effectiveness of the induction process and the subsequent buddying process, in order to understand how this could be improved for the forthcoming new Governor cohort.

Appendix 1

COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS EFFECTIVENESS SURVEY	
Section 1: Roles and Responsibilities	
No.	Statement
1	I have a clear understanding of the roles of the Governor, including those within the Health and Social Care Act 2012
2	I have a clear understanding of what it means to hold the Trust's Non-Executive Directors to account.
3	The Council of Governors adopt a rigorous process for the appointment of new Non-Executive Directors.
4	The Council of Governors adopt a rigorous process for the appraisal of the Chair and Non-Executive Directors.
Section 2: Council of Governor Meetings	
No.	Statement
5	Governors have sufficient opportunity to identify 'topics of interest' to add to the Council of Governors programme/meeting planner.
6	Agendas and supporting documents are circulated in sufficient time for each meeting.
7	Meeting papers contain sufficient information to allow me to participate in discussions.
8	The Council of Governors' meeting is chaired effectively to time with adequate opportunity for all to contribute to the discussion
9	The Council of Governors meet sufficiently regularly to discharge its duties.
10	Overall, Council of Governor meetings are productive.
Section 3: Effectiveness of the Council of Governors	
No.	Statement
11	Governors effectively communicate and engage with and represent the views of the Trust membership.
12	The Council of Governors effectively discharges its role of holding the Non-Executive Directors to account for the performance of the Board.
13	The Council of Governors is able to influence the direction of the Trust's future strategy.
14	The Council of Governors is the appropriate size to effectively carry out its statutory duties.
15	Relationships within the Council are constructive and work effectively.
16	The Council of Governors plays an active role in developing the Trust's membership strategy (recruitment and engagement).
Section 4: Working with the Trust	
No.	Statement
17	Governors can readily approach the Chair with a query or issue.
18	The Board of Directors is supportive of the Council of Governors.
19	Governors have sufficient contact with the Trust's Non-Executive Directors.
Section 5: Skills/knowledge development for Governors	
No.	Statement
20	The induction programme for new Governors sufficiently meets their initial familiarisation needs.
21	The Trust provides Governors with sufficient information to enable them to perform their roles.
	Further free text feedback
	Please include below any further comments you wish to make.

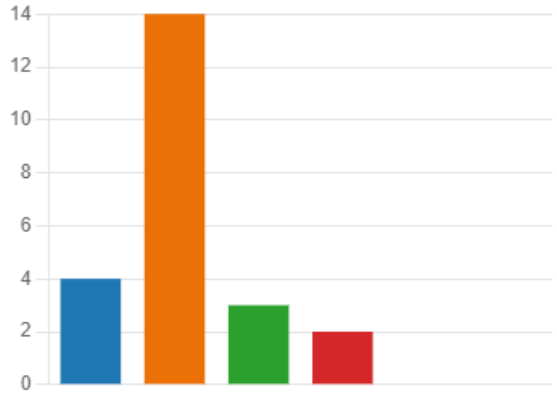
Appendix 2

Section 1: Roles and Responsibilities

1. I have a clear understanding of the roles of the Governor, including those within the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

More Details Insights

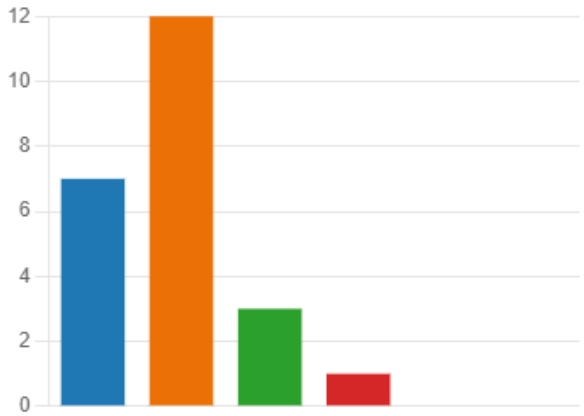
Strongly agree	4
Agree	14
Neutral	3
Disagree	2
Strongly disagree	0
Don't know	0



