

Dorset County Hospital
Dorset HealthCare



Non-Executive Directors

Candidate briefing pack

January 2026



Welcome from the Joint Chair

Hello and thank you for taking the time to explore these non-executive director opportunities.



Dorset County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (DCH) and Dorset HealthCare University NHS Foundation Trust (DHC) are two organisations with strong identities, proud histories and deep roots in the communities they serve. In recent years, we have chosen to work more closely together – not because it's easy, but because we believe it gives us the best chance of improving care, tackling inequalities and supporting people to live healthier, more independent lives.

As Chair of both Trusts, I am very clear that this federated way of working must strengthen governance, not dilute it. Each Trust remains accountable in its own right, with a strong focus on quality, safety, finance and culture. At the same time, closer collaboration allows us to think differently about how care is delivered across acute, community and mental health services – and how we support our staff to do their very best work.

The context for these appointments is significant – Dorset Healthcare is progressing its Advanced Foundation Trust application, alongside long-term thinking around a ten-year strategic horizon and the expansion of integrated clinical pathways across community and mental health services.

At the same time, Dorset County Hospital continues to face the same challenge as other acute providers: rising demand, financial pressure and the need to improve patient flow and pathway efficiency.

This means we are now looking to welcome new non-executive directors who bring experience, curiosity and sound judgement; who are motivated by public service and making a genuine difference; and who can operate at pace and add value from day one. Given our federated nature, we are looking for NEDs for DCH and DHC only and at least one joint NED to serve across both organisations.

We are looking to bring a blend of complementary skills onto the Boards and are particularly interested in candidates with backgrounds in finance, partnership working – especially with the VCSE or primary care sectors – commercial innovation, strategic transformation, commissioning and health services – in particular mental health and/or the allied health professions.

You will be joining Boards that value openness, teamwork and respectful challenge, and organisations that care deeply about the people who use our services.

If this feels like something you would like to be part of, please read on and consider applying. We would be delighted to hear from you.

To learn more please contact our recruitment partners, Rhiannon Smith or Jenny Adrian at Hunter Healthcare on 07939 250362 or by email at jadrian@hunter-healthcare.com.

Yours sincerely,

David Clayton-Smith

Joint Chair
(Dorset County Hospital
and Dorset HealthCare)

Two Trusts... one vision

Across Dorset, people want care that is accessible, compassionate, well-coordinated and shaped around their lives. That shared ambition is driving DCH and DHC to work together to build a more integrated, future focused health and care system for Dorset.

Each Trust remains independent, with its own Board, responsibilities and accountability. What unites us is a shared belief that working together allows us to do more for patients, service users and communities than working alone.

Since 2023, the Trusts have operated through a federated leadership model, with a joint Chief Executive and joint Chair. This approach supports closer working, clearer decision-making and more integrated care, while preserving local focus and statutory accountability.

Our shared strategy, **Working Together, Improving Lives 2024–2029**, sets out a simple but powerful ambition: **healthier lives, empowered citizens, thriving communities.**

