

Welcome from the Chair

As Chair of East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust (ESHT), I am reaching out to invite exceptional candidates to apply for a pivotal role on our Board – a non-executive director position with the added responsibility of chairing the Audit and Risk Committee.



At ESHT, our values of Kindness, Inclusivity, and Integrity are at the heart of everything we do. As one of East Sussex's largest employers and a trusted partner in the NHS system, we are proud of the progress we have made over the last seven years in delivering high standards in clinical, operational, and financial performance. We are a local Trust serving the diverse needs of our community, blending acute and community services to provide integrated care. We value authenticity, humility, and meaningful engagement as essential qualities in our leaders.

The role of the Chair of our Audit and Risk Committee is critical in supporting our Board's evidence-driven approach to governance. We seek a candidate who combines strategic insight with a meticulous attention to detail, ensuring that we maintain our high standards of financial probity, risk management and quality assurance during these challenging times. An ability to foster collaborative relationships across the organisation will be invaluable as we continue to build on the platform of success laid by our strong and stable Board.

Beyond the practical requirements of governance, this role presents a unique opportunity to contribute to the values-based culture that defines ESHT. We work hard to create an environment where our staff can thrive, working cohesively to deliver the best care for our patients.

As Chair of the Audit Committee, you will play a key role in ensuring that our financial and operational strategies remain aligned with our ambitions for excellence in care and system-wide collaboration.

The coming years will bring unprecedented challenges, but also opportunities for innovation and transformative change. We are looking for a team member who is both strategic and grounded, someone who can inspire trust and confidence while pushing for improvements that will keep ESHT fit for the future.

If this resonates with your experience, values, and aspirations, we would be delighted to hear from you: please contact our recruitment partners Jenny Adrian and Rhiannon Smith, at Hunter Healthcare on: 07939 250362 or jadrian@hunter-healthcare.com

Steve Phoenix

Chairman
East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust

About Us

We provide safe, compassionate and high-quality hospital and community care to over half a million people living in East Sussex and those who visit our area.

We are one of the largest organisations in East Sussex with an annual income of £669 million and we are the only integrated provider of acute and community care in Sussex. Our extensive health services are provided by over 8,700 dedicated members of staff working from two acute hospitals in Hastings and Eastbourne, three community hospitals in Bexhill, Rye and Uckfield, over 100 community sites across East Sussex, and in people's own homes.

In 2020 the Care Quality Commission (CQC) rated us as 'Good' overall, and 'Outstanding' for being Caring and Effective. Conquest Hospital and our community services were rated 'Outstanding' and Eastbourne DGH was rated 'Good'.

Our two acute hospitals have emergency departments and provide 24 hour a day care, offering a comprehensive range of surgical, medical, outpatient and maternity services, supported by a full range of diagnostic and therapy services. Our centre for trauma services and obstetrics is at Conquest Hospital, while our centre for urology and stroke services is at Eastbourne DGH. At Bexhill Hospital we offer a range of outpatient, day surgery, rehabilitation and intermediate care services. At Rye, Winchelsea and District Memorial Hospital we offer outpatients, rehabilitation and intermediate services. At Uckfield Community Hospital we provide day surgery and outpatient care.

In the community, we deliver services that focus on people with long-term conditions living well outside hospital, through our integrated locality teams working with district and community nursing teams. Community members of staff also provide care to patients in their homes and from a number of clinics, health centres and GP surgeries.

We are part of the **Sussex Health and Care Integrated Care System (ICS)**, which is made up of health and care organisations across Sussex. For more information, visit our website [here](#).



In the Last Year...