2. I have a clear understanding of what it means to hold the Trust's Non-Executive Directors to account.

More Details

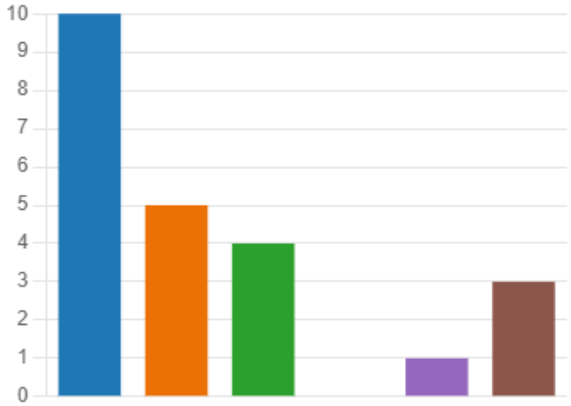
Strongly agree	7
Agree	12
Neutral	3
Disagree	1
Strongly disagree	0
Don't know	0



3. The Council of Governors adopt a rigorous process for the appointment of new Non-Executive Directors.

More Details Insights

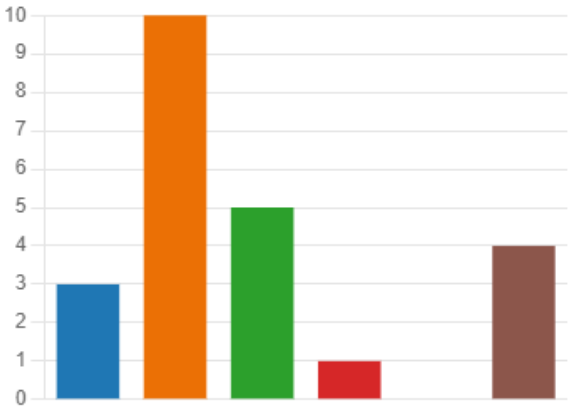
Strongly agree	10
Agree	5
Neutral	4
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	1
Don't know	3



4. The Council of Governors adopts a rigorous process for the appraisal of the Chair and Non-Executive Directors.

More Details Insights

Strongly agree	3
Agree	10
Neutral	5
Disagree	1
Strongly disagree	0
Don't know	4

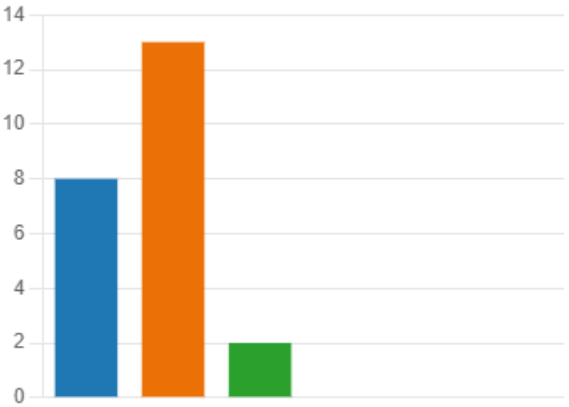


Section 2: Council of Governor Meetings

5. Governors have sufficient opportunity to identify 'topics of interest' to add to the Council of Governors programme/meeting planner.

More Details Insights

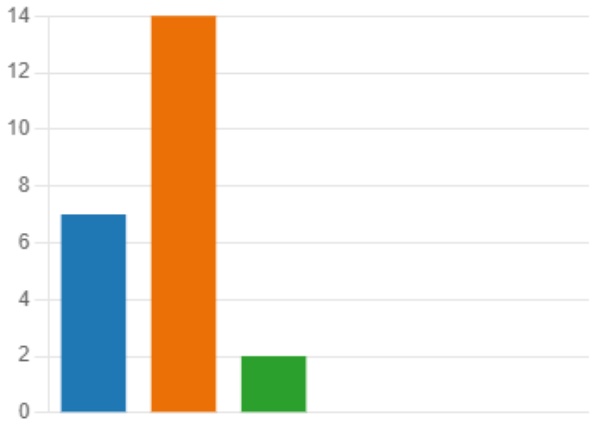
Strongly agree	8
Agree	13
Neutral	2
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0
Don't know	0



