

The Summer Newsletter 2026

In this issue you will see 2 items from VOICE – WSH Visitors Charter and Role of Governors

We are now in early summer with longer sunnier days. Enjoy every moment in your own way taking good care of you.

We are now halfway through the year with two meetings to the summer break in August. The latter half of the year is all booked up to the festive break. We have welcomed a variety of speakers and will be looking to invite a further variety for the new year. Thinking caps on please as to who you would like to entertain us all and let Lorraine know. We need 9 in total however we are likely to include in that some revisits.

WSH - Smoking on-site: Cigarette butts are on the floor outside the front entrance to the hospital and are a slip hazard for patients and staff, especially when it is wet weather. This is being reported to estates and facilities. Result of this concern will appear in a further issue.

Easyfundraising - £637.55 earned to date + 1 new supporter has joined

Speakers – Amanda Sutherland cancelled in July, so Anglia CPR are coming instead.

Meeting Reminders – A response is much appreciated and a great help in planning what needs to be brought and how many to cater for on each occasion.

A reminder for Positively Crafty will also be sent round in advance of a session for the same reasons. 6 members are required for these sessions to succeed, 3 or less results in one being cancelled so the earlier we know about attendance the sooner we can let the hall know of any changes.

Visitors – we welcomed Elaine in May and in June Laura is hoping to join us. Please make any new attendees very welcomed and included in the social part of the meeting. The friendlier and welcoming we are the more people will want to come back. If any of the visitors feel the group is not the right fit for them then obviously, they will not return.

Membership to date stands at 19 however we do not see all members at each meeting

Positively Crafty by Beryl – an article published in June's edition of the Directory

In our sessions we can get very engrossed in what we are doing that often the room can go silent, then someone would say something and we would all be laughing.

It would be great to see more people come and join us. Nothing we have made has been too difficult for non-crafters to do. One of us would be willing to sit with you to make a card or do whatever you want to do. In fact, we all help each other. Nothing is set in stone; you can either bring along your own type of crafting to do or join in with us. We will always encourage new skills.

After payment for hiring the room, insurance, replacement of crafting materials, with any surplus funding to spare we have been able to spend some on new items for the group to use. We have all the basic tools and a die cutting machine. Some members bring their own tools and materials to share as well. Everyone has something nice to take home at the end of the session.

The room we use is quite large and airy; toilets are close and there are no steps or hazards in the room or entrance area so easily accessible for all mobility needs. Car parking is free for up to 3 hours.

It has been proven that Crafting is an excellent way to relax and we ourselves can vouch for that.

It is worth coming along because halfway through a session, we always have a drink and homemade cake.

WSH Visitor's Charter – to be displayed on wards promoting open visiting and setting expectations

Visiting hours 10am – 8pm (friends and family play an important role in supporting recovery)

Thank you for helping us to provide safe, respectful and high-quality care

The aim being to improve communication between staff, patients and families

Help patients feel more informed about their care and what to expect

Encourage patients and relatives to ask questions and raise concerns

WSH – what you can expect from us

Respect and professionalism at all times

Clean, safe environments with strong infection prevention

Privacy and dignity with minimal interruptions

A calm, restful ward to support recovery

Clear communication with patients and nominated contacts

WSH – what we ask of you

Respect and professionalism – be polite and respectful to staff, patients and visitors

Infection Prevention – do not visit if unwell (wait 48 hours after sickness/diarrhoea)
clean your hands on arrival and when leaving. Follow all signage and wear PPE if asked.
Use public toilets, not patient bathrooms.

Clean Environment – step away when cleaning is taking place to support hygiene standards.

Mealtimes – you're welcome to help at mealtimes (if appropriate). Food and drinks on the ward are for patients only.

Rest and Recovery – maximum two visitors per bed at one time. Keep noise low and use chairs provided.

Safety – avoid interrupting during medication rounds. Do not photograph or film on the ward. Only bring essential items and avoid valuables. WSH sites are smoke free.

