



St George's University Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

▶ **MEMBERSHIP STRATEGY 2019-22:**  
OUR VISION FOR ENGAGING WITH  
MEMBERS AND THE PUBLIC



## Overview: Why membership matters

This strategy sets out our vision for engaging with our Foundation Trust members and the communities we serve. Their involvement is important in helping us to achieve our goal of providing outstanding care, every time.

As an NHS Foundation Trust, we are accountable to our patients and the public. Our members have a key role in the Trust's governance; they elect representatives to sit on our Council of Governors, which in turn appoints the Chairman and other Non-Executive Directors to the Board of Directors and oversees the Board's performance.

Members are our staff, our patients and members of the public. We believe that involving our members, patients and the public in decisions about services is an integral part of meeting the needs of the communities we serve. Membership helps give those communities a voice in the running of the Trust and shaping our plans for the future.

A significant number of our public members and their relatives have been treated at the Trust. Our new Patient Partnership and Engagement Strategy sets out the steps we are taking to engage patients, listen to their views and act upon them. Our membership strategy will work in parallel with our work on patient engagement. Members will have opportunities to participate in patient engagement activities and, through their Governors, will have a voice on the Patient Partnership and Engagement Group.

Our vision is to develop an actively engaged and vibrant membership. Over the next three years, we want to make a fundamental step change in how we engage and involve our members, building a more active membership and giving members a voice in shaping how the organisation works. This strategy outlines the measures we will put in place during 2019-22 to achieve that vision.

We have developed this strategy based on feedback from a survey of our public members in late 2018, good practice from other Foundation Trusts and *NHS Providers*, and statutory and regulatory requirements. The development of the strategy has been led by our Council of Governors and its Membership Engagement Committee. The strategy is supported by an action plan which sets out what we will do in practice across the next three years to achieve our vision.

## Our membership community

Our members are our staff, our patients and people from across the diverse communities we serve both locally and regionally.

### Who can be a member?

#### *Public members*

As both a local provider of services to the populations of Wandsworth, Merton and Lambeth and a regional and national provider of tertiary and specialist services, we offer all those who have an interest in or connection to the Trust, the opportunity to become a member. No special skills or experience are required. It is free and open to anyone 14 years of age or older. Our public members include patients, volunteers and all other members of the public who wish to become involved. They come from our geographical constituencies for the purposes of electing Governors: Wandsworth, Merton, south west Lambeth, and the rest of England. We currently have 12,500 public members.

#### *Staff members*

Our 9,500 staff are also members of the Trust. Any member of staff employed by the Trust on permanent contracts or fixed term contracts of 12 months or longer can become a member. Staff employed through service partners, including transport, catering and cleaning staff, also provide valuable services and are also eligible to become members.

#### *Disqualification from membership*

We want to encourage the widest possible membership but where a member's actions or behaviour are detrimental to the Trust or its values, for example acts of verbal or physical abuse against our staff, it may be necessary for the Trust to revoke their membership.

### Why become a member?

The core benefit of becoming a member is to have a regular voice – to shape the way services are provided, contribute to the future direction of the organisation, and ensure the Trust is responsive to the needs of the people and communities it serves. Alongside this, membership provides opportunities to show support for the Trust and its work. In general terms, the benefits of membership include:

- Getting regular and up-to-date information about the Trust
- Invitations to attend free health talks on a range of subjects and to attend and ask questions at the Annual Members' Meeting
- Voting for representatives on the Council of Governors and standing for election to the Council of Governors (for those 16 years of age or older)
- Taking part in surveys and consultations
- Participating in patient involvement initiatives
- Access to NHS Discounts Scheme.

### Representing the interests of members

Members' views and opinions are heard through the Council of Governors, whose role is to represent the interests of members and hold the Board to account through the Non-Executive Directors. The Council of Governors is made up of 15 elected public Governors, four elected staff Governors and seven appointed Governors from stakeholder organisations. All public members aged 16 or over are allowed to stand as a Governor or

vote for a Governor. All staff members are able to stand as a Governor or vote for a Governor within their staff constituency. There are also seven local stakeholder organisations that are represented on the Council of Governors.

