

The members newspaper

# SEPT News

From

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NHS Foundation Trust

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**Issue 2  
Election Special**

# Would you like the opportunity to be a voice of your community?

## Welcome to the Election Special of our members' newsletter, SEPT News.

We want the best for everyone using our services and we are passionate about local communities having a strong voice in our Trust.

We are delighted so many new members have signed up from the Bedfordshire, Essex and Luton areas, and we now have a public and staff membership of over 20,000 people.

Elections for public and staff governors will be taking place during the summer of 2012.

If you are passionate about mental health, learning disability, social care and community health services, then why not consider becoming a governor?

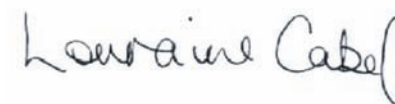
The Council of Governors is a key part of a 'can do' organisation and acts as a link between the members and the Trust's Board of Directors, promoting active membership, representing local views, holding the Board of Directors to account for the delivery of health services and being a 'critical friend' to the Trust.

There are twenty public governor vacancies for seven constituencies in Bedford, Central Bedfordshire, Luton, Rest of Essex, Southend, South Essex and Thurrock, and four staff governors to represent the other clinical specialities, social worker, support staff, and nurses and midwives community health services constituencies.

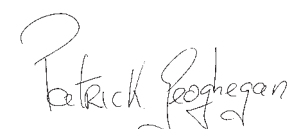
If there is competition for a governor's position in your area, you will be balloted to vote for the person you consider will best represent your voice. Please use your vote.

Our governors play a vital role in the Trust and SEPT believes it is important that the interests of all local communities are represented.

Thank you for being a member of SEPT. We look forward to meeting you soon at our members' meetings and other events in your area.



Lorraine Cabel



Patrick Geoghegan





## What do governors do?

The Council of Governors help the Trust exercise its freedom to take local decisions for the benefit of local people.

Governors have the responsibility of helping the Trust develop a strategy of local mental health, learning disability, community health and social care services and to hold the Board of Directors to account for the delivery of these services.

Governors have no operational influence but are instrumental in bringing a local perspective to planning and development of services. The Council of Governors also appoints the Non-Executive Directors and the Chair, and approves the appointment of the Chief Executive.

**“Becoming a governor has enabled me to represent staff in activities which affect the Trust as a whole. These activities are always very interesting and worthwhile and, while I love working in my particular clinical area, they provide an enjoyable contrast.”** Karen Forrest, Staff Governor Other Clinicians for Bedford & Luton

**“I became a staff governor to represent community services and provide a voice and understanding from a staff perspective. The role has provided me insight into the organisation and the enthusiasm of the governors and Board of Directors is an inspiration which makes me proud to be part of SEPT”.** Tracy Reed, Staff Governor Community Health Services West Essex

## What skills do I need?

You don't need any special skills or qualifications to be a governor. The most important thing you need is enthusiasm and the willingness to represent not just your own views but the views of the people in your community or staff group are essential. You do require a high level of commitment and the time to get involved in a variety of meetings and events.

Training will be provided for newly-elected governors, and there will be support to help carry out the role.

**“I see myself as an ambassador for SEPT, representing the Trust in the community as well as the community to the Trust.”** Dr Clive Travis, Public Governor for Bedford

**“A Foundation Trust is a complex organisation which is best served by a highly committed Council of Governors. Once you have grasped what is going on and who is responsible for what, then it is quite possible to influence the direction which the Trust will take and in this way achieve what we are all attempting, an improved service for those with mental health problems.”** John Jones, Public Governor for Bedford

## Who can become a governor?

Only members of our NHS Foundation Trust may become elected members and must be aged 16 or over at the nomination date.

**“I want to be active. I know from my own experiences that people with mental health problems show warning signs and it is being able to spot them and act on them that is vital.”**

Marie Creighton, Public Governor for Central Bedfordshire

## The election process

Nominations and voting for governors takes place during July to September 2012. The whole election process is run by the independent scrutineer, Electoral Reform Services (ERS), who has many years of experience running elections. ERS will ensure that the elections are managed professionally and completely independently from the Trust.

