



# Chair

## Candidate briefing pack

July 2026

# Foreword

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## **Thank you for your interest in the role of Chair of East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust.**

This is one of the most important leadership roles in the NHS today, serving the people of East Kent and the dedicated staff who work tirelessly across the Trust every day.

The Trust faces significant challenges. It is currently one of the five poorest performing NHS organisations in the country and, as a result, has been included in the NHS Intensive Recovery Programme. This reflects the scale and complexity of the improvement challenge facing the organisation. Many of the issues are longstanding and deeply rooted. Yet there is a shared commitment across the Trust, NHS England and system partners to confront these challenges, restore confidence and build an organisation capable of consistently delivering the high quality care that the people of East Kent deserve.

The incoming Chair will inherit a remarkable concentration of important decisions. Foremost among these is the appointment of a permanent Chief Executive, an appointment that will help shape the future direction of the Trust for many years to come and is likely to be one of the most significant leadership appointments in the NHS this year. Alongside this sit important decisions about the future configuration of services, the development of the estate, and the role the Trust will play in a health and care system that is evolving around it.

We are looking for a Chair with the judgement to provide support and challenge in equal measure; someone who can help a Board succeed without diminishing its confidence, rebuild trust with communities who have every reason to demand more, and lead with steadiness and integrity while the organisation remains under close scrutiny from regulators, politicians and the media.

Addressing these challenges will require commitment, resilience and a genuine spirit of partnership. As Regional Chair, I am personally committed to supporting the successful candidate and working alongside them, the Board and system partners to help the Trust succeed.

This will not be an easy role. However, for the right individual it presents a rare opportunity to make a lasting difference to patients, staff, and communities. The task is demanding, but the opportunity to lead meaningful and enduring change is considerable.

I would encourage anyone who is excited by that challenge to get in touch to discuss the role further.

**Sir Jonathan Montgomery**

Regional Chair

NHS England – South East

# Welcome

## Thank you for your interest in the role of Chair at East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust (EKHUFT).

We want to be honest with you about our current position: this is one of the most challenging and potentially impactful leadership appointments in the NHS right now, and we want to attract someone who sees it that way.

EKHUFT is currently one of five trusts across England identified by the Secretary of State as needing significant sustainable improvements and as such has been placed into the Intensive Recovery Programme (IRP). In addition we are operating under Segment 4 oversight and are subject to Section 111 conditions. We have both an Interim Chair and an Acting Chief Executive in post and so one of the incoming Chair's first and most significant tasks will be to lead the appointment of a permanent Chief Executive – a decision that will shape our trajectory for years to come.

There is much for the new Chair to oversee – not least our ongoing response Dr Kirkup's report "Reading the Signals" which was published in 2023. The failures it identified – in safety, governance, clinical behaviour, culture and organisational openness – have left a mark on this organisation and on the communities we serve. We are determined to face that honestly and to build something genuinely different.

We are also placed within a system in turnaround – Kent and Medway ICS. The incoming Chair will need to lead EKHUFT – the largest organisation in the system – through a period of serious system transformation, including shared services, group working, service centralisation and reconfiguration. The system expects EKHUFT to lead, not follow, in that work.

This is not a role for someone who needs to be persuaded that it is manageable. It is a role for a compassionate, values-based and resilient leader who runs towards exactly this kind of challenge – someone who understands that the complexity, visibility and urgency of this appointment is precisely what makes it worth doing.

If that description resonates with you, we recommend that you book a confidential conversation with Rhiannon Smith at Hunter Healthcare [rsmith@hunter-healthcare.com](mailto:rsmith@hunter-healthcare.com) or on 07860 773860.

We look forward to hearing from you.