The Council of Governors is responsible for:

- Representing the interests of members and the public
- Appointing the Chairman and other Non-Executive Directors, and holding them to account for the performance of the Board
- Approving the appointment of the Chief Executive by the Non-Executive Directors
- Receiving the Trust's Annual Report and Accounts
- Appointing the Trust's external auditors.

The Trust is committed to developing and supporting Governors to enable them to carry out their role and contribute fully to the work of the Council of Governors. Our Governors attend our Board meetings and Committees of the Board, giving our Governors broader access than Governors in many other Trusts. Further details of the composition of the Council of Governors is set out in Appendix 1.

## Our membership objectives, 2019 – 2021

St George's has been an NHS Foundation Trust since February 2015 and we have a combined public and staff membership of around 22,000 members. Our vision is to build on our engagement with our members in order to create an active and vibrant membership community, one that is representative of the diverse populations we serve and of the staff who work here, and one which has a real voice in shaping the future of the Trust and the services it provides. To achieve this vision, our strategy for 2019-2022 sets out three overarching aims:

- To improve the quality of engagement and communication with members
- To continue to work towards a membership that is representative of the diverse communities the Trust serves
- To maintain and where possible increase the overall size of the Trust's membership

### Objective 1: To improve the quality of mutual engagement and communication with members

Foundation Trusts are based on the principle of local accountability and an active and engaged membership helps to anchor the Trust in its local community. The value of membership is not solely in the numbers of people who have joined, but in the quality of our engagement with members. While we welcome the largest and most diverse membership possible, we recognise that it is most beneficial to build a more engaged and active membership rather than a large but passive one. Enhancing the quality of our

engagement with our members is therefore at the heart of this strategy and will be the overriding focus of our efforts.

We want to create real two-way engagement between the Trust and its members and provide meaningful opportunities for members to engage in issues affecting the future of the Trust, for example service changes, strategy development and quality improvement. Members should feel involved in the organisation, and supported to add value to the Trust. It will also help us to support our Governors in representing the interests of members and the public.

By 2022, we want to have effected a fundamental step change in how we engage with our members and develop a partnership culture between members, Governors and the Trust management to facilitate effective working relationships.

*To achieve this, we will:*

- **Promote the work of the Trust's Governors, as representatives of our members.** We will promote new ways for members to get in touch with Governors to make it easier for them to raise issues and get feedback. We will develop new ways of highlighting and following the issues Governors have raised on members' behalf.
- **Develop new opportunities for members to express their views.** We will develop new ways for members to engage, for example through participation in focus groups and surveys.
- **Introduce new types of membership so members can choose how involved they want to be.** All our members are equal but we recognise that some

may wish to be more involved. Drawing on the successful experiences of other Trusts, we will ask members to indicate the type of involvement they want to have:

Type	Involvement
Tier 1: Informed	Largely one-way communication. Receive newsletters and updates about the Trust
Tier 2: Engaged	Opportunities to share ideas. Want to be consulted, participate in surveys, attend events, open days tours and workshops.
Tier 3: Involved	Want to be consulted, participate in surveys, open days, events, tours and workshops. Have time to review and pass comment.

Through these different levels of membership, we can target our communications appropriately to meet members' different needs and preferences. Members will of course be free to change the type of membership they wish to have at any stage should their preferences or circumstances change.

- **Refresh our existing communication channels with members and our approach to membership communication and engagement.** We will look afresh at how we communicate and engage with our members in order to provide the information that members want in an accessible way. We will use a range of

different media to target different groups (including Borough level); create an ongoing dialogue with members; provide opportunities for information sharing, discussion and feedback from members; and celebrate Trust achievements so that members can share in this success.

- **Improve our programme of engagement events.** We will introduce engagement events across the constituencies of the Trust, led by the Trust's Governors so that members have a wider range of opportunities to engage with the Trust in their areas, and engage directly with their elected Governors.

## **Objective 2: To continue to work towards a membership that is representative of the communities the Trust serves**

The Trust serves communities across Wandsworth, Merton, South West Lambeth and beyond and we want to be relevant and accessible to all sections of the population.