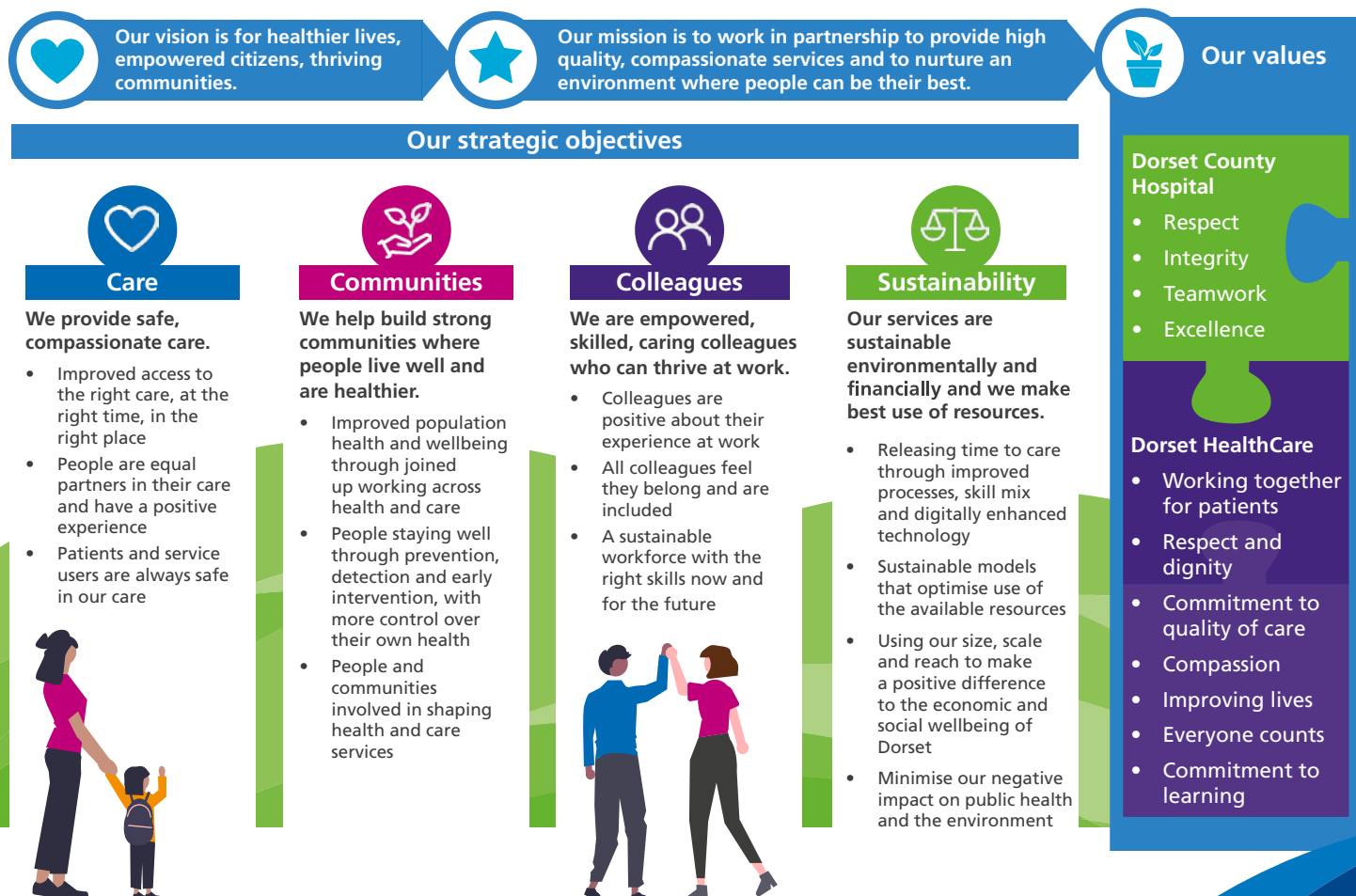
What this means for patients, service users and residents

This partnership is not about organisational change for its own sake. It is about how care feels and works for people.

Working together allows us to:

- make it easier for people to access the right support, first time
- bring physical and mental health care closer together
- support people earlier, helping them stay well and independent
- improve transitions between services, reducing frustration and delay
- tackle health inequalities more effectively across Dorset

People tell us they want care that is joined up, kind and responsive. Our shared ambition is to design services around those needs; not around structures.



About the Trusts



Dorset County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust provides acute hospital services for more than 300,000 people across west, mid and north Dorset. Based in Dorchester, the Trust delivers emergency, planned and specialist care, including maternity, paediatrics, critical care, surgery and outpatient services. Around 3,500 staff work across the main hospital site, community hospitals and outpatient centres, providing care at some of the most important moments in people's lives.

The Trust is rated **Good** by the Care Quality Commission and is investing significantly in modernising its emergency department and critical care facilities. Alongside this, there is a strong focus on improving patient flow, experience and outcomes.

Through the federation, Dorset County Hospital is strengthening how acute care connects with community and mental health services – supporting safer discharge and recovery closer to home.

Dorset HealthCare University NHS Foundation Trust

provides community, physical and mental health services to more than 830,000 people across Dorset and beyond.

With around 7,000 staff delivering care from over 300 locations, the Trust supports people of all ages – often in their homes, schools and local communities. It is Dorset's main provider of NHS mental health services, alongside a wide range of community physical health services.