### **Bernie Mayall**

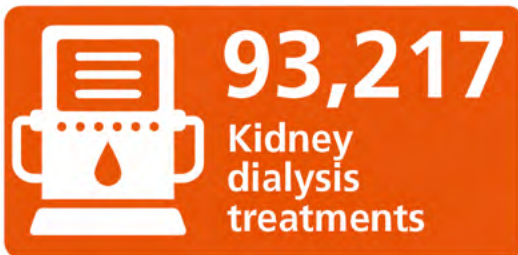
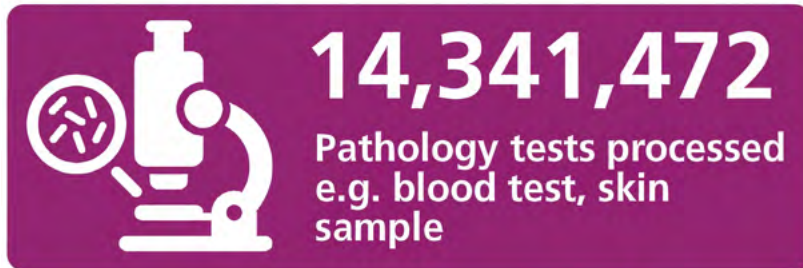
Lead Governor  
East Kent Hospitals University  
NHS Foundation Trust



# The year in numbers 2025-26

East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust is one of the largest hospital trusts in England, with five hospitals and a number of community sites serving a local population of around 700,000 people. We also provide specialist services across Kent and Medway.

We have many excellent services and outstanding, dedicated staff. Every day we care for more than 1,000 people. We want every one of them to feel cared for, safe, respected and confident we are making a difference. We are not there yet – but we are committed to getting there, and to being honest about the distance still to travel.



# Our improvement journey

We have set ourselves stretching, ambitious targets for what we want to achieve, together we will:

- Reduce harm and deliver safe services by developing and fostering a safety culture in which all of us respond openly and learn when things go wrong, where we involve patients and families and do everything we can to improve the conditions where our staff work and patients are treated.
- Put patient, family and community voices at the heart of everything we do. We will be open and honest when things go wrong, we will constantly seek their feedback and design services with them, and make sure they are listened to, involved and their concerns are acted upon.
- Treat our patients and each other with care and compassion at all levels across the organization, and create teams that work well together, trust, and respect each other and where people feel included.
- Work with our partners to improve patient outcomes and reduce health inequality and continuously improve by being a centre of research excellence.
- Strive constantly to reach national standards for access and outcomes in planned and emergency care; steer the trust to financial balance and sustainability and seek to deliver care in the most cost-effective way possible.

Achieving this change will take time. There is a great deal of work we need to do at every level of our organisation to provide the consistent standard of care we want for all of our patients and to improve how it feels to work here for our staff. We also recognise the importance of acknowledging the milestones and progress that is made along the way, as together we work to transform our Trust.



# Vision, mission and values

## Our vision

Our vision is **to deliver great healthcare from great people.**

Our strategic themes are Quality and Safety, Patients, People, Partnerships, Sustainability and Research.

Our strategic objectives are driven by our response to Dr Kirkup’s report Reading the Signals; the importance of meeting national standards for planned, cancer and emergency care and the need to be financially sustainable by providing better care and reducing waste.

We will discuss our progress against key performance indicators, and the difference it is making, in public at our public board meetings which anyone can join, visit [www.ekhuft.nhs.uk](http://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk)

## Our mission

Our mission is improving health and wellbeing.

## Our values

Everything we do is underpinned by our values: People feel cared for, safe, respected and confident we are making a difference.



# Our future strategy

## Our future strategy

We are currently working to develop our new Trust Strategy. This will set out what our long-term future will look like and how we will continue to improve our services.

The strategy will include our current improvement work and the changes we wish to make in the future.

The key aims and priorities of the strategy will include:

- Improving patient outcomes
- Addressing health inequalities
- Delivering sustainable, quality care

Alongside this, we are also developing our clinical, digital, workforce and estates strategies. These will underpin the Trust Strategy, and set out how these areas will be developed over the next 10 years. The strategy will also provide details of our Green Plan,

In its development, we are working with our clinical, operational, and managerial teams. We are also using feedback from patient groups and our communities.

These are a few examples of how we plan to achieve this:

- Engagement with community and patient networks
- Meetings with specialty teams and staff groups across the trust
- Engaging and collaborating with our partners across Kent.