6. Agendas and supporting documents are circulated in sufficient time for each meeting.

More Details Insights

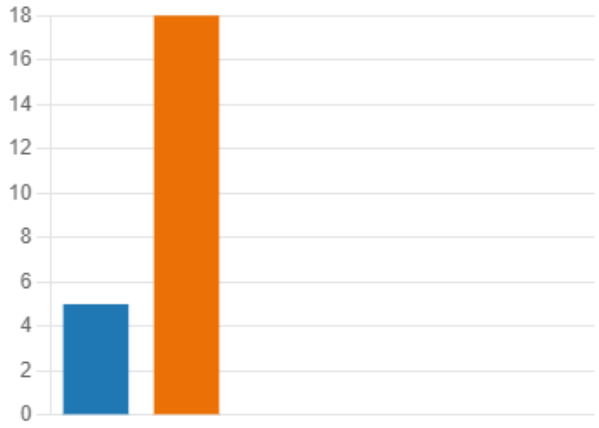
Strongly agree	7
Agree	14
Neutral	2
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0
Don't know	0



7. Meeting papers contain sufficient information to allow me to participate in discussions.

More Details Insights

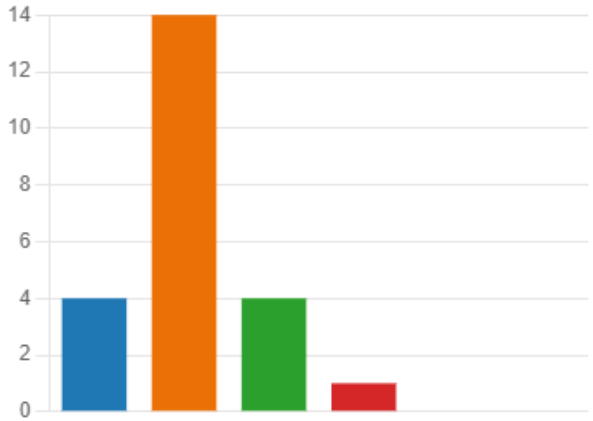
Strongly agree	5
Agree	18
Neutral	0
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0
Don't know	0



8. The Council of Governors' meeting is chaired effectively to time with adequate opportunity for all to contribute to the discussion.

More Details

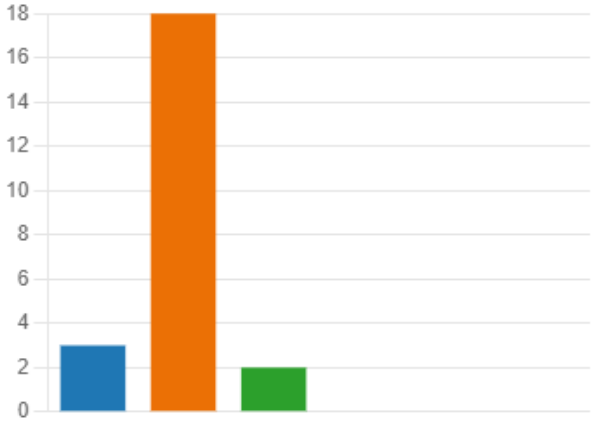
Strongly agree	4
Agree	14
Neutral	4
Disagree	1
Strongly disagree	0
Don't know	0



