

Governors' Bulletin

April 2016

Governors working on your behalf

Following the recent round of Governor elections we now have a full council of elected Governors working on your behalf, who provide a link between local people and the Trust's Board of Directors.

We are unpaid volunteers with an interest in mental health. In addition to representing the views of users, carers and the general public we scrutinise the work of the Board of Directors and seek assurance on important issues.

Our Council of Governors meet in public at least every three months where we highlight issues of concern and contribute to the Trust's strategic priorities.

The Thursday, 4 April, meeting held in Ipswich, heard how over the past few months the Governors have played a key role in a number of areas. Highlights include:

Lorenzo

Lorenzo is a multi-million pound IT system that supports patient care by bringing healthcare records together in one place, and is available to Trust clinicians wherever they are in Norfolk and Suffolk.

The Trust's Lorenzo system was mainly paid for by the Department of Health. It is designed so clinicians can access an up-to-date and comprehensive picture of patients' needs and preferences. Governors are supportive of the aim to ensure patient safety but after many months there remain a number of functionality problems that need addressing. Many of these are out of the Trusts' control as the system is centrally procured. The Board of Directors has made strong representations on the importance of addressing these problems quickly and, as governors, we continue to monitor the Trust's actions to improve performance of the system.

E-rostering

Electronic input of staff rotas has been introduced to make more efficient use of staff resources and reduce the need for agency staff. Staff Governors, in particular, have raised concerns about its impact on some staff and therefore a three-month audited pilot is taking place to identify where services are struggling with it. We will continue to track how well this progresses.

Discharge letters to patients

Governors have cited a number of cases where the language used in letters given to patients following discharge needs to be more personal. At a time of vulnerability, we wish to see empathetic language that reflects the Trust's values of respect. The Trust will now examine the standard letters and improve them in line with Governors' feedback.

Suffolk Wellbeing Service contract won by the Trust

The news that the Trust's bid to continue providing the Wellbeing Service in Suffolk was successful, against competition, has been greeted with delight by Governors. Well done to the staff who put the bid together.

Plans are coming together

The Trust is a complex organisation operating in an extremely challenging financial and social context. Governors are pleased that for the first time, the various plans of the Trust are coming together and are now linked to the recently approved overriding goals and values. Governors expect to see performance against each plan measured through performance appraisals and regular performance reports to the Board.

Improving services to black and minority ethnic communities (BME)

The Trust has carried out important research into the use of mental health services by BME communities. A key finding is that the proportion of Black mental health patients using services is three times higher than the proportion of Black people in the population. There is concern that Black people tend to get into services at crisis point rather than being supported at much early stages. This could be linked with other findings of the research where it indicates that BME communities do not always find services accessible or welcoming and that there is a sense of lack of understanding from services in supporting them appropriately.

Governors support the Trust's work that is taking place in partnership with BME communities to identify and improve the key barriers to access i.e. language, fear and lack of information. Following the current trials in Suffolk, Governors are pleased with the Trust's commitment to roll-out training which highlights the unconscious bias in all of us to all staff.

How do we raise issues of concern with the Trust ?

A very important role of Governors is to represent the interest of the public, users and carers. Governors work voluntarily with mental health locality groups and organisations, make site visits and attend community events where we hear first-hand accounts from people who use the Trust's services. Each constituency of Governors (public, carer, user, staff and partner) can then raise issues with the Trust in writing. Responses are then received at the next Council of Governors meeting.

If we are not satisfied with the response we keep the issue open. Issues such as the adequacy of discharge arrangements and lack of tutors for the Recovery College have recently been raised, together with items highlighted in this bulletin.

Our next **Governors' meeting** will take place on Thursday, 7 July 2016, at the King's Centre, in Norwich. All are welcome to attend.

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

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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
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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 NSFTTrust

Working together for better mental health...



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