North Cheshire and Mersey
NHS Foundation Trust

Annual Members' Meeting

Wednesday 7 October 2026

Lecture Theatre, Halton Education Centre, Halton Hospital

Home
Community
Hospital

Welcome and opening comments

Andy Carter, chair

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Agenda

Time	Agenda item	Lead
3:30pm	Welcome and opening comments	Andy Carter, chair
3:35pm	Looking back: 2025-26, including the Annual Report and Accounts	Nikhil Khashu, chief executive
3:50pm	Looking forward: 2026-27	Nikhil Khashu, chief executive
4:05pm	Lead governor’s report	Sue Fitzpatrick, lead governor
4:20pm	Questions and answers	Andy Carter, chair
4:28pm	Closing comments	Andy Carter, chair
4:30pm	Meeting closes	



Looking back:
2025-26

Nikhil Khashu, chief executive

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2025-26 in numbers

NHS
Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

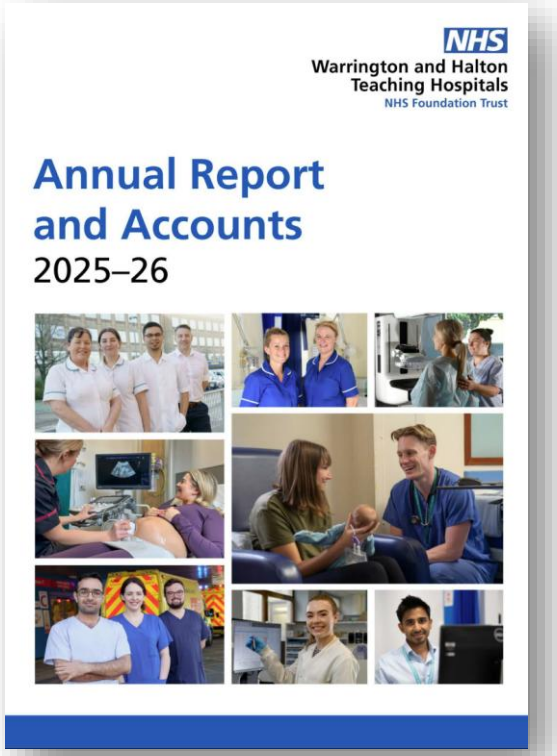
- Annual turnover of approximately **£393m**
- Employed around **5,000** staff
- **2** acute hospitals and more than **30** community sites in Warrington and Halton
- Delivered **2,300** babies in hospital and in the community
- Completed **57,701** hospital procedures and stays
- **117,676** individual new outpatient appointments
- Provided **140,657** episodes of emergency care
  - **82,270** episodes in the Emergency Department
  - **23,228** at the Warrington Same Day Emergency Care facility
  - **35,159** at Runcorn Urgent Treatment Centre

NHS
Bridgewater Community Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

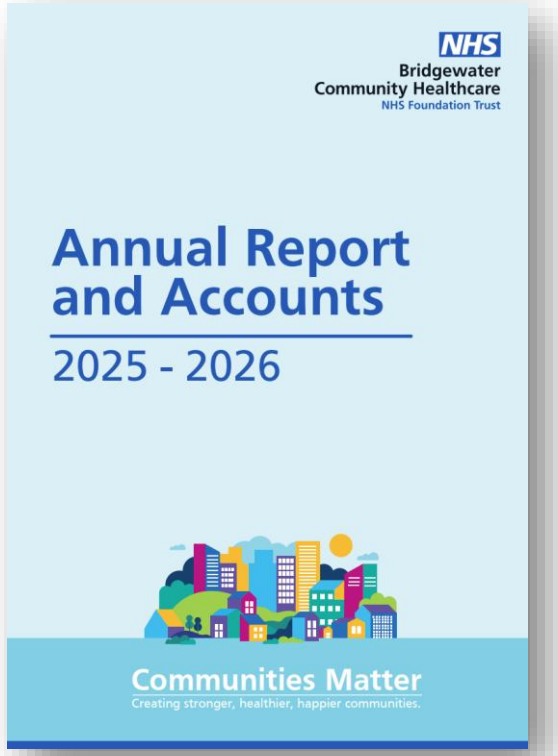
- Annual turnover of approximately **£106m**
- Employed around **1,500** staff
- **66** community sites in Warrington, Halton, Cheshire, Merseyside and Greater Manchester
- Delivered **185,284** district nursing care contacts
- Provided **12,778** community matron contacts
- Delivered **42,732** dental appointments
- Completed **38,045** same day urgent care contacts at Widnes Urgent Treatment Centre



View the 2025-26 WHH and BCH annual reports



Scan the QR code to read the report



Scan the QR code to read the report

Better Care Together

To support the coming together of WHH and BCH, an integration programme called Better Care Together was launched.

