

# CHAIR

## Candidate Brief

August 2025



## Welcome

### **Thank you for your interest in the role of Chair at Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust.**

The Council of Governors is seeking to appoint a Chair in succession to David Walker, who comes to the end of his seven-year tenure in April 2026. We are looking for someone to lead the Trust as the latest NHS 10-year plan unfolds, capitalising on Oxford Health's great strengths. This is an opportunity to help shape the future of mental health and community services across a wide swathe of southern England while maintaining the financial standing and reputation of a strong trust.

The Board of Oxford Health is changing. An established Chief Executive is moving to fill the key substantive positions leading community and mental health. The incoming Chair will be able to work with the Council of Governors in appointing several new Non-Executive Directors, their skills reflecting the changing emphases of NHS policy towards neighbourhoods, information technology and the prevention of ill health while sharpening our delivery.

The Trust serves the public in Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire as well as Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire, within two integrated care systems. The Chair of Oxford Health has special responsibilities in liaising with our close partners in local government, a dynamic voluntary sector and the University of Oxford.

The Chair is responsible to the Council of Governors for leadership of the board, for maximising the performance of the Chief Executive and deploying the talents of Non-Executive Directors. The Chair will demonstrate the competency described in the job description and person specification. The Chair also leads the Council of Governors and ensures it works with the Board to shape the Trust's future strategy. Our active Council of Governors provides a key link between the Trust, its staff and the communities we serve.

To carry out the role, the Chair must cultivate a strong, collaborative relationship with the Chief Executive. Many responsibilities will be discharged in partnership with him.

We are rated Good by the Care Quality Commission but, like everyone else, strive to deal with tight recruitment and run safe, effective services in the face of surging demand.

We value kindness, respect, an appetite for evidence of outcomes, a spirit of innovation and quality improvement and are seeking a motivated leader with vision, energy and drive to join us in making a sustainable and lasting difference to our populations and the people we provide care for. Our strengths include a commitment to staff learning and development; we aspire to a culture of inclusion but recognise we have a way to go to realise our own and wider NHS ambitions on equality and diversity.

If you would like to have an informal and confidential discussions with the Chief Executive and other Board members, please contact Taff Gidi (Executive Director of Corporate Affairs).

We look forward to hearing from you.



**Vicki Power**  
Lead Governor  
Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust

## Contents

1.	The opportunity	4
2.	Person specification and NHS Leadership Competency Framework	4
3.	Role of the NHS Board and Chair	8
4.	Role description	8
5.	About the Trust	9
6.	Key Challenges	9

## **Appendices** 10

Appendix 1: Values and concepts from the NHS Leadership Competency Framework

Appendix 2: Terms of appointment

Appendix 3: More information

Appendix 4: Making an application

Appendix 5: Key dates

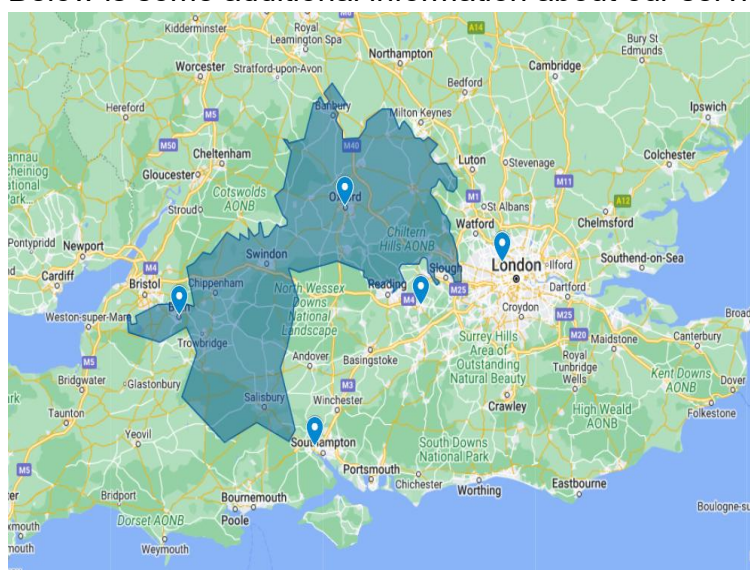
## The opportunity

We are looking for an exceptional leader to chair Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust. This is a unique opportunity to help shape the future of local services by sharing your talents and expertise to help transform the hospital and make a positive difference to your community.