Over

2,700

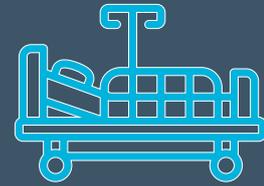
babies were born
in our hospitals



Almost

160,000

attendances in our
emergency departments



Nearly

56,000

people had
planned surgery



We received

21,800

cancer referrals



Over

41,000

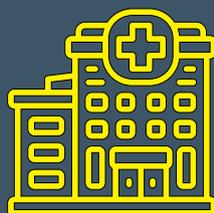
referrals to community
nursing – 96% seen
within 24 hours



We prepared

1,109,000

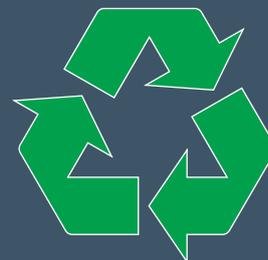
patient meals across our
four main hospital sites



More than

470,000

outpatient appointments



We recycled

227

tonnes of cardboard and scrap metal

Our Vision

Our Vision is “High quality care and experience for our patients, colleagues and communities”

QUALITY

Delivering safe care; always improving outcomes and experience for patients

- Putting safety first and consistently achieving quality standards
- Minimising waiting times for treatment
- Continually delivering improvements in quality
- Routinely receive great feedback on the care received
- Co-designing service models that respond to differing community needs

PEOPLE

Fostering a positive culture; living our values; helping our teams feel equipped to deliver

- Enabling staff to realise their potential
- Valuing diverse capabilities and recognising individual contribution
- Equipping our people with the tools to make decisions and improve
- Creating a culture of engagement, development and belonging
- Giving colleagues the time they need to spend with patient

SUSTAINABILITY

Always searching for the best way to use our resources for clinical, workforce and financial outcomes

- Working collaboratively with partners
- Ensuring we have financially sustainable organisation and system
- Services that consistently provide the right care for our communities
- Minimising our impact on the environment
- Capitalising on digital and technological advances

More information can be found on our [website](#).

Our Strategy 2021-26

“Our current Trust Strategy, “Better Care Together for East Sussex” is built on four main pillars, summarised below, that drive us toward our Vision by working with system partners, supporting our colleagues and enabling our residents to access the right care in the most effective places. The strategy will be refreshed entirely during the coming year, however key features of the current strategy remain just as relevant.

Improving the health of our communities

- Investment in services outside the hospitals remains a key strategic driver for long term sustainability for us. We have a strategic programme to maximise the benefit of being an integrated Trust, which is progressing well, and our community based teams have had some great successes this year: our virtual ward is now very well utilised and had a very positive GIRFT review; and our Urgent Community Response team substantially exceed its two hour response targets. We are also piloting new, more integrated approaches, working with the South East Coast Ambulance Service, to respond to urgent calls for help more rapidly.
- We have been successful in reducing the number of people waiting too long for planned care interventions (almost reducing the number of people waiting over 65 weeks to zero), reinvigorated our day surgical programme and made good progress in improving the speed of access to urgent care. Our medium-term strategic goal is to restore a 95% performance against the clinical standard by implementing sustainable, integrated models of delivery.
- The Sussex Surgical Centre is expected to open in July 2025 which will transform the delivery and capacity for high volume, day case work for East Sussex and Sussex overall. We also implemented a large scale Community Diagnostic Centre in Bexhill which has become very popular with our patients.
- We continue to build collaborative arrangements across East Sussex, working together with system partners to co-develop joint health and social care priorities.

Collaborating to deliver better care

- We have extended that collaboration by working closely with NHS Sussex colleagues on the development of a range of mutually beneficial programmes..
- We continue to play a key role in the Sussex Pathology Network which is now implementing the Laboratory Information Management System it procured last year, has implemented Digital Pathology capability and has completed the case for a joint managed service contract. We are also keenly involved in the newer and developing Radiology Network, which has begun to develop the capability to share image content so we can maximise the network’s radiologist and reporting capability.
- As well as collaborating on service improvement, we work very closely with other critical programmes across Sussex, including digital programmes and workforce development priorities. We have also seen early progress made as a system in developing meaningful ways to share information with each other (when it helps us care for patients and people in our communities and is within information governance rules) by working well with NHS Sussex’s Our Care Connect programme.
- We also took the first steps in the development of Integrated Community Teams, joining system partners in the Hastings ‘FrontRunner’ project; and we are beginning to test new ways of joining up services across acute, community and primary care to support people who live with a higher degree of frailty..