This work will allow us to focus on:

### QUALITY AND SAFETY

- Improving patient outcomes and supporting the delivery of quality improvements.

### PATIENTS

- Providing services that deliver national standards
- Providing services that improve the experience for patients and families.
- Providing local services where possible; alongside centres of excellence for quality and efficiency.

### PEOPLE

- Improving the experience for staff including workforce transformation and modernisation.

### PARTNERSHIPS

- Working with other healthcare partners or providers to reduce health inequalities.
- Increasing opportunities to deliver services in the community wherever possible.
- Making best use of limited acute hospital space and capital funding.

### SUSTAINABILITY

- Delivering services within the funding available that are sustainable long-term.
- Supporting our Green Plan including digital solutions.



# About the role

## Role specific duties

- To chair and lead the Board of Directors of EKHUFT, working alongside the Chief Executive, executive and non-executive directors and driving rapid and sustainable improvement across all areas of challenge.
- To set the strategy and direction of the trust, monitoring the delivery of those plans and ensuring the maintenance of the appropriate arrangements for promoting standards of governance, behaviour and financial stewardship.
- To engage with the stakeholders within and beyond the organisation, building a productive dialogue, building understanding and supporting continuous improvement.
- To engage with the Council of Governors with regard to its duty to hold the non-executive directors, individually and collectively to account for the performance of the Board of Directors.

### 1. Contributing to the work of the Board

- Contribute to the development of the strategic direction of the organisation and set challenging objectives to underpin continuous improvement in performance.
- Shape the culture of the organisation, its values and behaviours, ensuring they are demonstrated by the Board in all its actions.
- Participate fully in the work of the Board, ensuring the corporate responsibility of the board of Directors.
- Establish clear objectives to deliver the agreed plans and strategy to meet the Provider Licence and regularly review performance against those objectives.
- Ensure that strategies and actions approved by the Board of Directors are implemented effectively by the Chief Executive and the senior management team.
- Monitor the performance of the organisation and have a clear understanding of the risks and challenges (both internal and external) facing the organisation.
- Account to the Council of Governors for the performance of the Board.

### 2. Board and other activities

- Participate in the Board's Nomination and Remuneration committee.
- Attend sub committees of the Board and other ad hoc meetings of the main Board.
- Join sub-committee(s) and/or group subsidiary boards as needed.
- Participate in Executive Patient Safety and/or ward and staff Visits.
- Attendance at full Council of Governors meetings.
- Undergo an individual and Board performance appraisal, attending any additional training highlighted as a result of the evaluation process.
- Act as an ambassador of the Trust through active participation in external meetings and other events, including membership engagement events.
- Ensure a high level of visibility throughout the organisation and personally engage with staff across the organisation.

### 3. Governance and Compliance

- Ensure the Trust complies with its licence, constitution and all relevant legislation and regulations.
- Ensure the highest standards of probity, integrity and governance and that the Trust's internal governance arrangements conform to best practice and statutory requirements in particular for financial sustainability, and for clinical and financial systems of control.

# Job Description and Person Specification

## Purpose of the role

The Chair will provide visible, authoritative and inclusive leadership to the Trust Board and Executive team during a period of intensive improvement and recovery, with a focus on:

- Establishing short-term stability and grip.
- Supporting delivery of the Trust's recovery and improvement plans.
- Enabling medium-term transformation of services, estate and partnerships.
- Supporting the development and delivery of the Trust's clinical strategy.
- Restoring and strengthening confidence with patients, staff, regulators and system partners.

## Key focus areas

The Chair will work with the Chief Executive and Board to oversee delivery at pace across the following priorities:

### STABILITY AND RECOVERY

- Strengthen Board-level assurance over quality, safety, performance and finance.
- Hold the Executive team to account for rapid, effective and sustainable delivery of recovery and improvement plans
- Ensure the Board has clear sight of key risks, decisions and progress.
- Provide calm, visible and consistent leadership through a period of heightened scrutiny.