We regularly analyse our membership to make sure we understand its composition and take steps to ensure, as far as possible, it is representative of the people we serve. We are pleased that our analysis shows that, overall, the Trust's membership broadly reflects the rich diversity of our local communities. But where some groups are less well represented we will try new ways of engaging with them. We are keen to support young people to become members if they wish.

To achieve this, we will:

- **Analyse our membership on a regular basis.** This will help us understand any changes in demographics across our

local communities and identify any groups that are under-represented.

- **Develop targeted campaigns to recruit members from any group which is under-represented.** We will work with our volunteers and partner organisations to explore and develop new ways of promoting membership to those who may not have considered becoming a member.
- **Promote membership opportunities to younger people in our communities.** We will work with our partner organisations to encourage membership from young people who use our services and across the communities.

### **Objective 3: To maintain and where possible increase the overall size of the membership of the Trust**

The value of membership lies in the quality of engagement not solely in the numbers. At the same time, we welcome a large and active membership community and recognise that the membership of the Trust needs to be large enough to be credible.

While our priority is to focus on the quality of our engagement, we must continue to invest in recruitment of new public members to offset the natural attrition in membership levels in any given year. Where possible, we would also like to increase our membership so that we engage our communities in our work.

To achieve this, we will:

- **Simplify the process for becoming a member.** We will make the process of applying more accessible and well publicised, including introducing an online membership application form.

- **Refresh the membership pages on the Trust's website.** We will make our web pages more engaging and will review and enhance the content to make them more informative, engaging and visually appealing, with downloadable newsletters and event details. This will include making it clearer to public and staff members how they can get in touch with Governors.
- **Articulate more clearly the benefits of membership.** We will re-define how we articulate the benefits of membership, and promote this effectively – so making membership and its value a more attractive proposition to potential members.
- **Refresh our membership recruitment material.** We will review our recruitment material to make this more impactful and engaging. This will include developing new membership posters, flyers and other physical and online materials to assist Governors in recruiting new members.
- **Work more innovatively with our partners to promote membership.** Our partner organisations have valuable networks with patients and the public and we want to work with them to encourage those who have not previously considered becoming a member of the Trust to do so and play an active role in the organisation.
- **Maintain an accurate membership database.** Our records need to be up-to-date and meet regulatory requirements. But we also rely on this

to identify which groups may be underrepresented or to identify trends in membership. This database can help us target recruitment initiatives to best effect.

## Delivering the strategy and evaluating success

Through this strategy, we want to achieve a step change in how we engage with members. To achieve this, we need to implement and deliver the strategy effectively. As an organisation committed to learning, we recognise the importance of measuring its impact and evaluating its success.

### Implementation

We have developed an action plan which sets out the practical steps we will take in each year to implement the strategy so that it is clear how we will put our plans into action. The action plan is set out as an appendix to this strategy. It will evolve and develop as the strategy is implemented. But, in summary, we envisage a phased approach over three years to deliver and fully implement the strategy, with the first year focused on laying the essential groundwork and years two and three focusing on embedding engagement. The Trust is committed to ensuring that this strategy is supported with appropriate resources.

### Evaluating success

The Council of Governors is ultimately responsible for the delivery of the strategy and it will be supported in this by the Governors' Membership Engagement Committee, which will undertake the detailed monitoring of implementation and will report regularly to the Council on this.

The principal ways in which we will assess the success of the strategy will include:

- **Analysing the profile of the Trust's membership.** We will conduct this analysis twice a year and look in depth at the profile of the Trust's public membership and identify any under-represented groups. This will help us to understand whether our targeted recruitment campaigns have been successful and whether we are succeeding in maintaining the size and diversity of our membership. The results will be analysed by the Membership Engagement Committee.
- **Analysing involvement.** We also need to understand the extent to which our efforts in promoting a more active and involved public and staff membership have been successful. To do this, we will undertake a regular analysis of the readership of the Trust's new membership newsletter, monitor membership attendance at engagement events, analyse which issues members have responded to, and undertake a regular survey of all members to assess their views
- **Analysing impact.** We want to understand and evaluate the impact of the membership on the Trust's services. Our regular surveys of members will assist with this. We are also committed to compiling evidence to demonstrate what has changed within the Trust as a result of members' views and activities.