Empowering our people

- We continue to focus on keeping our people safe, healthy and well. We are doing this by increasing our capacity to deliver both psychological and well-being support and we are committed to delivering the Sexual Safety in the Workplace Charter.
- In partnership with university and college partners we have developed new educational programmes to ensure our people have the skills and experience to deliver the best possible patient care.
- We asked our Staff Partnership Forum to review the Trust values. Forum partners from all divisions of the Trust worked together to identify three key words. More than 700 colleagues attended numerous engagement events, led by the Chief Executive. After a lot of discussion and feedback, the words which received the most support and were agreed to embody the trust's values were kindness, inclusivity and integrity.
- We have re-designed and developed our recruitment material to attract new people to join our Trust. Successful campaigns have improved our vacancy rate. Our vacancy rate fell further to 0.6% in February 2025. Alongside this, we have held 'Big Conversations' with our people to understand why they would consider leaving the Trust, and how we can create a flexible environment in which our people can grow and develop. During this year, our retention rates have improved to levels seen pre-pandemic.
- In the coming years we will be implementing our Quality Management System as a central feature of our Continuous Quality Improvement system – a primary outcome of this will be empowerment and engagement of colleagues right through the organisation.

Ensuring Innovative and sustainable care

- We have continued to build on some of the innovations from last year, such as implementing digital pathology, and rolling out our electronic pharmacy management and new test ordering systems.
- We have also focused on understanding how to derive the most benefit from being an integrated organisation to develop more sustainable service models. The success of our virtual ward service (which is now very well utilised with 56 virtual 'beds'), our HomeFirst pilot, our 'Frailty Enhanced Discharge' pilot and our nationally recognised work on rehabilitation service models are being brought into a new programme of work designed to optimise and showcase the 'art of the possible' as an integrated acute and integrated acute and community provider. This will see more appropriate locations in the coming years.
- In terms of environmental sustainability, we are now benefiting from the investment in the solar farm on the Eastbourne staff car park, the air source heat pumps and the completed insulation fascia at Eastbourne Hospital, leading the way nationally on aspects of the net zero NHS journey.
- The Trust has a short term goal to achieve and sustain financial breakeven.

Our Trust Values

This past year has seen us undertake work to develop and then engage colleagues on our new trust values. Our previous values had been used for a decade, and when the Partnership Forum, a group of staff representatives from across all areas of the trust, was formed in 2022, they were asked to review the values and understand if they were still fit for purpose.

It was agreed they needed refreshing, with the new values needing to reflect who we are, how we work and what we believe in as a trust. Forum partners from all divisions of the trust worked together to identify three key words, then more than 700 colleagues attended numerous engagement events in July and August to gain their views.

The forum shared the words with the trust leadership team. After a lot of discussion and feedback, the words which received the most support were kindness, inclusivity and integrity.

These were then shared with Healthwatch, our patients and volunteers. The values were launched across the organisation with a host of activities engaging colleagues across the trust, at both community and acute sites. We introduced the new values, their meanings and the behaviours that underpin them, and the response was overwhelmingly positive.

However, it's really important that this isn't an initial flurry of excitement and then nothing more – these need to be embedded in everything we do in our organisation. There is lots of positive feedback to build on, and we are committed to making sure our values work is at the heart of our trust objectives for the coming year.

A working group will manage the continued embedding of the values over the coming year, which will see them being woven into every aspect of working life at the trust.



KINDNESS INCLUSIVITY INTEGRITY

Kindness means treating others how you want to be treated and caring enough to get it right. It's the small acts of kindness both to patients and each other that make everyone's experience better.

- Treating others as you would wish to be treated
- Being kind to yourself, colleagues and our patients and their loved ones
- Choosing to react in a kind way and being open and friendly
- Being considerate of other people as individuals
- Showing empathy for patients and colleagues

Inclusivity involves embracing differences and working together as a team. It's fundamental to providing the best care for our patients so we can make the trust a supportive workplace where everyone is welcomed and feels involved.