Communication – identify one main contact person for updates. You may need to wait to speak to clinical staff. Children must be supervised and should not visit if unwell.

Additional Support – named carers can visit where appropriate. Special arrangements are available for end-of-life care. Speak to the nurse in charge about support needs.

WSH Simple Steps to keep you Safe

Check your wristband – make sure WSH have the right details

Know your medicines – tell staff if you have any allergies

Prevent slips, trips and falls – wear appropriate footwear and ask for help if you need it

Prevent Pressure Ulcers – change your position regularly in bed

Keep active to prevent blood clots – do simple leg and ankle exercises

Help stop Infections – wash your hands regularly and ask visitors to do the same

Speak up if you are Worried – talk to the team caring for you first. If you remain worried and feel concerns are not being addressed, phone **call 4 concern via 01284 713000**

When its time to go Home – make sure you know about your discharge letter, any follow-up appointments and who to contact if you have any questions.

WSH The Role of Governors and Members

Membership allows you to:

Provide feedback and opinions through a range of channels including surveys and focus groups

Receive regular information about West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust in a members' newsletter

Meet our experts to find out more about modern treatments and how to prevent ill health

Receive personal invitations to our events including our annual meeting

Have the opportunity to join Trust committees and groups

Vote for your representatives on the Council of Governors (COG)

Talk to your Council of Governor representatives

Stand as a Governor yourself

Role of Governors

Is a **collective** group of people that supports the Execs and NEDs

WSFT has 26 Governors

Stand for a three-year term

Three types of governors: -

14 Public Govs - must live in Suffolk

5 Staff Govs – elected by staff groups/includes volunteers

7 Partner Govs eg West Suffolk Council, University of Cambridge, Suffolk County Council (Subject to change after local government reorganisation)

Q – What is the Time commitment: -

Observe Trust Board/Assurance committees

Attend 4 COG meetings a year

Sit on sub committees

Assist with NED recruitment & appraisals

Participate in ‘15 Steps’ – a process where governors & NEDs visit an area of the hospital to get first hand feedback from patients and staff

2026 meeting dates: -

19 May 2026

10 September 2026

10 November 2026

Governors – The Election Process

June 26 – publication campaign starts

July/August 26 - targeted mail and advertising

September 26 – Nomination & Election forms sent to Members

October 26 – voting

23 November 26 – election closes and successful candidates notified

1 December 2026 – new term begins with induction and training

The future of Governors is uncertain...

Government may disband COG. **HOWEVER**, engagement is key and there will be a role in future for governors/the public to shape and define our services.

Governors or groups like this will be key to ensure we shape future services correctly

Your help is needed as we need more diversity

Becoming a Member – The Process

All training is provided too, alongside regular update and briefings, most of which are on Teams

- Members must be 16+
- Membership is free
- Can be anyone from the local community
- 2 types of membership: Public or Staff

Simply fill out the 3-page form using this link:

<https://secure.membra.co.uk/join/westsuffolk>

Any questions please email

foundationtrust@wsh.nhs.uk

In brief by Jude Chin (Non-Executive Director and Chair of the Trust Board)

- Jude presented on upcoming Council of Governors elections, encouraging wider community participation, especially from underrepresented groups.
- To become a governor, individuals must first register as a Trust member, which is described as a quick and simple process.

Key points about the governor role:

- Governors hold non-executive directors accountable and represent the interests of patients and the public.
- The role involves attending around 4 meetings per year, with optional involvement in committees and other activities.
- Training and support are provided for new governors.

Election process:

- Recruitment campaign begins before September
- Voting takes place in October
- New governors start a 3-year term in December

Important note:

- There is potential future legislative change affecting Councils of Governors, but no immediate changes are expected.

Key message:

- There is a strong need for greater diversity and representation, and attendees were encouraged to promote the opportunity within their communities.

Discussion:

- Questions were raised about council representation and political influence, with clarification that governors focus on improving healthcare services, not politics.