

The role of the Senior Independent Director (SID)

The senior independent director is a non-executive director appointed by the Board of Directors in consultation with the Council of Governors. The senior independent director supports the chairperson and serves as an intermediary for the other directors when necessary. The senior independent director is also available to members of the foundation trust and to governors if they have concerns.

The SID is appointed by the Board of Directors in consultation with the Council of Governors. Candidates for the SID need to be able to demonstrate their independence and that they have sufficient time to meet the additional responsibilities of the role.

In addition to the duties described here, the SID has the same duties as the other non-executive directors. The senior independent director receives an additional payment in recognition of this role.

Key duties

Supporting the chairperson

The SID should provide a sounding board for the chairperson and serve as an intermediary for the other directors when necessary.

Leading the appraisal of chairperson

The SID should lead the performance evaluation of the chairperson, within a framework agreed by the council of governors and taking into account the views of the directors and governors. This should involve holding a meeting with the other non-executive directors in the absence of the chair at least annually as part of the appraisal process.

Communicating with governors and members

The SID should maintain regular contact with governors to understand their issues and concerns. The SID should attend sufficient meetings with governors to listen to and understand their views and concerns. The senior independent director should be available to governors if they have concerns that contact through the normal channels of chairperson, chief executive, finance director or trust secretary has failed to resolve, or for which such contact is inappropriate. If the Council of Governors has any concerns about the performance of the chairperson, they should raise these with the SID in the first instance.

Responding to staff concerns (whistleblowing)

If members of staff have concerns that have not been able to be resolved by line managers or executive directors or are so serious that they cannot be discussed with these people, then they are able to raise them with the senior independent director.

Medical Performance Issues

The SID will be the designated board member under the 'Maintaining High Professional Standards' policy. Specifically the SID will oversee the case manager and investigating manager who are investigating performance concerns relating to medical staff. This will also include assessing decisions to exclude and where necessary considering representations from the medical professional in question about either the exclusion or the investigation.