- Working together collaboratively across all areas of the Trust
- Involving patients and carers in decisions about their care
- Being part of a supportive workplace where we can all be ourselves
- Valuing that everyone has something different to bring to our Trust
- Showing respect to everyone – consistently and without prejudice

Integrity is saying and doing the right thing, in the right way, for the right reasons. We should all come to work each day with the intention of giving the best of ourselves and doing the best for our patients, colleagues and the Trust.

- Understanding what's acceptable and what's not – and speaking up when something's not right
- Being committed to doing what you say you will do
- Being honest and accountable for your actions
- Being mindful of resources and how they can be used as effectively as possible
- Striving to be the best you can be



Key Challenges: 2025-26 & beyond

New leadership for the NHS nationally and the changes announced with the abolition of NHS England and 50% staffing reductions nationally, regionally and in NHS Trust corporate staff growth is creating significant turbulence and uncertainty for NHS bodies and anxiety for many staff.

Any growth in funding is overtaken by higher than allocated inflation costs and nationally agreed pay awards. The withdrawal of non-recurrent funding is putting huge pressure on Trusts across England to deliver balanced budgets.

ESHT has agreed a 2025/26 plan that meets national requirements but is predicated on a 6.3% efficiency programme – almost £50M. This is a higher target than ever previously delivered in East Sussex and two to three times the typical NHS annual efficiency programme.

The plan uses non-recurrent savings to balance and, inevitably, involves reductions in staffing.

There is considerable optimism, notwithstanding the scale, that our 2025/26 Plan is achievable.

In 2024/25 we delivered a £38M efficiency saving (the largest ever) but the costs of excess inflation and pay awards resulted in a £9M overspend. Further, comparable financial issues will present in 2026/27 and 2027/28.

The Trust has a new CEO after the promotion of the previous post-holder and there is an experienced, stable Board with a strong track record over the past seven years.

The focus of the Board for the next two to three years will be to deliver financial and clinical sustainability while delivering good care to national standards.

Keeping staff engaged and motivated during a lengthy period of instability and austerity will be key.

Naturally there are other major issues. There will be a new ten year NHS plan by the summer, with an emphasis on shifting treatment to prevention, on digital transformation and on improving access and speed of treatment. We believe we are well placed to take that agenda forward.

Our buildings require significant capital to continue to provide high quality care. We have one of the largest backlog maintenance requirements in the UK. We were in the New Hospital Programme for major investment from 2030 but that has now been deferred to 2037.

We are part of a complex web of system relationships. Locally we are in a symbiotic relationship with colleagues in primary care (especially but not solely in general practice), with colleagues providing mental health care and crucially with the social care services of East Sussex County Council. Housing, employment and transport bodies; and voluntary and charity organisations are also a vital part of the eco system of East Sussex. More widely we are part of NHS Sussex which covers all NHS functions across East and West Sussex and Brighton & Hove.

These relationships are vital. Other NHS Trusts across Sussex have similar financial, service, workforce and capital challenges. Overall we are deemed to be over funded for a 'fair share' of the national allocation. All local authorities are grappling with the austerity programme caused by the state of our national finances. Additionally a major local government reorganisation is being planned for Sussex that will result in some devolved functions from central government and will reduce the number of councils (District/Borough/Unitary/County) to three.

Despite the collegial working relationships between ESHT and ESCC delayed transfers of care have soared since 2020 and are a major barrier to effective care, hospital flow and discharge, finance and workforce costs. The turbulence inevitable during reorganisation will likely complicate discharge planning further.

Role Description

Job Title:	Non-Executive Director (Audit Committee Chair)
Accountable to:	Trust Chair
Term of Office:	Three years

Introduction

Non-Executive Directors play a crucial role in bringing an independent perspective to the boardroom, in addition to any specific knowledge and skills they may have.

Non-Executive Directors have a duty to uphold the highest standards of integrity and probity and to foster good relations in the boardroom.

Non-Executive Directors are expected to participate fully as members of Committees of the Board of Directors to which they are appointed and to take the role of Committee Chair when so appointed. For this role the successful candidate will be Chair of the Audit Committee, although over time these do change and rotate.

Non-Executive Directors will meet periodically with the Trust Chairman in the absence of Executive Directors to discuss issues of interest or concern.