9. The Council of Governors meets sufficiently and regularly to discharge its duties.

More Details

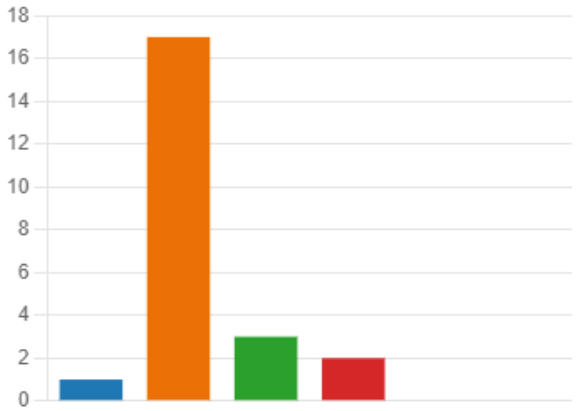
Strongly agree	3
Agree	18
Neutral	2
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0
Don't know	0



10. Overall, Council of Governor meetings are productive.

More Details

Strongly agree	1
Agree	17
Neutral	3
Disagree	2
Strongly disagree	0
Don't know	0

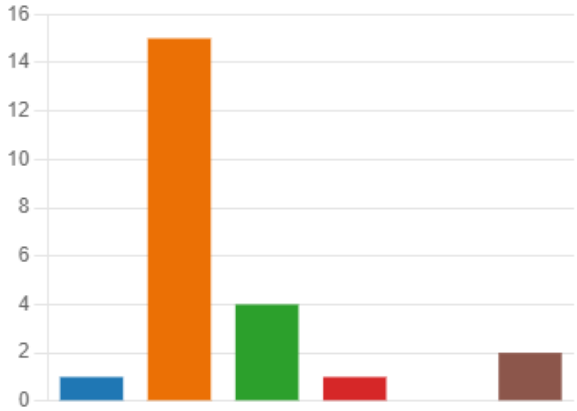


Section 3: Effectiveness of the Council of Governors

11. Governors effectively communicate and engage with and represent the views of the Trust membership.

More Details

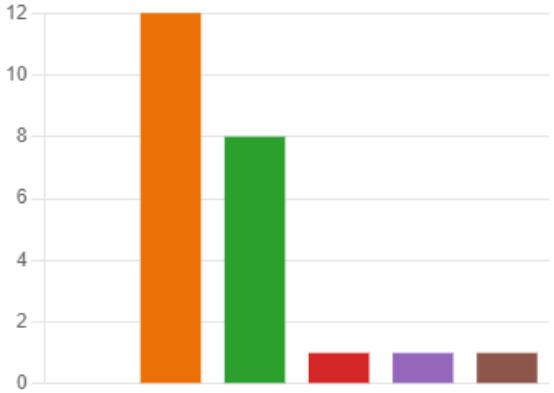
Strongly agree	1
Agree	15
Neutral	4
Disagree	1
Strongly disagree	0
Don't know	2



12. The Council of Governors effectively discharges its role of holding the Non-Executive Directors to account for the performance of the Board.

More Details

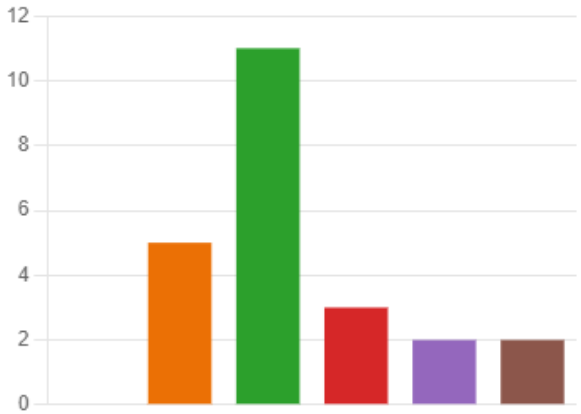
Strongly agree	0
Agree	12
Neutral	8
Disagree	1
Strongly disagree	1
Don't know	1