### TRANSFORMATION AND STRATEGIC CHANGE

- Lead the Board through complex decisions about service change, investment and future models of care.
- Support a credible programme of estates and capital transformation, aligned to the Trust's clinical strategy.
- Enable delivery of long-term financial sustainability.
- Ensure decisions are grounded in patient benefit, staff engagement, clinical quality and public accountability.

### SYSTEM AND PARTNERSHIPS

- Work closely with local and regional partners, including Integrated Care Boards, neighbouring NHS organisations and local authorities.
- Strengthen strategic partnerships to support service sustainability and improvement.
- Work in partnership with Kent and Medway Medical School (KMMS), the NHSE Workforce, Training and Education (formerly HEE), and higher education partners across Kent and Medway to support the future clinical workforce pipeline.
- Represent the Trust with authority and credibility across Kent and Medway and the wider NHS.
- Build constructive relationships that support collaboration, shared accountability and better outcomes for patients.
- Work in close partnership with the Council of Governors, recognising its constitutional role as the primary voice of patients, staff and members of the Trust, and its duty to hold the non-executive directors, individually and collectively, to account for the performance of the Board of Directors.

### NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

- Operate effectively with national and regional NHS bodies, maintaining close working relationships with NHS England and local system leaders.
- Bring political awareness and sound judgement in engaging with Ministers, MPs, regulators and other senior stakeholders where required.
- Communicate clearly, transparently and confidently with external stakeholders.
- Help the Trust navigate public, political and regulatory scrutiny with integrity and confidence.

## CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

- Set the tone for high standards of governance, accountability and openness and respect.
- Champion an open, learning culture in which patient safety, candour and continuous improvement are central.
- Support and challenge the Chief Executive and executive team to deliver at pace, including through periods of leadership transition.
- Help rebuild confidence among staff and stakeholders through clarity, consistency and visible leadership.
- Champion an organisational culture focused on quality, inclusion, learning and improvement.
- Lead with compassion and inclusivity, modelling the values-based leadership culture the Trust is committed to building – one in which every member of staff feels safe, heard, respected and supported to do their best work.

## EXPERIENCE AND CAPABILITY REQUIRED

- This role requires an individual with exceptional leadership experience and credibility. This may have been gained in the NHS, wider public sector, government, regulated industries, infrastructure, higher education charities or other large and complex organisations.

Candidates should bring experience of:

- Chairing or leading a large, complex organisation through significant improvement, recovery, transformation or change.
- Operating successfully in regulated, publicly accountable or politically sensitive environments.
- Working effectively with senior stakeholders including regulators, government, regional or national bodies, partners and communities.
- Leading or overseeing complex strategic decisions, including service change, investment, transformation or organisational renewal.

- Building confidence and credibility in an organisation facing intense local, regional and national scrutiny, challenge or loss of trust.

The Chair must demonstrate:

- Strong judgement, resilience and personal credibility
- The ability to provide grip and pace while maintaining collaboration and trust.
- Political and stakeholder awareness.
- A clear commitment to patients, staff, quality, inclusion and public service.
- The confidence to support and challenge senior leaders constructively.
- The ability to bring clarity, calm and focus in a complex environment.

## Time commitment

This is expected to require a significant time commitment, particularly in the early phase of the appointment.

Candidates should be prepared to give the organisation the time, visibility and leadership required during a period of intense improvement and recovery.

- Enhanced Chair remuneration.
- Interim or fixed-term arrangements if necessary.
- Alternative contractual options that reflect the time commitment, intensity and complexity of the role.

# How to apply

The recommended first step for anyone considering one of these roles is a direct, candid and confidential conversation with our recruitment partner Rhiannon Smith at Hunter Healthcare.

Rhiannon can share with you more detail about the roles, the context and what it would mean in practice to become the Chair. She can be contacted by email at [rsmith@hunter-healthcare.com](mailto:rsmith@hunter-healthcare.com) or on 07860 773860.

