Belfast Health and Social Care Trust caring supporting improving together	**Paper Ref. Number:** 2026.09.24_TBP_AgendaItem7.2_P248 ManagementofQuestionstotheBoard

Belfast Health & Social Care Trust Meeting Template (v300726)

Title of paper (300 characters maximum Management of Questions to the Board		
Purpose of paper	For Approval	
If other purpose please specify		
Meeting TB Public		
If other meeting please specify		
Rationale for confidential consideration (if applicable)		
Presenter	**Peter Watson**	
Date of meeting	26 September 2026	

Background (1500 characters maximum)

Queries have been raised in recent times in relation to the management of questions posed to the Trust Board.
It has been established that no other Trust has guidance in place for this, beyond the provisions regarding the arrangements for Speaking Rights included in each Trust's Standing Orders.
Guidance was drafted and then input sought from the Trust's Reader Panel. That input has been considered and the revised guidance below prepared.

Date considered at Exec Team (If Applicable)	18 August 2026

Options for consideration (1500 characters maximum)

N/A

Recommendations (1500 Characters maximum)

Trust Board are asked to approve the guidance for implementation.

Proposed Onward Consideration	Remove from Agenda

If other	

Note:-
Any papers accompanying this template should not exceed 10 pages in length.
Please ensure when submitting papers that:

- ***Orientation of papers is set so that the content of the papers can be read***
- ***Embedded documents are provided as separate attachments***
- ***Any papers are appended to this coversheet, on the next page.***

Guidance for the management of questions addressed to the Trust Board – 17 August 2026

1. This guidance operates alongside the Trust's Standing Orders (dated 7 November 2024). The provisions of the Standing Orders including Section 3, Meetings of the Trust Board, are noted.

2. While the Standing Orders provide for Speaking Rights, Petitions and Motions, they are silent in relation to questions addressed to the Trust Board by individuals.

3. This guidance seeks to clarify the process which will be adopted.

4. Upon receipt of question(s) addressed to the Trust Board, the question(s) will be passed to the Head of the Office of the Chief Executive. A standard template reply will be used as noted below.

5. The Head of the Office of the Chief Executive will acknowledge the receipt of the question(s), noting :
   (a) That the Trust Board welcomes questions in relation to its role and the services provided by the Trust.
   (b) That responses to questions posed will be prepared by the Head of the Office of the Chief Executive, and agreed with the Chair of the Trust Board, before being shared with the questioner.
   (c) That the name of the questioner, and their questions and answers will be shared with the full Trust Board
      - at a public Trust Board meeting
      - and will be included in the minutes of the public Trust Board meeting which are publicly available on the Trust website
   (d) That matters relating to any individual other than the questioner will not ordinarily be shared. Eg confidential matters in relation to individual patients or staff.

6. Subject to the exception at d above, the Chair will enquire at the Board meeting of all present (both Board members and all others in attendance) if it is acceptable that the questions and answers are not read at the Trust Board meeting. Where anyone

indicates they would wish the questions and answers to be read, they will be read by the Chair.

7. Subject to the exception at d above, the questions and answers will be incorporated into the formal record (minutes) of the Board meeting.

8. The process as outlined above, and explained to the questioner, will then be followed.

9. A flowchart will also be provided for the questioner.

Template Letter

Dear < INSERT NAME OF QUESTIONER>,

Thank you for raising questions with the Trust Board in your correspondence dated <INSERT>.

I support the Chair and Trust Board members in their role, and so the questions you have asked have been passed to me. I will speak with Trust staff and aim to get answers to your questions. Once I have been provided with the answers, I will discuss these with the Trust Chair and finalise a response to you.

INSERT PARAGRAPH A OR B AS APPROPRIATE

PARAGRAPH A – WHERE THERE IS NOT AN ISSUE OF CONFIDENTIALITY

Your name and your questions and answers will be shared at a public Trust Board meeting and will be included in the minutes of that meeting. The minutes of the meeting are publicly available on the Trust's website.

PARAGRAPH B – WHERE THERE IS AN ISSUE OF CONFIDENTIALITY

Given that the matters which you have raised relate to personal information they will not be shared with the full Board. The Chair of the Board will advise the Board that questions have been asked, but that the matters relate to personal information.

Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me. I will be happy to assist you in any way I can.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Watson

Head of Office of the Chief Executive