We predominantly provide direct provision services within the following Integrated Care Systems:

- Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West
- Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire

Below is some additional information about our services and geography:



- A full range of **Mental Health Services** across Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire (and CAMHs and adult eating disorder services across Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire)
- **Forensics Mental Health Services** across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Milton Keynes
- **Learning Disabilities Services** across Oxfordshire
- **Community Health Services; Special Care, Paediatric and Urgent Care Dentistry; and Primary Care Services** across Oxfordshire

## The person specification

We are looking for candidates who want to use their energy, skills and experience to help drive the delivery of sustainable healthcare services for the people of Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire, and some surrounding areas.

## Essential Requirements

- Meets the independence requirement set out in *Section B, 2.6* of the [Code of governance for NHS provider trusts](#).
- Essential experience and attributes are described in the NHS Leadership Competency Framework for Board Members and our values as set out below.

- Preference will be given to people able to demonstrate strong local knowledge or have strong connections with the areas served by the Trust.
- In addition, individuals must meet the requirements of the Fit and Proper Persons Test found [here](#).

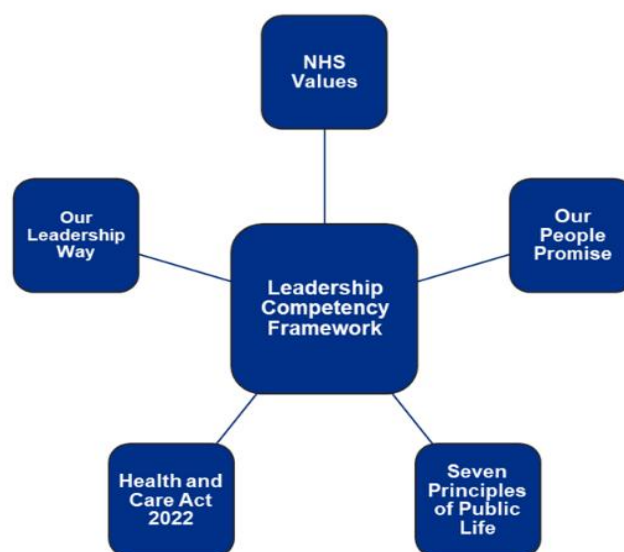
### Desirable experience

- Prior experience as a non-executive director (any sector)
- Prior experience on an NHS board (executive, non-executive or associate role)
- Professional qualification or equivalent experience
- Prior senior experience of complex organisations outside the NHS, i.e. private, voluntary or other public sector providers of similar scale
- Highly effective influencer and confident and active networker who is able to demonstrate partnership working in complex systems. In particular, the ability to strike the right balance between the Trust's own priorities and the system.

### NHS leadership competency framework for board members

Leaders in the NHS help deliver better health and care for patients by setting the tone for their organisation, team culture and performance. NHS England have worked with a wide range of leaders from across the NHS to help describe what we do when we operate at our best.

The competency domains reflect the [NHS values](#) and the following diagram shows how they are aligned:



<b>Working together for patients*</b>	<b>Compassion</b>
Building a trusted relationship with partners and communities	Creating a compassionate, just and positive culture
<b>Respect and dignity</b>	<b>Improving lives</b>
Promoting equality and inclusion and reducing health and workforce inequalities	Setting strategy and delivering long term transformation Driving high quality sustainable outcomes
<b>Commitment to quality of care</b>	<b>Everyone counts</b>
Driving high quality and sustainable outcomes Setting strategy and delivering long term transformation	Promoting equality and inclusion and reducing health and workforce inequalities Creating a compassionate, just and positive culture
Providing robust governance and assurance	

The competency domains are aligned to [Our NHS People Promise](#), [Our Leadership Way](#) and the [Seven Principles of Public Life](#) (Nolan Principles).