The Governors' Membership Engagement Committee will directly oversee the Trust's efforts to engage with all of its members. It will receive updates at each meeting on the



delivery of the strategy and will report on this to the Council of Governors.

## Appendix 1: Composition of the Council of Governors by constituency

The following tables set out the composition of the Council of Governors, including the numbers of Governors from the public and staff constituencies and those appointed by our key stakeholder partners:

Public constituencies	Number of Governors
Wandsworth	6
Merton	4
Rest of England	4
South West Lambeth	1
<b>Total number of public Governors</b>	<b>15</b>

Staff constituencies	Number of Governors
Medical and Dental	1
Nursing and Midwifery	1
Allied Health Professionals and other Clinical and Technical Staff	1
Non clinical	1
<b>Total numbers of staff Governors</b>	<b>4</b>

Stakeholder organisation	Number of Governors
Healthwatch Merton	1
Healthwatch Wandsworth	1
Kingston University	1
St George's University	1
Merton Council	1
Wandsworth Council	1
Merton and Wandsworth Clinical Commissioning Group	1
<b>Total number of stakeholder Governors</b>	<b>7</b>

## Appendix 2: St George’s Membership Strategy Action Plan

The following action plan sets out how the vision and objectives set out in our Membership Strategy 2019-2022 will be implemented in practice:

Overarching Objective	Supporting aims	What we will do to deliver the objective		
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Objective 1: To improve the quality of mutual engagement and communication with members	Promote the work of the Trust’s Governors, as representatives of our members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce a new contact email address for members to submit questions or raise issues with Governors, and publicise this on the membership pages on the Trust website</li> <li>Develop a model for Governor communication with Members tailored to Borough level</li> <li>Include a regular section focusing on the work and role of Governors in new electronic membership newsletter</li> <li>Develop promotional material and aids to promote the role and work of Governors, using the opportunity of the Governor elections in early 2020 to do this.</li> <li>Governors to introduce member health talks</li> <li>Governor participation in new Constituency level events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publish first annual membership report which showcases the work of Governors</li> <li>Use second survey of membership to record member awareness of Governors</li> <li>Develop video content for the Trust’s website, where Governors talk about their work and their reasons for becoming Governors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publish second annual membership report which showcases the work of Governors</li> <li>Use third survey of membership to record member awareness of Governors</li> </ul>
	Develop new opportunities for members to express their views	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Membership Engagement Committee to receive report at each meeting on issues raised by members and actions being taken in response, and Committee to report on</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publish first annual membership report which showcases work on how the Trust has responded to issues raised</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publish second annual membership report which showcases how the Trust has responded to issues raised by</li> </ul>

		these to the Council of Governors.	by members	members
	<b>Introduce new levels of membership so members can choose how involved they want to be</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirm the definitions of the three levels of membership, ensuring these are sufficiently flexible to allow members to engage more or less depending on their areas of interest.</li> <li>• Introduce these categories on all new membership application forms</li> <li>• Contact existing members to confirm preferences on levels of engagement and involvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek feedback from members through the membership survey to establish the degree to which the introduction of the new levels of membership has helped members have the opportunity to engage on the issues they care about.</li> <li>• Use new levels of membership to target members for participation in surveys, workshops and focus groups</li> <li>• Monitor changes in number of members in each category as a proxy for measuring levels of active engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use levels of membership to target members for participation in surveys and workshops</li> <li>• Monitor changes in number of members in each category as a proxy for measuring levels of active engagement</li> </ul>
	<b>Refresh our existing communication channels with members and our approach to membership communication and engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launch new electronic membership newsletter which is visually more appealing and engaging and more informative about key developments in and affecting the Trust.</li> <li>• Refresh membership pages on the Trust's website to make them more accessible and informative.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake analysis of which issues and stories have been read most in the membership newsletter</li> <li>• Develop options for introducing a quarterly hard copy newsletter for staff, patients and the public.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launch third membership survey and reflect learning from this in activities to be delivered in the final year of the Strategy and in the planning of the new Membership Strategy from 2022.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop plans for an annual survey of members, refining key questions and issues where members feedback is needed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launch second membership survey and update Membership Strategy Action Plan to reflect feedback from the survey</li> </ul>	
	<b>Improve our programme of engagement events</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop plans for and launch pilot of constituency events in Wandsworth, Merton and South West Lambeth, introduced by a Governor from that area. Assess impact &amp; practicality of Member face to face meetings locally.</li> <li>Develop a programme of member health talks for the full year ahead and seek views on topics for inclusion in future talks. Governor to be selected to introduce each speaker.</li> <li>Seek to increase member turnout at Annual Members meeting by 20% (with a target of 100 attendees).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subject to feedback from the constituency event pilots, roll out an annual programme of constituency engagement events in Wandsworth, Merton and South West Lambeth</li> <li>Introduce updated member health talks with broader range of topics.</li> <li>Seek to increase member turnout at Annual Members Meeting by a further 20% (with a target of attracting over 120 attendees)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek to increase member turnout at Annual Members Meeting by 25% (with a target of attracting over 150 attendees)</li> </ul>
<b>Objective 2: To continue to work towards a membership that is representative of the communities we serve</b>	<b>Analyse our membership on a regular basis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing monitoring of membership database</li> </ul>	As year 1	As year 1.
	<b>Develop targeted campaigns to recruit members from any group which is under-represented</b>  <b>Promote</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop proposals for engaging with groups that are less well represented within the Trust's membership, in particular the age group 17-21 years and also the 30-39 age group. Engage with other Trusts to understand</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subject to learning from year 1 activities, roll out comprehensive plans for engagement with younger people.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use membership database to track changes in the composition of the Trust's membership within these age groups</li> </ul>