Dorset HealthCare is rated **Outstanding** by the Care Quality Commission and has been selected as a national pilot to apply to be an **Advanced Foundation Trust**, recognising its strong leadership, culture and capacity to innovate. The Trust continues to invest in modern facilities and community-based models of care that support prevention, independence and recovery.

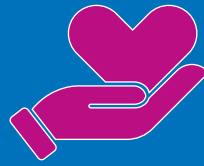


DCH in numbers



300,000

people who receive our
health and care services



97.8%

average satisfaction on the
Friends and Family Test



3,500
staff



Rated as one of the
best Trusts in the National
Inpatient Survey



£303.8m
annual income



'Good'
CQC rating



DHC in numbers



£419m
annual income



830,000
people who receive our
health and care services



7,000
staff



'Outstanding'
CQC rating



300+
sites



Vision, mission and values

Our vision

Our vision is for healthier lives, empowered citizens, thriving communities.

Our vision shows how we would like things to be if we are successful in delivering our strategy. It demonstrates our commitment to helping improve the health of the population, with people being in control of their own health and all of us playing our part to help our communities thrive.

♥ **Healthier lives**

👤 **Empowered citizens**

🌱 **Thriving communities**

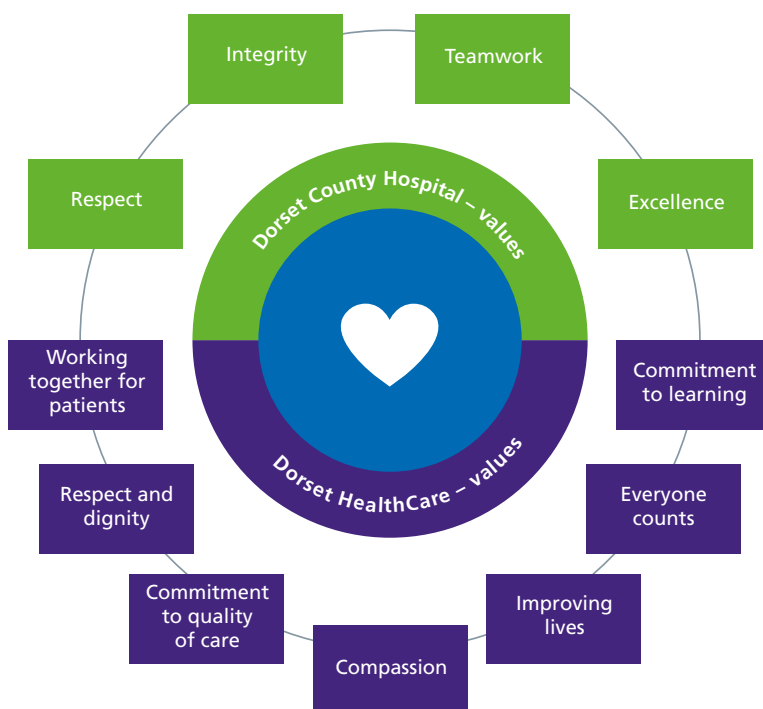
Our mission

Our mission is to work in partnership to provide high quality, compassionate services and to nurture an environment where people can be their best.

Our mission represents what we are here to do, our unique contribution as two federated Trusts to achieving our vision and the wider ambitions of our health and care system. It shows that our two Trusts will work together and with others to achieve the best possible outcomes for Dorset communities. It highlights the importance of supporting and empowering colleagues to provide the best possible care.

Our values and behaviours

Our two Trusts each have their own values, underpinned by a set of behaviours, and we will look to build on the common themes to develop shared values for the future.



Our strategic objectives

These show where we will focus our efforts to translate our vision into a practical roadmap for success for the next five years. They provide clarity and direction and support us to make decisions and prioritise resources.

By monitoring our progress against these objectives, we can celebrate our successes and quickly identify areas that need improvement.