Non-Executive Directors will meet at least once a year with the Senior Independent Director in the absence of the Trust Chairman to participate in the Trust Chairman's appraisal and the setting of objectives for the Trust Chairman.

In exceptional circumstances they may be asked to meet with the Senior Independent Director to attempt to resolve issues concerning the Trust Chairman's performance or to take action in that respect.

The Non-Executive Director Role

Non-Executive Directors have a responsibility to:

- support the Trust Chairman, Chief Executive and Executive Directors in promoting the ESHT values

- support a positive culture throughout the Trust and adopt behaviours in the boardroom and elsewhere that exemplify our agreed values
- constructively engage with the proposed decisions of the Board of Directors and ensure that appropriate challenge is made where necessary
- help develop proposals on priorities
- help develop proposals on risk mitigation
- contribute to the development of strategy

Non-Executive Directors have a duty to:

- scrutinise the performance of the Executive management in meeting agreed goals and objectives
- satisfy themselves as to the integrity of financial, clinical and other information
- satisfy themselves that financial and clinical quality controls and systems of risk management and governance are sound and that they are used
- commission and use external advice if necessary
- ensure that they receive adequate information in the form that they specify and to monitor the reporting of performance

Non-Executive Directors are responsible (acting in the appropriate Committees) for:

- determining appropriate levels of remuneration of Executive Directors
- participating in the appraisal of Executive Directors, their fellow Non-Executive Directors and the Trust Chairman
- succession planning for key executive posts

SUMMARY

The Audit Committee is accountable to the Board and provides an independent and objective view of ESHT's compliance with its statutory responsibilities.

The role of the committee is to seek assurance that financial reporting and internal control principles are applied, and to maintain an appropriate relationship with the auditors, both internal and external.

The committee provides advice to the Board about the reliability and robustness of internal control processes.

The Trust CFO is the Executive Director responsible for the finance and audit functions. The Chair of the Committee and the CFO will work in partnership to ensure the effective function of the Committee. In particular they will ensure accurate, timely and clear information necessary for effective assurance and control. In particular they will ensure that there is a positive and constructive approach to audit and its contribution both for the Board and beyond.

In addition to sharing the responsibilities as a Member of the ESHT Board, the Chair of the Audit Committee also has these additional responsibilities:

- Bring independent financial acumen to the work of the Audit Committee across its governance, risk management, assurance and internal control functions
- Ensure the committee identifies key risks in implementing its strategy; determine its approach and attitude to providing effective oversight of those risks and ensure there are prudent controls to assist in managing risk
- Set an integrated agenda relevant to the current operating environment, taking full account of the important strategic issues it faces and aligning with the annual planner for the Board and other committees
- Build and maintain relationships with key Audit Committee stakeholders, such as the board Chair, the chief executive, finance director and internal and external auditors, including regular meetings with each as part of the process of developing the agenda and preparing for each committee meeting

- Lead and support a constructive dynamic within the committee, enabling grounded debate with contributions from all, ensuring the committee sees itself as a team, has the right balance and diversity of skills, knowledge and perspectives, and the confidence to challenge on all aspects of the agenda
- Ensure that the committee receives accurate, high quality, timely and clear information, that the related assurance systems are fit for purpose and that there is a good flow of information between the committee, the Board and senior management
- Ensure safeguards are in place to allow staff and other individuals, where relevant, to raise, in confidence, concerns about possible improprieties in matters of financial reporting and control, clinical quality, patient safety or other matters. These processes should also reassure individuals raising concerns that they will be protected from potential negative repercussions
- Develop a committee that is genuinely connected to and assured about staff and patient experience, as demonstrated by appropriate feedback and other measures;

On average this role will require the equivalent to two to four days a month, however the time commitment may vary and a flexible approach should be taken. The remuneration payable for this role is £13,000 (standard rate for all NEDs) per annum.

Given the significant public profile and responsibility members of NHS Boards hold, it is vital that those appointed inspire confidence of the public, patients and NHS staff at all times. NHS England and the Trust make a number of specific background checks to ensure that those we appoint are "fit and proper" people to hold these important roles.

