

Governance principles

Delivering the Trust's vision – 'for ever, for everyone' – is a demanding challenge, and will only be achieved through good governance arrangements. Those arrangements, which underpin the day-to-day operations of the Trust, are set out in this document. They aim to demonstrate how the Trust is run, how it takes decisions and how it will achieve its objectives.

At the heart of the Trust's approach to governance is a deep-rooted commitment to openness, transparency and accountability. The better run the Trust, and the more open it is to those who wish to get involved, the more successful it will be.

This Handbook identifies the main Trust bodies which constitute the governance structure, and explains how they run their affairs and how they deliver the required levels of openness, transparency and accountability. The governance structures and processes are there to demonstrate to all who care about the Trust that the charity is well-run, and that it can be held to account for its performance.

Principles underlying governance appointments in the Trust

The Trust recognises that one of the most important means by which openness, transparency and accountability can be achieved is through the appointment, selection or election, as appropriate, of high-calibre volunteers capable of overseeing the governance arrangements of the Trust, ensuring that it remains focused on achieving its mission efficiently and effectively.

The Appointments Committee of the Board of Trustees and the various Nominations Committees of the Council, play a key role in the process of governance appointments. They ensure adherence to the principles and standards set out in this Handbook in making governance appointments. An external member sits on each of these committees to increase the rigour of the appointments procedures.

Before an appointment, selection or election process is initiated for any of the bodies in the governance structure, the relevant committee will take into account:

- the aims and purposes of the body concerned
- the knowledge, skills and experience required for the position in question
- the intention to create a diverse and effective body
- the intention to meet standards of good governance
- the intention to avoid conflicts of interest

These aims will be pursued in a manner proportionate to the nature of the positions to be filled.

The Committees will ensure that selection, appointment and election processes are:

- conducted in an open and transparent way
- applied in a fair, equitable, objective and impartial manner
- designed to be thorough, robust and expeditious
- applied consistently
- fully explained and readily comprehensible

Equality and diversity

The Trust is committed to ensuring that the principles of equality and diversity remain at the forefront of the selection, appointment and election processes.

Equality is about creating a fairer society where everyone can participate and has the opportunity to fulfil their potential. It can be summarised in terms of equal access, treatment, shares and outcomes and is backed by legislation designed to address unfair discrimination.

Diversity is about the recognition and valuing of difference in its broadest sense. It is about creating a working culture and practices that recognise, respect, value and harness difference for the benefit of the organisation and the individual.

At appropriate stages in the selection, appointment and election processes, candidates will be invited to familiarise themselves with the Trust's Equality and Diversity Policy, outlined in Appendix A to the Handbook. The policy, which has been written for the purpose of internal staff processes, applies equally to all governance appointments.

Whistle-blowing

The Trust acknowledges that, however strong its commitment to openness, transparency and accountability, it may not always get matters right. The Trust has therefore established a process whereby everyone involved with the organisation, including those holding governance positions, can raise significant issues. The detail of this whistle-blowing process is outlined in Appendix B of the Handbook.

By providing a clear framework for identifying concerns, particularly those involving perceived failings in the organisation's governance process, the Trust is seeking to demonstrate the values of openness and responsiveness which underpins its approach to running the organisation.