

**Cover Sheet**

**Council of Governors Meeting on Wednesday 14 July 2021**

CoG2021.15

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**Title:**                   **Timing the Next Lead Governor Election**

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**Status:**               **For Decision**

**History:**           **CoG2021.14 (by correspondence), CoG2020.30 (and previously  
CoG2019.28)**

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**Board Lead:**       **Trust Chair**

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**Confidential:**     **No**

**Key Purpose:**    **Strategy**

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## Timing the Next Lead Governor Election

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1. This paper sets out points that may be considered when determining when to hold the next Lead Governor election.

### 2. Background

- 2.1. All NHS foundation trusts are asked to nominate a lead governor.
- 2.2. The Council of Governors was given the opportunity to consider aligning election to the role of Lead Governor, and the term of office served, with the revised timetable for governors' elections. (Paper CoG2021.14 was circulated in May, for approval by correspondence).
- 2.3. There was all but unanimous support for the proposal to align election of the Lead Governor with the electoral cycle.
- 2.4. There was complete agreement that the term of office of the current Lead Governor, Cecilia Gould, should be extended until the next election of a Lead Governor.
- 2.5. Some Governors indicated that they would welcome the opportunity for further discussion before determining the precise timing of the next election to the role of Lead Governor.

### 3. Timing election of lead governor in alignment with the revised electoral cycle

- 3.1. With the next governors' elections due to be held in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2022, it is proposed that the optimal time to hold a new election to the role of lead governor would be shortly after the outcome of those elections is reported, but before the newly elected governors are expected to take up office on 1 April 2022.
- 3.2. At that point, there will be:
  - 3.2.1. Clarity as to who will qualify for candidature
    - given that it will be known with certainty which governors will be in post for 2022/23; and
  - 3.2.2. A guarantee of an 'informed electorate'
    - inasmuch as the choice of lead governor will be made by governors who have had the opportunity to become acquainted with any individual governor who puts themselves up for election to the role.

- 3.3. If an election were to be held, for example, in September 2021, then there would be a cohort of governors who effectively could not stand because they would only be guaranteed to have 7 months left in office – and another cohort of newly elected governors who (having only served 5-6 months in office) might not feel suitably experienced to stand – and/or who might not be regarded by colleagues as such.
- 3.4. It may be noted that, although the first lead governor had to be nominated immediately upon establishment as Foundation Trust, that was after a period where Council had been operating in ‘shadow’ form, and the role of Lead Governor has been further developed and expanded since then.
- 3.5. On the other hand, the view has been expressed that it is not appropriate to confer votes on outgoing Governors, but rather that the Lead Governor should be elected by Governors who will be in office for the duration of the Lead Governor’s term.
- 3.6. Governors may also wish to consider what is the best timing to facilitate an effective handover from an outgoing Lead Governor.

#### **4. Recommendations**

- 4.1. The Council of Governors is asked to:
  - Consider and agree when the next Lead Governor election should be held.