Following engagement, our partnership was named North Cheshire and Mersey Healthcare Partnership, ahead of our plans to become North Cheshire and Mersey NHS Foundation Trust on 1 April 2026.





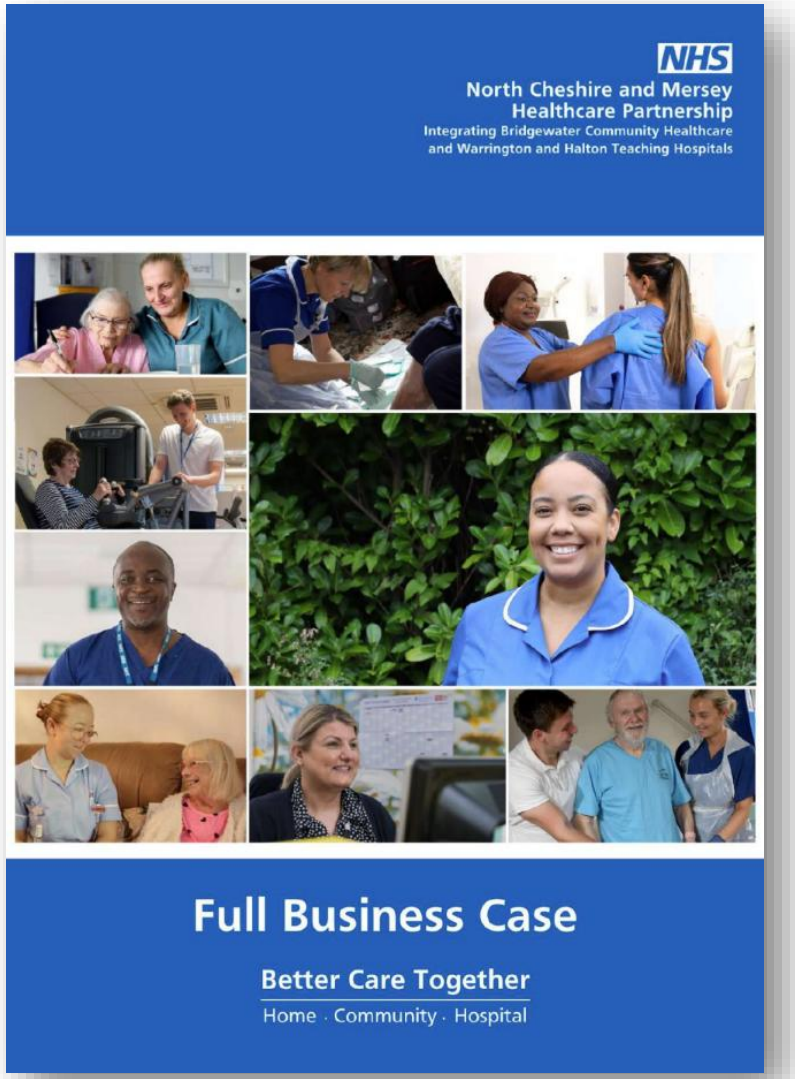

Better Care Together

In July 2025, our Boards and the ICB signed off the strategic case to accelerate our integration to April 2026.

A full business case (FBC) provided assurance that integration was the right thing to do and that robust plans were in place to deliver it safely.

The FBC, alongside supporting information, got submitted to NHS England and the Secretary of State in early December 2025.

It was fully approved in February 2026.



Our aims

Our Boards approved that an interim strategy would be adopted in the short term from 1 April 2026.

Three strategic aims are framed around Quality, People and Sustainability:



QUALITY

We will always put our patients first, delivering safe, compassionate, inclusive and effective care and an excellent patient experience



PEOPLE

We will be the best place to work, with a diverse and engaged workforce that is fit for now and the future with staff developing, growing and thriving



SUSTAINABILITY

We will work in partnership with others to achieve social and economic wellbeing in our communities, and improve equity in health outcomes

Quality

Throughout a year of significant change, we continued to improve access, embrace innovation and deliver more personalised care in hospitals, community settings and people's homes.