	<b>membership opportunities to younger people in our communities</b>	<p>how they have approached engagement with these groups and use this to inform the development of tailored engagement plans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce membership recruitment stand at St George's University of London freshers' fair.</li> <li>• Pilot engagement opportunities in schools and colleges.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use membership database to track changes in the composition of the Trust's membership within these age groups</li> </ul>	
<b>Objective 3: To maintain and where possible increase the overall size of the membership of the Trust</b>	<b>Simplify the process for becoming a member</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and roll out new electronic forms for applying to become a member of the Trust and include link to these on refreshed membership pages of the website</li> </ul>		
	<b>Refresh the membership pages on the Trust's website</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refresh membership pages on the Trust's website to make them more accessible and informative.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep content of membership webpages up to date with new content</li> <li>• Make improvements based on feedback from membership survey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As year 2</li> </ul>
	<b>Articulate more clearly the benefits of membership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define clear articulation of the benefits of being a member of the Trust and ensure Governors are supported to articulate these benefits to potential members at Meet Your Governor events.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish first annual membership report which showcases work how the Trust has responded to issues raised by members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish second annual membership report which showcases work how the Trust has responded to issues raised by members</li> </ul>
	<b>Refresh our membership recruitment material</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake review of existing membership recruitment and engagement material</li> <li>• Develop new material (e.g. posters, flyers) using the Trust's</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review impact of the new materials through feedback from members via the membership survey and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As year 2</li> </ul>

		forthcoming new branding	engagement events and refresh this where appropriate.	
	<b>Work more innovatively with our partners to promote membership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify a range of key partners to work with and explore opportunities for joint work to help recruit new members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Begin joint campaign with partner groups selected on recruiting new members, including members from under-represented or hard-to-reach groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate joint working with partner groups and identify further opportunities for engagement and recruitment of members.</li> </ul>
	<b>Maintain an accurate membership database</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain external support from MES to manage the Trust's membership database.</li> <li>Provide regular reports to the Membership Engagement Committee on key trends and developments in membership numbers and patterns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As year 1</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As year 1</li> </ul>

There are many ways you can stay in touch with us and keep up to date with how our strategy is progressing.

You can find us on:

Twitter @StGeorgesTrust

Facebook @StGeorgesTrust

Instagram @StGeorgesTrust

If you would like to become a member of St George's:

Online: [www.stgeorges.nhs.uk](http://www.stgeorges.nhs.uk)

Email: [members@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto:members@stgeorges.nhs.uk)

Call: 020 8266 6132

A summary version of this strategy is available on our website at [www.stgeorges.nhs.uk](http://www.stgeorges.nhs.uk) or hard copies are available from the membership office at St George's Hospital.