13. The Council of Governors is able to influence the direction of the Trust's future strategy.

More Details

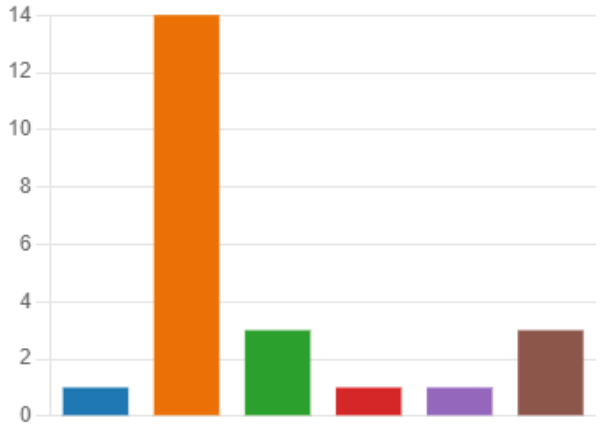
Strongly agree	0
Agree	5
Neutral	11
Disagree	3
Strongly disagree	2
Don't know	2



14. The Council of Governors is the appropriate size to effectively carry out its statutory duties.

More Details

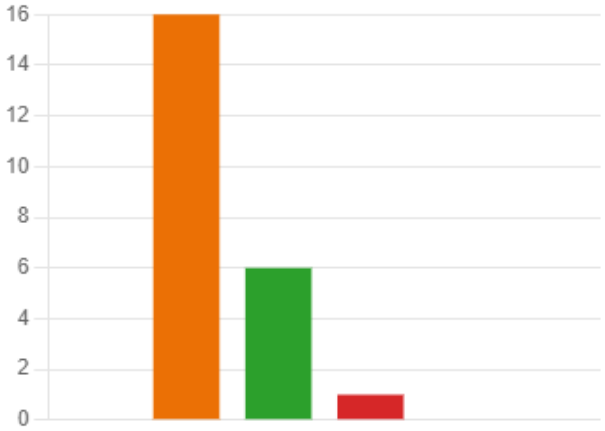
Strongly agree	1
Agree	14
Neutral	3
Disagree	1
Strongly disagree	1
Don't know	3



15. Relationships within the Council are constructive and work effectively.

More Details

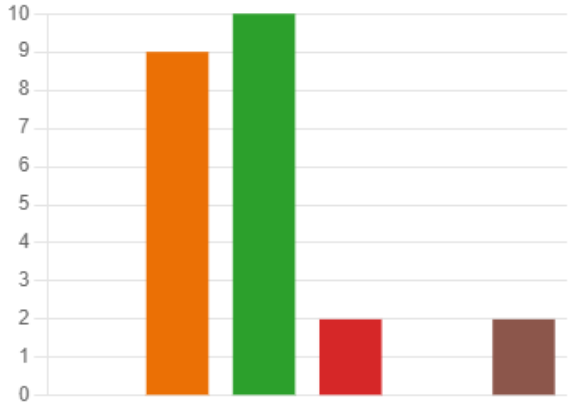
Strongly agree	0
Agree	16
Neutral	6
Disagree	1
Strongly disagree	0
Don't know	0



16. The Council of Governors plays an active role in developing the Trust's membership strategy (recruitmen and engagement).