Person Specification

Essential criteria

You will need:

- A recognised financial qualification or the requisite skills, experience and track record to be able to chair the Audit Committee
- Recent relevant financial management experience in a large and complex organisation (ESHT has over 8,000 staff and an annual budget of around £650,000,000)
- Experience of operating at a senior or Board level
- Excellent working knowledge of audit committee practices

The role will require you to:

- Demonstrate independent and proactive leadership with confidence and integrity
- Champion open and frank discussion and be prepared to ask difficult questions
- Have a genuine commitment to patients and the promotion of excellent health care services and be able to demonstrate that interest
- Ensure an effective balance of skills among non executive Board members
- Work collaboratively alongside other non-executives and executive colleagues as an equal member of the Board
- Bring independence, external perspectives, skills and challenge to strategy development
- Hold the executive to account by providing purposeful, constructive scrutiny and challenge
- Shape and actively support a healthy culture for the Trust
- As a local Trust we would normally look for a locally based candidate. The specialised nature of what we are seeking means we are happy to consider candidates from a wider catchment.

All non-executive directors must champion the standards of public life – by upholding the highest standards of conduct and displaying the principles of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership.

As an NHS leader, the successful candidate will be able to demonstrate the range of behaviours required to contribute effectively in this Board level role. These are outlined in the NHS England Board Leadership Competency Framework on the next page.

NHS England: Leadership Competency Framework – Competencies

Alongside the Fit and Proper Persons Test, all Board directors are required to meet the six leadership competency domains which reflect the NHS values as set out in NHS England's Leadership Competency Framework 2024:

COMPETENCY DOMAIN	
Driving high-quality and sustainable outcomes	The skills, knowledge and behaviours needed to deliver and bring about high-quality and safe care and lasting change and improvement – from ensuring all staff are trained and well-led to fostering improvement and innovation which leads to better health and care outcomes
Setting strategy and delivering long term transformation	The skills that need to be employed in strategy development and planning, and ensuring a system-wide view, along with using intelligence from quality, performance, finance and workforce measures to feed into strategy development
Promoting equality and inclusion, and reducing health and workforce inequalities	The importance of continually reviewing plans and strategies to ensure their delivery leads to improved services and outcomes for all communities, narrows health and workforce inequalities, and promotes inclusion
Providing robust governance and assurance	The system of leadership accountability and the behaviours, values and standards that underpin our work as leaders. This domain also covers the principles of evaluation, the significance of evidence and assurance in decision making and ensuring patient safety, and the vital importance of collaboration on the Board to drive delivery and improvement
Creating a compassionate, just and positive culture	The skills and behaviours needed to develop great team and organisation cultures. This includes ensuring all staff and service users are listened to and heard, being respectful and challenging inappropriate behaviours
Building a trusted relationship with partners and communities	The need to collaborate, consult and co-produce with colleagues in neighbouring teams, providers and systems, people using services, our communities, and our workforce. Strengthening relationships and developing collaborative behaviours are key to the integrated care environment

How to Apply

The closing date for applications is **27 May 2025**.

Applications should be made by submitting:

- A full and up-to-date CV, which includes your contact details and email address.
- A personal statement of no more than two sides of A4, which should explain why you are interested in applying for the role and what you believe you will be bringing to it.
- Contact details for three referees (who will not be contacted without your permission).
- A completed **Diversity Monitoring Form** and **Fit and Proper Person Monitoring Form**.

All applications should be sent to: **applications@hunter-healthcare.com**. All applications will be acknowledged.

For an informal conversation about the post, please contact **Rhiannon Smith** at our recruitment partners, Hunter Healthcare by email: **rsmith@hunter-healthcare.com** or phone: **07860 773860**

KEY DATES:

Application Deadline	27 May 2025
Longlisting	circa 3 June 2025
Shortlisting	circa 17 June 2025
Interview	w/c 30 June 2025





East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust



Floor 2, Berkshire House
168-173 High Holborn, London WC1V 7AA

T: 020 7935 4570
E: enquiries@hunter-healthcare.com