Members who stand for election are required to submit an election statement which includes information about themselves and why they think they would be a good governor, together with a declaration confirming their eligibility and any potential conflicts of interests. This information will be sent to all members from the relevant constituency together with the ballot paper.

Elections are by secret ballot and are a ‘first past the post’ system. If only one candidate comes forward there will be no need for a vote.

## The Trust has the following vacancies on the Council of Governors:

Constituency	No of Seats
<b>Public</b>	
• Bedford	3
• Central Beds	5
• Luton	4
• Rest of Essex	1
• Southend	2
• South Essex	4
• Thurrock	1
<b>Staff</b>	
• Nurses and Midwives Community Services	1
• Other Clinical Specialties	1
• Social Worker	1
• Support Staff	1

## How should I choose a public or staff governor?

When you are considering who to vote for, remember that the person who represents you needs to:

- use their unique skills and experience to help inform debate when services are being planned or changes are being made;
- understand and speak for the wide range of views of their community or staff group to the Board of Directors;
- be a guardian of the organisation – helping maintain the Trust’s visions, values and local focus and ensure it continues to work within NHS principles;
- be an ambassador for the Trust;
- widen membership through recruitment and development activities;
- scrutinise the Board of Directors and act as a ‘critical friend’ ensuring all views are heard in key strategic decision making processes.

## Election – key dates for 2012

- **9 July:** Election called; nomination forms will be available from this date
- **6 August:** Closing date for nomination forms to be returned
- **29 August:** Issue of postal ballot papers
- **21 September:** Final date for receipt of postal ballot papers to ERS
- **27 September:** Election results announced at the AGM.

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## What should I do now?

If you are interested and think you could be an effective governor for the Trust or would like to find out more about the role, please contact Caroline Hinchcliffe at ERS on 020 8365 8909 or by calling the Trust Secretary Office on 0800 023 2059 or by attending one of the ‘I want to be a Governor’ events on 24 July at The Lodge, Wickford, Essex and 27 July at Charter House, Luton – details available on the Trust website or by phoning the Trust Secretary Office.

If you don’t think that being a governor is right for you, as governors play a vital role in the Trust, we would encourage you to have your say in who is elected by voting in the forthcoming elections.

**“How often have you heard people say ‘somebody should do something’? If you care about the healthcare your friends and family can get, then becoming a Public Governor is your chance to do something. SEPT really do listen to what Governors say and it’s your chance to make a difference.”** Bob Calver, Public Governor for Rest of Essex



## About SEPT

With an annual turnover of approximately £300m South Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (SEPT) is one of the most successful Foundation Trusts in the country providing integrated care including mental health, learning disability, social care and community services across Bedfordshire, Essex and Luton.

We became one of the country's first mental health and learning disability NHS Foundation Trusts in May 2006. We are a responsive, innovative and dynamic Foundation Trust delivering leading edge health services in a constantly changing environment. In 2010 the Trust acquired the former Bedfordshire and Luton Mental Health and Social Care Partnership NHS Trust and in 2011 continued to expand in 2011 with the acquisition of the community health services in Bedfordshire, South East Essex and West Essex. We now provide these services across Bedfordshire, Essex and Luton, employ approximately 6,000 people and serve a population of 1.8 million.

We work with a wide range of partner organisations to deliver care and support to people in their own homes and from a number of hospital and community based resource centres and community facilities to provide local services to local people where possible.

All our services are delivered by teams of highly skilled and qualified health and social care staff to people in their own homes, in residential and nursing homes, and from our resource centres and clinics.

The alignment of community services forms an important part of the government's plans to deliver 'world class' services for patients, carers and the community. It is an exciting opportunity for SEPT to become even more effective in the services it provides and more efficient in the way they are delivered and become a stronger more innovative organisation in the newly competitive NHS market.



our vision  
‘ providing services that are  
in tune with you ’

and values  
optimistic respectful empathising  
involving empowering accountable