CARE

We provide compassionate, safe, person-centred care



COMMUNITIES

We help build strong communities where people live well and are healthier



COLLEAGUES

We are empowered, skilled, caring colleagues who can thrive at work



SUSTAINABILITY

Our services are sustainable environmentally and financially and we make best use of resources



Meet the Board

Non-Executive Directors



David Clayton Smith
Joint Chair



Eiri Jones
Joint NED



Dave Underwood
Joint NED



Dr Claire Lehman
Joint NED



Frances West
Joint NED*



Margaret Blankson
DCH NED



Andreas Haimboeck-Tichy
DHC NED



Stuart Parsons
DCH NED



Steven Peacock
DHC NED*



Stephen Tilton
DCH NED*



Nikki Rowland
DHC NED



Suresh Ariaratnam
DHC NED

(*approaching the end of their term of office)

KEY

- Joint Board members
- DCH representative
- DHC representative

Executive Directors



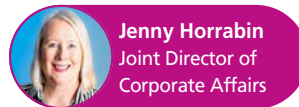
Matthew Bryant
Joint Chief Executive Officer



Dawn Dawson
Joint Chief Nursing Officer



Chris Hearn
Joint Chief Finance Officer



Jenny Horrabin
Joint Director of Corporate Affairs



Nicola Plumb
Joint Chief People Officer



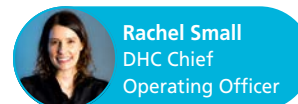
Dr Rachel Wharton
DCH Chief Medical Officer



Dr Lucy Knight
DHC Chief Medical Officer



Anita Thomas
DCH Chief Operating Officer



Rachel Small
DHC Chief Operating Officer



The role

We are looking for four NEDs in total, at least one of whom will be joint across both organisations. The other three NEDs will be appointed solely to either DCH or DHC.

We are looking for board colleagues to collectively bring a broad range of skills and experiences (as outlined in the person specification on p.12) and do not expect any one person to bring all the skills we require.

As a non-executive director, you will play a vital role in helping both Trusts deliver high-quality, compassionate and sustainable care

You will:

- bring independent judgement, insight and constructive challenge
- support and hold the executives to account
- help shape strategy and oversee delivery
- uphold values, culture and integrity
- keep the needs of patients, service users and communities at the heart of decisions

Some non-executive directors hold responsibilities across both Boards; others are appointed to meet specific trust needs.

In all cases, balance of focus and contribution is actively monitored to ensure neither organisation is disadvantaged.

You won't be expected to know everything – but you will be expected to listen, ask good questions and work as part of a supportive Board team.

Across both organisations, we expect our non-executive directors to:

- act with compassion, respect and integrity
- challenge constructively and supportively
- promote inclusion and belonging
- focus relentlessly on quality, safety and experience
- work together in the best interests of Dorset's communities

Job description and purpose

As a non-executive director (NED) of the Board, the post holder will be one of up to eight NEDs working with the Chair and executive directors (EDs) as members of the Board of Directors. You will share responsibility with fellow Board directors for the strategic leadership, direction, governance and overall success of the organisation in delivering healthcare.

The post holder will:

- Contribute to the development of strategies, business cases and governance processes that will drive delivery of effective management to achieve excellence in quality and financial outcomes and support the provision of a positive patient experience.
- Ensure that the Board sets challenging goals and objectives for service delivery and achievement of targets and monitor progress towards those goals and objectives.
- Provide insight to and relevant experience of organisational development and culture change to aid Board discussions and decisions concerning organisational change programmes.
- Scrutinise and challenge proposals to support the provision of modernised, patient-focussed services across our system.
- Be a member of or chair Board committees as requested by the Chair.
- Uphold the Nolan Principles of Public Life and promote these principles through the organisation.
- Be held to account by the Council of Governors, individually and collectively, for the performance of the Board.
- Promote the success of the organisation so as to maximise the benefits for the members as a whole and the public.
- Avoid conflicts of interests.

FREEDOM TO ACT

As a NED, the post carries corporate responsibility for effective delivery of business objectives, quality standards, probity and governance in all aspects of healthcare provision and will play a key role in determining and implementing strategic aims. All Board Members are expected to work as part of a unified team.

COMMUNICATION AND WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

Internal: Executive and non-executive directors, Council of Governors, Joint Director Corporate Affairs, all other Trust staff and staff representatives.

External: Department of Health, NHS England, Care Quality Commission, the ICB and other local NHS Trusts and Foundation Trusts, NHS Providers, staff organisations and trades unions, relevant voluntary organisations, Foundation Trust members.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, as an employee, you must take reasonable care for the health and safety of yourself and for other persons who may be affected by your acts or omissions at work. The Act also states that you must not intentionally or recklessly interfere with our misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety and welfare. You are also required to make yourself aware of the Trusts' health and safety policies and to report any accidents/incidents.