- Opened the £11 million Warrington and Halton Diagnostics Centre at Halton Hospital, offering new MRI and CT services to more than 30,000 patients each year.
- Introduced NICE-recommended artificial intelligence technology at Halton Health Hub to help speed up the diagnosis of skin cancers.
- Installed a new cone beam CT scanner at Warrington Hospital, providing detailed 3D imaging and helping to reduce waits for specialist dental scans.
- Specialised dental services moved into a new state of the art community dental hub in Altrincham in May 2025.
- Halton and Warrington 0-19 Services successfully achieved the UNICEF UK Stage 3 Baby Friendly Initiative re accreditation award.



People

Colleagues continued to work together, embrace integration and celebrate the contribution of our people.

- Integration between our two trusts progressed at pace, supported by strengthened joint leadership arrangements ahead of becoming one organisation.
- Long-serving colleagues from WHH and BCH were recognised at a joint celebration, marking an impressive **2,435 years of combined NHS service**.
- Around **300 colleagues and sponsors** attended our annual Thank You Awards, celebrating finalists and winners across 13 categories.
- Six **staff networks in common** were launched, bringing inclusion activity together and laying the foundations for the networks to develop across the new organisation.



Sustainability - WHH

Our 2025-26 financial position

Original plan	Actual outturn
£28.7m deficit	£40.7m deficit

- Variation from our original plan was due to £11.2m stretch cost improvement programme (CIP) not delivered and £0.8m unfunded integration costs
- CIP target of £21.5m was achieved (£10.1m recurrently)
- Cash balance at the end of the year was £24.9m
- **Audit opinion – unqualified accounts (good)**

Sustainability - WHH

Significant revenue investment of £6.3m

Including on areas such as:

- continued elective restoration
- Halton theatres
- winter capacity on A10 and B3
- increased medical staffing (e.g. ENT and cardiology)

Significant capital investment of £20.8m

Including on areas such as:

- Halton theatres
- Appleton ventilation
- aseptic unit
- interventional radiology
- device refresh and other digital schemes
- decarbonisation – LED lighting and solar
- medical equipment (e.g. ultrasound and cone beam CT scanners)
- estates and facilities schemes

Sustainability - BCH

Our 2025-26 financial position

Original plan	Actual outturn
£1.5m deficit	£4.4m deficit

- Variation from our original plan was due to £2.9m stretch CIP not delivered
- CIP target of £5.5m was achieved (£5.3m recurrently)
- Cash balance at the end of the year was £5.6m
- **Audit opinion – unqualified accounts (good)**

Sustainability - BCH

Significant revenue investment of £0.7m

Including on areas such as:

- Dermatology – skin analytics/ waiting list reduction
- Neuro developmental pathway

Significant capital investment of £2.2m

Including on areas such as:

- Drive Ability North West improvements
- Spencer House car park purchase
- Europa Point roof works
- Laptop replacement programme
- Equipment replacement - community and dental kit
- Other digital schemes
- Other estates and facilities schemes