## THE SIX NHS LEADERSHIP COMPETENCY DOMAINS

### 1. 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. Candidates will have:

- A demonstrable interest in health and social care and a strong desire to achieve the best sustainable outcomes for all patients and service users through encouraging continuous improvement, clinical excellence and value for money
- Strong understanding of financial management, with the ability to balance the competing objectives of quality, operational performance and finance
- An appreciation of constitutional and regulatory NHS standards

## **2. 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. Candidates will have:

- Experience of leading and delivering against long-term vision and strategy
- Experience leading transformational change, managing complex organisations, budgets and people

## **3. 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. Candidates will have:

- A clear commitment towards issues of equality, diversity and inclusion
- Significant experience of engaging with the diverse social, economic and cultural groups served by the organisation

## **4. 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. Candidates will have:

- Prior board experience (any sector, executive or non-executive role)
- Evidence of successfully demonstrating the NHS Leadership competencies in other leadership roles
- An ability to identify and address issues, including underperformance, and to scrutinise and challenge information effectively for assurance



## **5. 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. Candidates will have:

- A clear commitment to the NHS and the trust's values and principles
- Experience of building effective teams, encouraging change and innovation and shaping an open, inclusive and compassionate culture through setting the right tone at the top and championing diversity at, and across, all levels
- Strongly focused on the experience of all staff and patients
- Experience managing conflict, finding compromise and building consensus across varied stakeholder groups with potentially conflicting priorities

## **6. 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. Candidates will have:

- A desire to engage with the local population and to collaborate with senior stakeholders across the health and care system
- Strong interpersonal, communication and leadership skills

Applications will be assessed on merit, as part of a fair and open process, from the widest possible pool of candidates. The information provided by applicants will be relied on to assess whether sufficient personal responsibility and achievement have been demonstrated in previous/other roles, to satisfy the experience being sought.

The best boards are those that reflect the workforce and communities they serve. We particularly welcome applications from women, people from local black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, and people with disabilities, who we know are all under-represented in these important roles.

## **Role of the NHS Board and Chair**

NHS boards play a key role in shaping the strategy, vision and purpose of an organisation. They hold the organisation to account for the delivery of strategy and



ensure value for money. They are also responsible for assuring that risks to the organisation and the public are managed and mitigated effectively. Led by an independent chair and composed of a mixture of both executive and independent non-executive members, the board has a collective responsibility for the performance of the organisation. The Chair also ensures the Board is focused on improving outcomes in population health and healthcare, and fosters a culture of learning and continuous improvement, with a particular focus on quality, safety, access, patient experience.

The purpose of NHS boards is to govern effectively, and in so doing build patient, public and stakeholder confidence that their health and healthcare is in safe hands. This fundamental accountability to the public and stakeholders is delivered by building confidence:

- in the quality and safety of health services
- that resources are invested in a way that delivers optimal health outcomes
- in the accessibility and responsiveness of health services
- that patients and the public can help to shape health services to meet their needs
- that public money is spent in a way that is fair, efficient, effective and economic.

Oxford Health is an NHS Foundation Trust; therefore, the Chair also chairs the Council of Governors and ensures it works with the Board of Directors to shape the Trust's future strategy. The Council of Governors provides a key link between the Trust and the communities we serve.

## Role description

To carry out their role effectively, the Chair must cultivate a strong, collaborative relationship with the Chief Executive. Many responsibilities in this role description will be discharged in partnership with the Chief Executive. It is important the Chair and the Chief Executive are clear about their individual and shared roles, and their respective responsibilities towards the unitary board.

Together, the Chair and the Chief Executive set the tone for the whole organisation. They are ultimately responsible for ensuring that the population the Trust serves and the wider system in which the organisation sits receive the best possible care in a sustainable way.

## Responsibilities of the Chair

**The Chair has a unique role in leading the NHS Foundation Trust board.** The role combines the duty to lead effective governance, consistent with the Nolan principles and NHS values, with securing a long-term vision and strategy for the organisation.

Fundamentally, the chair is responsible for the effective leadership of the board. They are pivotal in creating the conditions necessary for overall board and individual director effectiveness. Central to the Chair's role are **the six NHS leadership competency domains**.

As a Foundation Trust, the role also chairs the Council of Governors. The Council of Governors is responsible for representing the interests of NHS Foundation Trust members, the public at large, and staff in the governance of the NHS Foundation Trust. Governors must act in the best interests of the NHS Foundation Trust and should adhere to its values and code of conduct. The powers and obligations of Governors of NHS Foundation Trusts are set out in the 2006 Act, as amended by the 2012 Act. More information can be found in the guidance published by Monitor found [here](#). There is also additional NHS England guidance which clarifies how governors can continue to perform their duties within the context of system working which can be found [here](#).

## About Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust

Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust is a community-focused organisation that provides physical and mental health services and social care with the aim of improving the health and wellbeing of all our patients and their families.

Our Trust provides community health, mental health and specialised health services. We operate across: Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Berkshire, Wiltshire, Swindon, Bath and North East Somerset (BaNES).