INFECTION CONTROL

It is the responsibility of the individual to comply with the Trusts' infection control policies and to attend any appropriate training.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

NEDs are required to carry out their duties in a manner which complies with the Nolan Principles of Public Life and have a statutory duty to promote the success of the organisation. Members of the Board are expected to ensure that the Trusts' licence conditions and constitution are upheld at all times.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Dorset County Hospital and Dorset HealthCare are committed to diversity and inclusion and the development of positive policies to promote this. All employees have a responsibility to ensure that they understand the standards expected and that they promote and adhere to the equal opportunity measures adopted by the Trust.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidential and personal information related to staff, patients and Dorset County Hospital and Dorset HealthCare must not be disclosed within or outside the place of work except in the proper discharge of duties.

OTHER INFORMATION

The job description is indicative but not exhaustive of the responsibilities of the post. The requirements of the job may develop and change over time and the post-holder will be expected to adapt to these requirements. The postholder will be expected to comply with all the relevant local, national and statutory policies and frameworks.

The Trusts operate a no smoking policy.

ID badges must be worn at all times on Trusts' premises.

Person specification

We are committed to ensuring that the boards of both trusts are balanced, highly skilled, and equipped to provide strong strategic leadership. To support this, we have identified a number of priority skills and experiences that we are seeking from our new Non-Executive Directors. These include:

- **Financial leadership**, including strategic financial oversight and assurance
- **Organisational development and change**, with experience of leading transformation
- **Primary care expertise**, bringing insight from frontline service delivery
- **Experience within the third sector**, offering community-focused perspectives
- **Expertise from allied health professions**, strengthening our clinical and professional breadth

These capabilities will enhance the board's collective strength and support our ambition to deliver high-quality, sustainable services for our communities.

EDUCATION, QUALIFICATIONS & TRAINING

- Evidence of extensive, senior-level (ideally Board-level) experience in a large, complex organisation(s).
- Evidence of professional and personal development at senior management level.

KNOWLEDGE & EXPERIENCE

- Experience of involvement in corporate governance and risk issues either in an active or advisory capacity.
- Experience of strategic planning and decision making.
- Evidence of proven involvement in helping to influence change and improvement in an organisation.
- Previous experience of organisational development and cultural change in the public or private sector is desirable but not essential.
- Previous experience as an NED is essential for some of the roles but not essential for all.

SKILLS & ABILITIES

- Evidence of ability to make significant and successful contribution at Board level in a large complex organisation.
- Demonstrable experience of working successfully in partnership with both internal and external stakeholders to agree and deliver shared objectives
- Evidence of advanced analytical and problem solving skills.
- Evidence of ability to influence and help develop robust corporate governance and risk strategies.
- Ability to demonstrate a variety of leadership skills in complex situation.
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills, both written and oral and ability to provide robust challenge in a Board setting.
- Evidence of a business focus, suitable for a Foundation Trust.
- Familiarity with current political, legal and business developments that impact on governance and risk in the NHS.
- Evidence of ability to engage with and advocate for the population of Dorset.

How to apply

The closing date for applications is
Monday 2 March 2026 (12 noon).

Applications should include:

- A covering letter which outlines which role you are applying for (DCH/DHC/Joint or a combination), explaining why the appointment(s) interest you, how you meet the criteria and what you specifically would bring to the post
- 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.
- A completed **Diversity Monitoring Form** and **Fit and Proper Person Monitoring Form**.

Please note that the information you provide will be treated as confidential, and is for monitoring purposes only. It will not form part of the application process. All applications should be sent to: applications@hunter-healthcare.com. All applications will be acknowledged.

If you would like to have an initial conversation, please contact our recruitment partners, Rhiannon Smith or Jenny Adrian at Hunter Healthcare on 07939 250362 or by email at jadrian@hunter-healthcare.com.

Interviews will be held at South Walks House, Dorchester.

KEY DATES

Closing date	2 March 2026
Longlisting	10 March 2026
Shortlisting	24 March 2026
Interviews	31 March & 1 April 2026



- ♥ Healthier lives
- 👤 Empowered citizens
- 🌱 Thriving communities



Floor 2, Berkshire House
168-173 High Holborn, London WC1V 7AA

T: 020 7935 4570
E: enquiries@hunter-healthcare.com