

## Governors' Bulletin

July 2016

# Governors working on your behalf

The Council of Governors met in Norwich on 7 July 2016. Some of the matters discussed are outlined below.

### Care Quality Commission (CQC)

The Trust is being inspected by the CQC, commencing on 13 July 2016. Chief Executive, Michael Scott, gave us a comprehensive presentation outlining the progress the Trust has made since the last inspection, focusing on the areas of concern raised at that time. Governors have also agreed a statement setting out our collective views on the Trust's operations and plans. We expect to receive some initial feedback from the CQC inspection on 21 July.

### 'Unexpected deaths'

We discussed, as sensitively as we could, the findings of two reports into 'unexpected deaths' (which include suicides) of Trust service users. These explored the statistical evidence around the rates of unexpected deaths (compared to national figures), the associated reporting, recording and communications processes and practices. It is clear that there is a lack of reliable, consistent information on these incidents at national level, but that there is no evidence to suggest that the rate of such incidents in the Trust is unusually high, or that our procedures, in general, are inappropriate. The reports identify a number of areas where the Trust needs to improve, and we and the Trust Board are agreed that we should do all that we can to reduce unexpected deaths to a minimum and to improve some staff practices and procedures. Two key areas are to have an effective approach to suicide prevention and to improve communications with bereaved families. It is important for the Trust to communicate in a compassionate and timely manner.

We were reassured that an action plan is in place to address these and other issues and recommendations made in the reports, which can be seen at: <http://nsft.nhs.uk/About-us/Pages/Independent-Review.aspx>. We will keep progress on this Strategy under review.

## Governor issues

As Governors we regularly raise concerns and questions for the Board to answer, as part of our role in representing the interests of the public and holding the Non-Executive Directors to account. We put forward a lengthy list of points at our July meeting (you can read about these at: [http://nsft.nhs.uk/Event/Documents/Combined%20CoG%20Papers%20\(G%20to%20follow\)%2007July2016.pdf](http://nsft.nhs.uk/Event/Documents/Combined%20CoG%20Papers%20(G%20to%20follow)%2007July2016.pdf)). Among these were concerns over the effectiveness of current arrangements for engaging with service users and carers (see more on this below), access to care, staffing levels and bed numbers in relation to demand and coordination of services with other agencies. We received satisfactory answers to several of these, whilst others require further work and will be monitored and discussed further at future meetings of the Governors.

## Governor elections 2016

We noted the arrangements to hold elections to fill currently vacant Governor positions and for those where current governors are coming up to the end of a three year term of office. The process kicks off in early November when nominations are sought from members to six 'public' Governor positions (three in Norfolk and Suffolk respectively) and one service user vacancy (Norfolk). The results should be announced by the end of December, so that the elected Governors can take up their positions from the beginning of February next year. Members will be contacted about the process later in the year.

## Changes to Governor sub-groups

In order to organise our work effectively, Governors have a small number of sub-groups that focus on different aspects of the Trust's work and to make sure that we fulfil our role effectively. We have agreed to merge two sub-groups (responsible for Membership and Communications and Governor Education) into a new one focused on Trust Member and Governor Development. This new group will help to grow and develop the Trust's membership (through events, communication, and other activity) and ensure that the learning needs of Members and Governors are identified and addressed.

We also discussed some minor changes to the ways two other groups operate: confirming the role of the Planning and Performance Sub-Group in commenting on the Trust's strategies and plans; and adjusting the membership of the Nominations Committee (which handles the Governors' role in relation to the appointment and remuneration of the Trust's Non-Executive Directors) – the latter will now better reflect the overall composition of the Council of Governors.

## Engaging with service users and carers

As noted above, Governors have continuing concerns over the arrangements for engaging with service users and carers. We heard about the progress of the Trust's 'Involvement Strategy' focusing on two pilot projects underway in Great Yarmouth and Waveney and East Suffolk. A new model of consultative meetings is being tried out, which it is hoped will encourage greater participation by service users and carers and eventually lead to more effective flows of information, issues and concerns to a Trust-wide 'Hub' for service users and carers.

We heard about reservations by some service user and carer representatives about the current three-year timescale for achieving this, and noted that the Trust has extended this to five years.

More information about the Strategy can be found at:

<http://nsft.nhs.uk/Get-involved/Pages/Service-user-and-carer-involvement.aspx>

For more information or to contact the Governors, please email: [governors@nsft.nhs.uk](mailto:governors@nsft.nhs.uk)  
You can also log on to our web pages at: [www.nsft.nhs.uk/governors](http://www.nsft.nhs.uk/governors)

### Guenever Pachent

Lead Governor  
Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust

### Andrew Good

Chair of the Governors' Membership /  
Communications sub-group

### Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

NSFT PALS provides confidential advice, information and support, helping you to answer any questions you have about our services or about any health matters.



If you would like this leaflet in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or a different language, please contact PALS and we will do our best to help.

Email: [PALS@nsft.nhs.uk](mailto:PALS@nsft.nhs.uk)  
or call PALS Freephone: 0800 279 7257

Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust values and celebrates the diversity of all the communities we serve. We are fully committed to ensuring that all people have equality of opportunity to access our service, irrespective of their age, gender, ethnicity, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership or social and economic status.



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