Looking forward:
2026-27

Nikhil Khashu, chief executive

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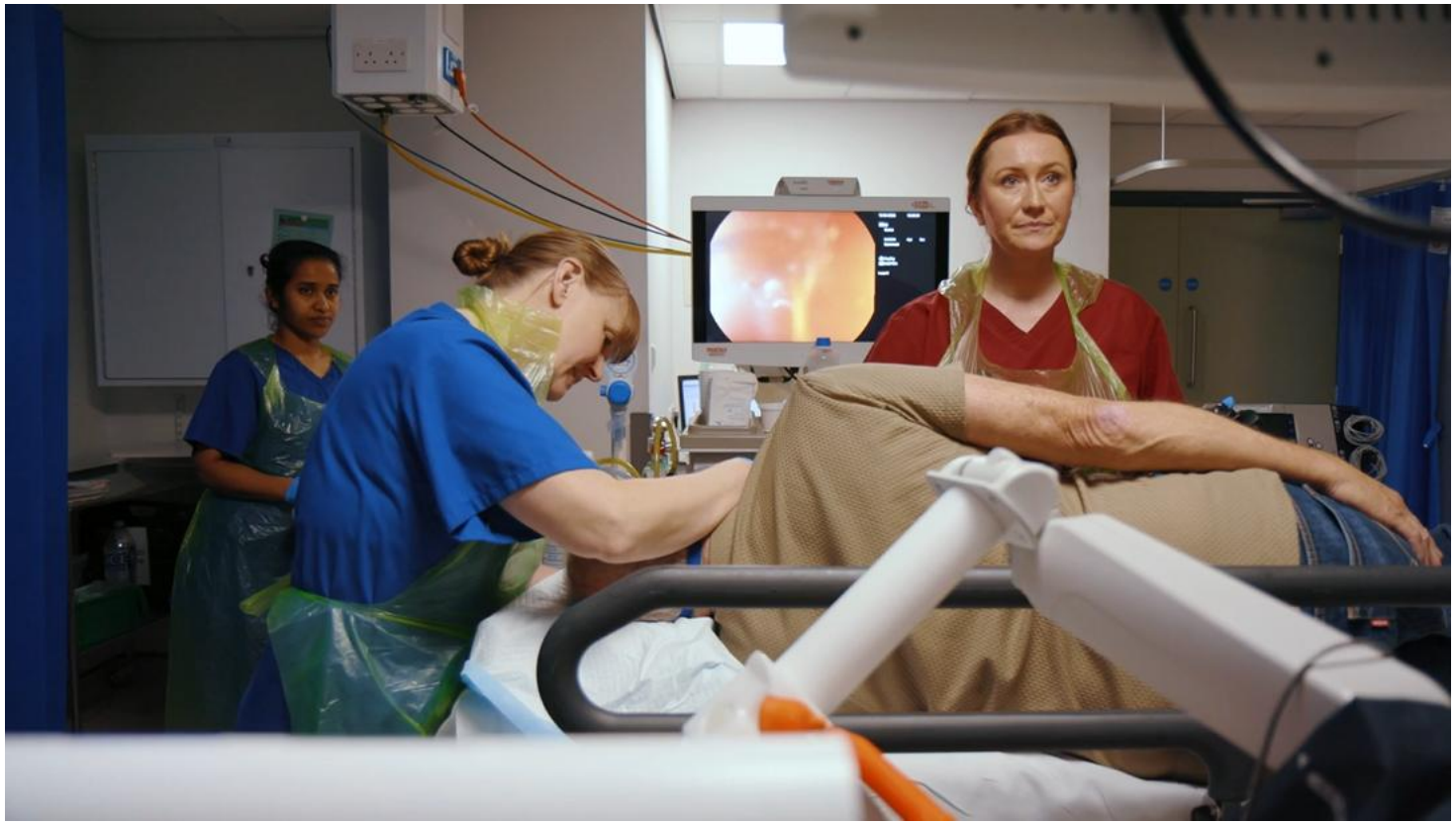
Welcome to North Cheshire and Mersey

On 1 April 2026, we officially became North Cheshire and Mersey NHS Foundation Trust

- Our services are delivered by a workforce of around 6,500 staff
- Together we serve a population of more than 1 million across Warrington, Halton, St Helens and Greater Manchester
- We provide acute and community care from two acute hospitals and more than 70 community locations



Together we are stronger



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tVoTjyYcjVk

Our mission, vision and values

MISSION: We will be exceptional for our patients, our communities and each other

VISION: We will be a great organisation providing excellent healthcare and opportunities to work and learn.

VALUES:



Creating a new NCM strategy

Why is a new strategy needed?

- In response to the NHS 10 Year Health Plan
- Future demand for health and care services
- Health inequalities driving significant demand
- We are now a single provider of acute and community services

We plan to launch our strategy at the end of March 2027.





How we compare nationally

Our first national position as NCM, based on performance from April to June 2026:

97th

out of 134

NHS acute and specialist trusts

This gives us a clear national benchmark and helps focus improvement.

Where we are performing strongly

- Diagnostic tests
- Cancer performance
- Avoiding delays to planned inductions (maternity)

Where we need to improve

- Overall performance
- Our financial position

Our financial deficit means we cannot currently be placed higher than segment 3 (out of the 4 segment scale).

Reviewed every three months

We will use each update to track progress and focus improvement.

How we compare regionally

Across eight core standards, our regional position shows strong performance and clear momentum, alongside one priority that needs sustained focus.

The eight core standards – latest performance (July 2026)

Elective: waiting within 18 weeks
64.9% NCM / 64.4% NW median

Elective: waiting over 52 weeks
0.9% NCM / 0.9% NW median

Cancer: faster diagnosis
80.2% NCM / 80.2% NW median

Cancer: 31-day treatment
98.2% NCM / 65.2% NW median

Cancer: 62-day combined
83.7% NCM / 74.7% NW median

Diagnostics: waiting over 6 weeks
6.3% NCM / 14.1% NW median

A&E: 4-hour performance
75.5% NCM / 72.5% NW median

A&E: 12-hour performance
24.9% NCM / 15.7% NW median

✓

1st

in the North West on both cancer treatment standards

✓

6 out of 8

at or above the Cheshire and Merseyside peer median

↗

6 out of 8

improved faster than national over 12 months

!

