

Governors Working For You

As Governors at Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust (NSFT) we provide a link between local people and the Trust's Board of Directors.

We are unpaid volunteers with an interest in mental health who are elected from within the Trust's membership body, and who are responsible for representing the interests of members and the public, and holding the non-executive directors to account for the performance of the Board of Directors.

Our Board of Governors meets in public at least every quarter when we highlight any issues or concerns to the Trust, while also contributing to its strategic priorities.

This brief bulletin aims to update you on some of our recent work on your behalf, and will be issued following each quarterly meeting.

The Thursday, 2 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:

Complaints and being more service user friendly

Over the past 18 months, Governors have been reviewing the Trust's complaints process following concerns about the timeliness and quality of responses. Following a recent progress check, Governors were pleased to note that improvements have been made and the quality of responses is now good.

We have made further recommendations to the Trust, which include sharing learning across all services, and ensuring staff call people back if they have promised to do so.



Keeping a check on quality

A small group of Governors has been set up to help monitor, challenge and support actions within the Trust's Quality Improvement Plan. This is the blueprint for improving the standard of services, following a negative Care Quality Commission (CQC) report. This sub-group will continue until NSFT has come out of special measures.

In our role of a 'critical friend to the Trust', we are responsible for offering constructive help to NSFT, but also for challenging the Trust Board, when necessary.

Alan Yates, the Improvement Director appointed by Monitor as part of special measures, has recognised this and attended our meeting to listen to the discussions which took place.

Strategically placed

Our listening to and feeding back the views and experiences of service users and carers from across Norfolk and Suffolk has ensured that local people have helped influence the Trust's strategic priorities.

As a direct result of this work by Governors, NSFT has included a greater commitment to user and carer involvement within these priorities.

Eventful

We hosted another well-attended conference, this time focusing on children and young people's mental health services, in March.

More than 200 people came to the half-day event in Norwich to listen to user and carer experiences and learn more about NSFT's services. Feedback from these events has been very positive. Our next event for members and for the public will be held in the late autumn in Suffolk.

Staff are our members too

Within our Board of Governors we, of course, have staff representatives too, who are there to ensure the voice of Trust employees as a whole is fully represented and supported.

We have been supporting the development of staff members by encouraging managers to release them to enable them to take part in ImROC (Implementing Recovery through Organisational Change) courses, together with service users and carers.

Financial matters

The Board of Governors has played a role in supporting the Trust's Chair and Chief Executive as they raise the issue locally and nationally around fair funding for mental health services.

Our next Governors' meeting

Council Chamber, City Hall, Norwich, Thursday, 2 July, starting at 1.30pm. 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