## KEY DATES

Application closing date	3 August 2026
Shortlisting	w/c 17 August
Interviews	w/c 31 August

Applications should include:

- A **covering letter** explaining why the appointment interests you, how you meet the appointment criteria and what you specifically would bring to the post (**no more than two pages**).
- A **Curriculum Vitae (CV)** with education and professional qualifications and full employment history. Please include daytime and evening telephone contact numbers and email addresses. The CV should include names and contact details of three referees. References will not be taken without your permission (**no more than three pages**).
- You will need the following reference code: **EKHU-CHAIR-0726**

All applications will be acknowledged.

[CLICK HERE TO APPLY ONLINE →](#)



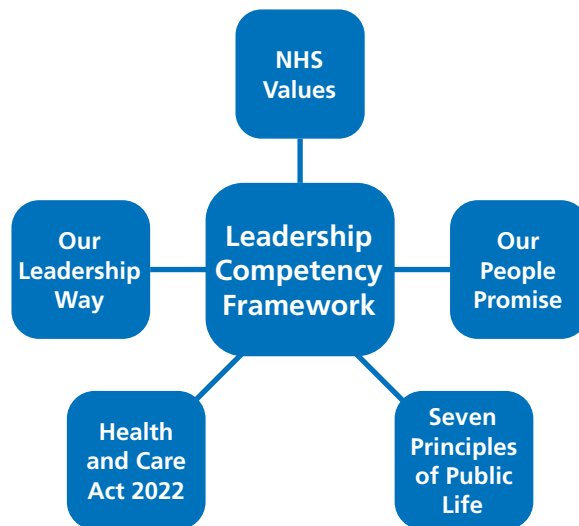
# Appendix 1:

## 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. We 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 diagram opposite shows how they are aligned.

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



<b>Working together for patients*</b>	<b>Compassion</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building a trusted relationship with partners and communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creating a compassionate, just and positive culture</li> </ul>
<b>Respect and dignity</b>	<b>Improving lives</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promoting equality and inclusion and reducing health and workforce inequalities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Setting strategy and delivering long term transformation</li> <li>Driving high quality sustainable outcomes</li> </ul>
<b>Commitment to quality of care</b>	<b>Everyone counts</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Driving high quality and sustainable outcomes</li> <li>Setting strategy and delivering long term transformation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promoting equality and inclusion and reducing health and workforce inequalities</li> <li>Creating a compassionate, just and positive culture</li> </ul>
<b>Providing robust governance and assurance</b>	

# Appendix 2:

## The six NHS Leadership competency domains

### 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

### 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

### 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

### 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

### 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

### 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.



# Appendix 3:

## NHS Leadership Competency Framework values and concepts

### 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

### 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 well-being 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

### 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

# Appendix 4:

## Fit and Proper Persons requirement

All organisations regulated by the Care Quality Commission need to ensure that successful candidates meet the Fit and Proper Persons Requirement (Regulation 5, The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations Act.

This means that the care provider must not appoint a director unless:

- The individual is of good character.
- The individual has the qualifications, competence, skills and experience which are necessary for the relevant office or position or the work for which they are employed.
- The individual is able by reason of their health, after reasonable adjustments are made, to properly perform tasks which are intrinsic to the office or position for which they are appointed or to the work for which they are employed.
- The individual has not been responsible for, been privy to, contributed to or facilitated any serious misconduct or mismanagement (whether lawful or not) in the course of carrying on a regulated activity or providing a service elsewhere which, if provided in England, would be a regulated activity; and
- None of the grounds of unfitness specified in Part 1 of Schedule 4 apply to the individual (e.g. bankruptcy, sequestration and insolvency, appearing on barred lists and being prohibited from holding directorships under other laws).

Good character is measured by the criteria set out in Part 2 of Schedule 4 of the Regulations:

- Whether the person has been convicted in the UK of any offence or been convicted elsewhere of any offence which if committed in any part of the UK would constitute an offence; and
- Whether a person has been erased, removed, or struck off a register maintained by a regulator of a health or social work professional body.

### The Seven Principles of Public Life

#### SELFLESSNESS

- Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

#### INTEGRITY

- Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

#### OBJECTIVITY

- In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

#### ACCOUNTABILITY

- Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

#### OPENNESS

- Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

#### HONESTY

- Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

#### LEADERSHIP

- Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.



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