Our key improvement priority

A&E 12-hour performance

16th in the North West

This is the clear outlier in the regional comparison and will be a major focus for improvement during the coming year.

Operational plan 2026-27 (2028-29 finances)

- NCM has a compliant plan for the next three years which means that deficit support funding (DSF) can be accessed to the level of the deficit.
- This means we have a breakeven plan in each financial year.
- The planned deficits and CIP targets over the next three years are as follows:

	2026-27 £m	2027-28 £m	2028-29 £m
Surplus / (Deficit) excluding DSF	**(25.5)**	**(10.0)**	**(3.3)**
DSF	25.5	10.0	3.3
Surplus / (Deficit) including DSF	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**
CIP target	36.8	30.1	20.9

Operational plan 2026-27 (2028-29 performance)

We have also submitted an operational plan which is compliant with the nationally set performance targets for the next three years. The targets are as follows:

Metric	Target	March 2027	March 2028	March 2029
RTT 18 weeks	**7% improvement by March 2027, 92% by March 2029**	7% improvement (72%)	Further 10% improvement (82%)	Further 10% improvement (92%)
A&E 4-hour performance (pre integration)	**82% by March 2027**	82.2% by March 2027	Average 83.1%	Average 85.9%
	83% average for 2027-28			
	85% average for 2028-29			
A&E 4-hour performance (post integration all Widnes UTC aligned to NCM leading to above target performance)	**82% by March 2027**	84.1% by March 2027	Average 84.9%	Average 87.3%
	83% average for 2027-28			
	85% average for 2028-29			
Diagnostics 6-week breaches	**1% by March 2029**	2.1%	1.9%	1%



Building a sustainable future

- Delivering the three-year route to financial sustainability
- Strengthening financial grip, control and accountability
- Improving productivity while protecting quality and safety
- Developing recurrent savings rather than relying on short-term measures
- Using the combined workforce, estate and technology more effectively
- Redesigning pathways to reduce duplication
- Delivering planned activity and improving operational performance
- Continued targeted investment in services, digital infrastructure and essential estates

The creation of North Cheshire and Mersey NHS Foundation Trust gives us a real opportunity to redesign care, improve outcomes and build stronger, more sustainable services for the future.

Lead governor’s report

Sue Fitzpatrick, lead governor

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Governor elections (Sept-Nov 2025)

- Public: Warrington and Halton – Diane Nield (second term)
- Public: Warrington and Halton – Helen Bennett
- Public: Warrington and Halton – Matt Machin
- Public: Warrington and Halton – Stephen Walton
- Public: Warrington and Halton – Linda Mills (third term)
- Public: Rest of England – Dorcas Akeju OBE
- Staff: Estates, Admin and Managerial – Suresh Arni Sukumaran
- Staff: Nursing and Midwifery – Michelle Kho

- **No candidates were nominated for one constituency, which remains vacant**
- Staff: Medical and Dental

Council of Governors

The NCM Council of Governors is made up of the below constituencies, totalling 31 seats.

The current composition of the Council Governors is as follows:

Public Governors (2 constituencies)	Governor
Warrington and Halton – 15 seats	Sue Fitzpatrick (Lead Gov)
	Diane Nield (Deputy Lead Gov)
	Colin Jenkins
	Helen Bennett
	Stephen Walton
	Catherine Ardern
	Margaret Bamforth
	Carol Ann Kelly
	Jack Roper
	Nigel Richardson
	Linda Mills
	Matt Machin
	Alan Davies
	Paula Jones
	Colin McKenzie
	Vacant
Rest of England – 2 seats	Kevin Keith
	Vacant
	Vacant
	Dorcas Akeju OBE

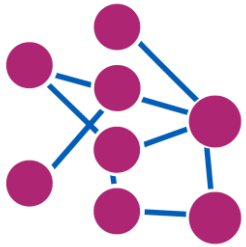
Staff Governors	Governor
5 Seats	Suresh Arni Sukumaran (Estates, Administrative and Managerial)
	Michelle Kho (Nursing and Midwifery)
	Vacant (Nursing and Midwifery)
	Vacant (Dental)
	Vacant (Medical)
	Erwin Tuballes (Support Staff)
	Vacant (Clinical Scientists & AHPs)