We work in partnership with a range of other organisations in Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Wiltshire, Swindon and BaNES. These include:

- The [University of Oxford](#) to promote innovation in healthcare, support research and to train doctors and psychologists
- [Oxford Brookes University](#) and the [University of Bedfordshire](#) to train nurses and allied health professionals
- Local authorities and voluntary organisations
- GPs across all the locations we serve in order to provide joined-up care.

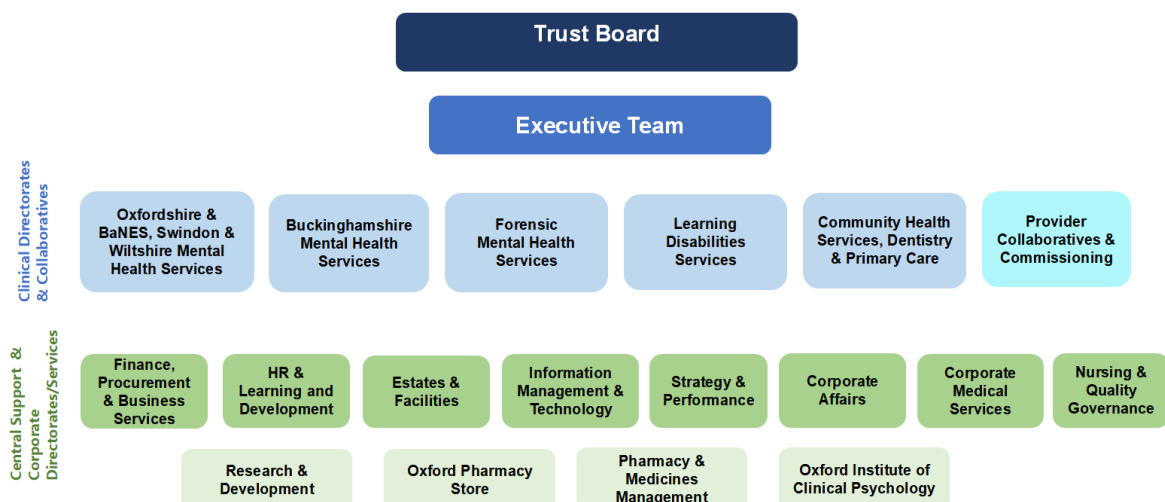


**Overall rating: good**

13 December 2019

*The Care Quality Commission, the body that assesses the quality of NHS services in England, has rated Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust as good overall.*

*The Trust has a good rating in in four out of five quality measurements – effective caring, responsive and well-led, and as requiring improvement in safe. See full report [here](#).*



## Mission

To be the **best Trust of our kind** in the country



## Vision

**Outstanding** care delivered by an **outstanding** team



## Values

Caring • Safe • Excellent



### Caring

- Privacy and dignity is at the heart of our care.
- We treat people with respect and compassion.
- We listen to what people tell us and act upon what they say.

### Safe

- Our services will be delivered to the highest standards of safety.
- All services will be provided within a safe environment for patients and staff.
- We will support our patients and staff with effective systems and processes.

### Excellent

- We aspire to be excellent and innovative in all we do.
- We aim to provide the best services and continually improve.
- We will recognise and reward those who deliver excellence.

# Our four strategic objectives:



## **Our vision**

Oxford Health Charity exists to support those receiving and giving care at Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust. We enhance patient, carer and staff experience through supporting projects, activities and training over and above that provided through the NHS.

## **Our mission**

We make a difference across the Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust services by:

- Listening to what our wards and teams need, and supporting them to introduce those projects
- Engaging with partners who help people before and after they engage with Trust services
- Supporting innovation and service improvement

## **What we do to deliver our mission**

We are receptive to requests for funding and support throughout the year, encouraging teams to get involved and fundraise as well as access funding for projects.

In addition, our Charity Committee meets every quarter to review requests for funding over £10,000 and develop appeals for future innovative projects.