More Details Insights

Strongly agree	0
Agree	9
Neutral	10
Disagree	2
Strongly disagree	0
Don't know	2

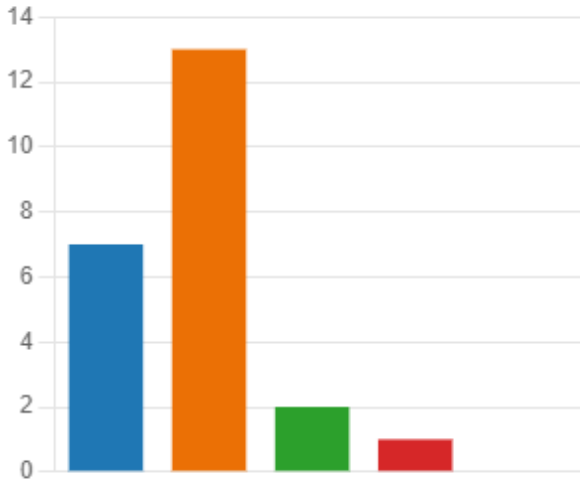


Section 4: Working with the Trust

17. Governors can readily approach the Chair with a query or issue.

More Details

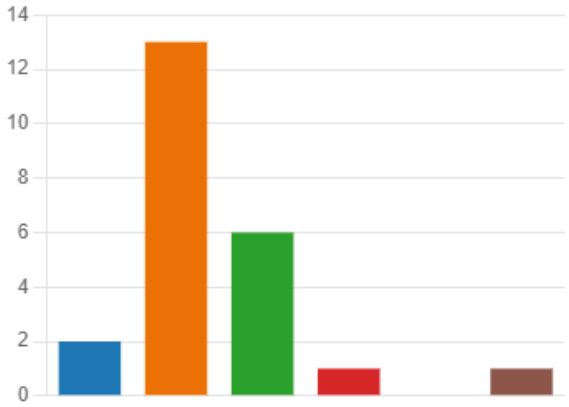
Strongly agree	7
Agree	13
Neutral	2
Disagree	1
Strongly disagree	0
Don't know	0



18. The Board of Directors is supportive of the Council of Governors.

More Details Insights

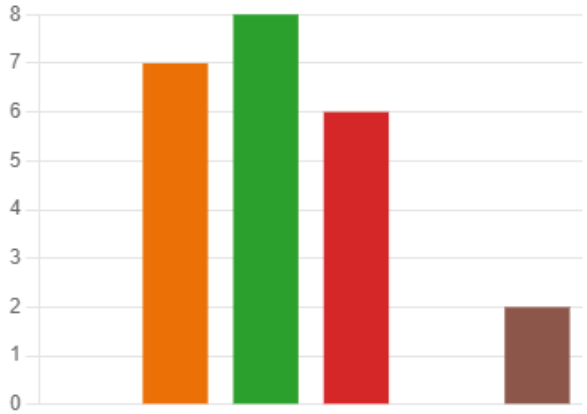
Strongly agree	2
Agree	13
Neutral	6
Disagree	1
Strongly disagree	0
Don't know	1



19. Governors have sufficient contact with the Trust's Non-Executive Directors.

More Details Insights

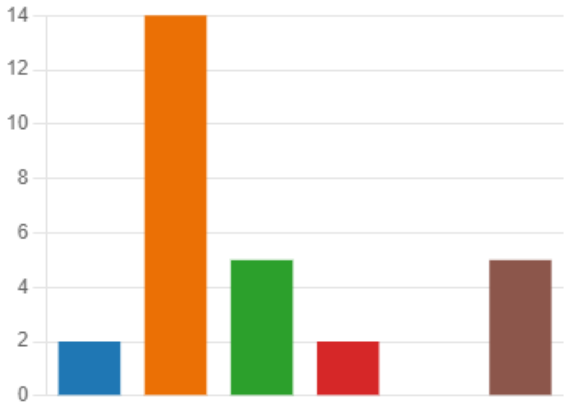
Strongly agree	0
Agree	7
Neutral	8
Disagree	6
Strongly disagree	0
Don't know	2



20. The opportunities to support my understanding of the business of the Trust are sufficient: i.e. Council of Governor meetings, informal meetings with Chair/CEO, NED-Governor meetings, one to one meetings with the Chair, public Trust Board attendance, board paper publication etc.