Partner Governors	Governor
5 seats	Cllr Colin Hughes (Halton Borough Council)
	Cllr Tony Higgins (Warrington Council)
	Mansimran Singh (Warrington Sikh Gurdwara)
	Vacant (Voluntary Community Services)
	Nichola Newton (Warrington and Vale Royal College)

Governor achievements 2025-26



Supported the acquisition of Bridgewater Community Healthcare, delivering the NHS's fastest acute and community trust integration



Strengthened community partnerships and supported seamless patient pathways



Approved constitutional changes



Supported 'Experts by Experience' events, sharing knowledge and recruiting engaged members



Participated in patient-led PLACE assessments



Appointed a new chair for North Cheshire and Mersey NHS Foundation Trust



Helped refresh the Governors' Handbook, presentation materials and video resources

Working together through integration



Joint development

Governors from both trusts came together for a joint development day, building shared understanding and relationships.



Shared observation and learning

Governors observed each other's board and Council of Governors meetings, and observed committees in common improving insight into both organisations, as well as attending observational visits across sites



Co-designing NCM governance

Joint governor working groups helped develop the NCM Constitution, ensuring the new arrangements reflected the enlarged trust.



Governor Engagement Group in Common

During Q3, governors came together through the group to align membership and engagement activity ahead of integration.

This early collaboration helped build strong relationships, maintain governor involvement and support a positive transition to NCM.

Holding the board to account



Greater influence has given extended Q&A sessions at Council of Governor meetings on priority issues



Governor-led observation visits across acute and community trusts enabled candid staff and patient feedback, with actions tracked through an observation visit tracker and monitored to completion via the Patient Experience Sub-committee



Contributed to the chair's appraisal and assessed and reappointed Non-Executive Directors (NEDs)



Held quarterly constituency meetings to collate member feedback and frame questions for COG

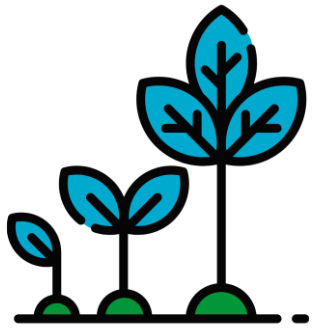


Observed public board of director meetings (lead governor observes private board)

Engagement with members



Helped shape future membership opportunities through quarterly Governor Engagement Group meetings



Promoted membership growth through community engagement events and member recruitment stands



Increased engagement with underrepresented groups through targeted community outreach



Revamped the quarterly Member Newsletter, improving visibility, transparency and member engagement



Engaged schools and apprentices to promote membership and amplify younger voices

Our Membership Strategy

The Governor Engagement Group has continued to oversee the trust's Membership Strategy, which was extended to 2026 to support member engagement and representation through a period of transition. The strategy focuses on ensuring members remain informed, involved and able to contribute to the future development of North Cheshire and Mersey NHS Foundation Trust.

Our Membership Strategy is set out under three key objectives:

1. **High quality information**

   Provision of high-**quality** Information to members to provide them with the knowledge they need to understand the offer of membership and to be ambassadors for the trust.

1. **Inclusivity**

   Ensure our membership is reflective of the different **people** and communities we serve, with a focus on attracting younger members and those from groups that are currently underrepresented.

1. **Sustainability**

   Taking meaningful steps so we can make sure that we are promoting **sustainability** in all membership communications and activities.



Future of governors – national context and transition

National policy indicates that **Councils of Governors may not continue in their current statutory form**.

- The NHS 10 Year Health Plan signals a shift towards:
  - care closer to home
  - greater use of digital technology
  - prevention and earlier intervention
- Future arrangements will need to preserve:
  - public voice
  - local accountability
  - community insight
  - visible challenge and assurance
- During this transition, governors have an important role in helping identify what is needed to maintain confidence and continuity.

Key message:

The future focus is not simply on the continuation of current structures, but on how public voice and accountability are protected in any new model.

Future engagement models and next steps

- Begin shaping future approaches to **public, patient, staff and stakeholder engagement**.
- Consider more flexible and inclusive ways to hear from local communities.
- Ensure future models support the trust's ambition for **Better Care Together** across North Cheshire and Mersey.
- Use the transition period to:
  - identify key principles for future engagement
  - maintain transparency and public confidence
  - prepare for national changes as they emerge

2026 governor elections: A light-touch election approach is to be taken to maintain constitutional compliance, quorum and governance capacity during a period of national change.

Key message:

This is an opportunity for governors to help shape what meaningful public involvement and accountability should look like in future.

Question and answer session

values

Andy Carter, chair

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Thank you

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