## **Our values**

These are the values that ensure we never lose sight of what we are trying to achieve:

- Making a Difference to patient experience
- Supporting but not replacing NHS funding

## **Our impact**

Visit our website to find out more about the difference Oxford Health Charity makes:

<https://www.oxfordhealth.charity/Pages/Category/the-difference-we-make>

## Appendix 1: Values and concepts from NHS Leadership Competency Framework

### Our people promise:

- We are compassionate and inclusive
- We are recognised and rewarded
- We each have a voice that counts
- We are safe and healthy
- We are always learning
- We work flexibly
- We are a team

### NHS values

- Working together for patients
- Respect and dignity
- Commitment to quality of care
- Compassion
- Improving lives
- Everyone counts

### Our leadership way

We are compassionate

- We are inclusive, promote equality and diversity, and challenge discrimination
- We are kind and treat people with compassion, courtesy and respect.

We are curious

- We aim for the highest standards and seek to continually improve, harnessing our ingenuity
- We can be trusted to do what we promise

We are collaborative

- We collaborate, forming effective partnerships to achieve our common goals
- We celebrate success and support our people to be the best they can be

### Health and Care Act 2022

- Collaborate with partners to address our shared priorities and have the core aim and duty to improve the health and wellbeing of the people of England.



- Improve the quality, including safety, of services provided.
- Ensure the sustainable, efficient use of resources for the wider system and communities

### **Seven principles of public life**

- Selflessness
- Integrity
- Objectivity
- Accountability
- Openness
- Honesty
- Leadership

## Appendix 2: Terms of Appointment

- A competitive remuneration will be agreed with the right candidate for this role.
- You will have considerable flexibility to decide how you manage the time needed to undertake this role. On average, it will require 3 to 4 days a week, including:
  - Attendance at Board, committee and Council of Governors meetings
  - Engagements and events with service users, staff and the community;
  - preparation time away from the Trust;
  - the occasional evening engagement; and
  - events designed to support your continuous professional development.
- Preference will be given to people able to demonstrate strong local knowledge or have strong connections with the areas served by the Trust.

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. The Trust makes a number of specific background checks to ensure that those we appoint are “fit and proper” people to hold these important roles. More information can be found on the NHS England [website](#).

### **Appendix 3: More information**

For information about the Trust, such as business plans, annual reports, and services, visit their [website](#).

Other sources of information include:

- Our Annual Reports and Oxford Health in Numbers [website](#)
- Care Quality Commission [website](#).
- Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West ICB [website](#)
- Oxford Health Charity [website](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)

## Appendix 4: Making an application

For more information, you can get in touch with:

- For general process enquiries or to arrange informal and confidential discussions with the Chief Executive and other Board members, please contact **Taff Gidi, Executive Director of Corporate Affairs** by emailing [corporateaffairs@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk](mailto:corporateaffairs@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk)
- **GatenbySanderson** - are helping us to identify potential candidates, if you would like a confidential discussion about the role contact Helen Barkham, Principal Researcher on 07921 308 766 or [helen.barkham@gatenbysanderson.com](mailto:helen.barkham@gatenbysanderson.com), Melanie West, Senior Consultant on 07384 464 187 or [melanie.west@gatenbysanderson.com](mailto:melanie.west@gatenbysanderson.com), Melanie Shearer, Partner on 07785 616 548 or [melanie.shearer@gatenbysanderson.com](mailto:melanie.shearer@gatenbysanderson.com)

If you wish to be considered for this role please provide:

- a CV that includes your address and contact details, highlighting and explaining any gaps in your employment history
- a supporting statement that highlights your motivation for applying and your understanding of the NHS and the role. You should outline your personal responsibility and achievement within previous roles and how your experience matches the person specification
- the names, positions, organisations and contact details for three referees. Your referees should be individuals in a line management capacity, and cover your most recent employer, any regulated health or social care activity or where roles involved children or vulnerable adults. Your references may be taken prior to interview and may be shared with the selection panel. In accordance with [NHSE's FPPT framework](#) if appointed your references and other background checks will be shared with the Trust.
- please complete and return the monitoring information form which accompanies this pack

## Appendix 5: Key dates

**Closing date for receipt of applications: Monday 29th September 2025 at 9am**

**Preliminary interviews:** Long-listed candidates will be invited for a preliminary interview with Melanie West, Senior Consultant from GatenbySanderson w/c 20<sup>th</sup> October. Feedback from these interviews will be given to the panel

**Stakeholder event and Interview:** the shortlisted candidates will be invited to the Trust to meet groups of its key stakeholders and final panel interview w/c 10<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

### **Proposed start date:**

We anticipate that the successful candidate will commence their role as a Non-Executive Director (Chair Designate) on 1 December 2025 and from 1 April 2026 as Chair.