More Details

Strongly agree	2
Agree	14
Neutral	5
Disagree	2
Strongly disagree	0
Neutral	5

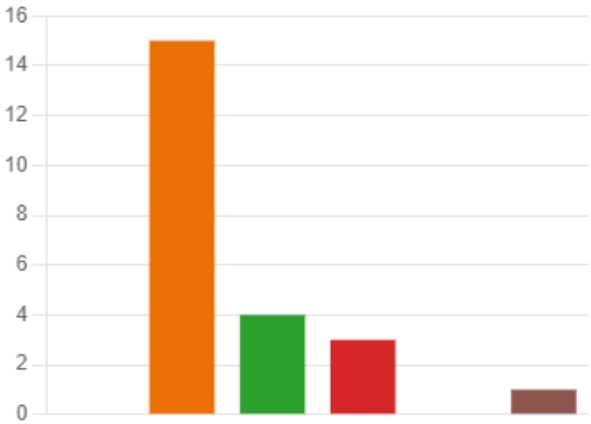


Section 5: Skills/knowledge development for Governors

21. The induction programme for new Governors sufficiently meets their initial familiarisation needs.

More Details

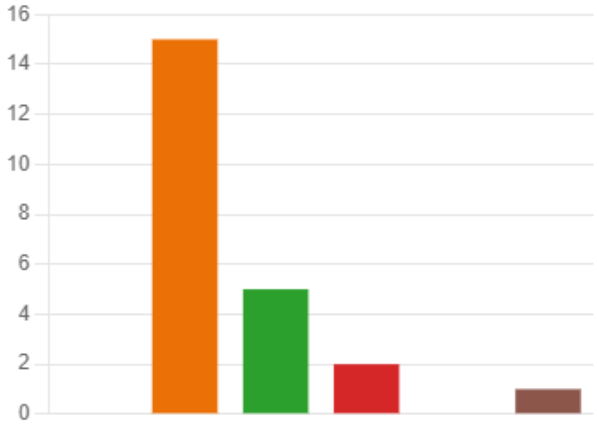
Strongly agree	0
Agree	15
Neutral	4
Disagree	3
Strongly disagree	0
Don't know	1



22. The Trust provides Governors with sufficient information to enable them to perform their roles.

More Details

Strongly agree	0
Agree	15
Neutral	5
Disagree	2
Strongly disagree	0
Don't know	1



23. Please include below any further comments you wish to make.

- New Governor so many answers are a don't know because they haven't featured as yet.
- Governors are deliberately not given answers to questions given to them by the local community members. Even after three confirmations given by the temporary CEO re the Car Parking free periods, nothing was forthcoming. And his agreed car parking increase was not even confirmed to the vol governors and they only discovered the increase from their own members. Deliberate evasion of his stated previous members declaration that he would notify them all of his decision. Nothing but lies of a very sensitive issue identified by Trust Members to us vol Governors. Absolutely destroys our credibility with the public and destroys trust with the NEDS and Chair.
- I do find it frustrating why certain things do take ages to progress and set up [eg. governors observing subcommittee meetings to see the effectiveness of NEDs] Also when suggestions are made for improvements, they are not either discussed with the governors so we can have input or they are dismissed without reason. At times, I get the feeling of being do as you are told rather than working together to get an agreeable approach to matters.
- there were long delays over a response concerning car parking from the acting CEO. Hr was economic with details and many believe economic with the truth many believed
- There are a high number of governors, many do not regularly attend meetings. There are a number of meetings and it's hard to assess the effectiveness. My experience showed staff were sometimes dismissive of governor feedback and some long term governors wanted to get involved in operational issues which is not their remit. The demographics of Governors need a review to ensure they truly represent their area. As someone who works full time it is hard to commit to the numerous meetings.
- I think the meetings will be better once they are held face to face.
- Many [questions] answered "Don't know": because I am a relatively new Governor and still getting to understand the boundaries. I get the feeling that as Governors we should be "pushing the boundaries" to get the assurance we need. - Not sure that is happening yet!
- I am optimistic that the Walkabouts and attendance at Sub Committee Meetings which have been recently introduced will give a more positive rating next time around.
- There seems to be an excessive amount of meetings which can sometimes re repetitive.
- I feel my role as governor, particularly in terms of engaging with members has necessarily been restricted by the Covid measures in place .
- As a new Governor I have not had enough exposure to make properly informed decisions on some of the questions.

- Though Council of Governors appoints the Chair and NEDs we are not in the position currently to take a lead in the ways we wish to hold NEDs to account. This means that as a Council we can hold some to account much better than the others. It is hoped that observation role for selected governors at different subcommittee meetings will improve this situation.