

## **Council of Governors' Highlights Report for Trust Members**

The Council met on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2017 and the agenda and draft minutes can be seen here: <http://www.nsft.nhs.uk/Event/Pages/CoG-12Oct2017.aspx>  
Here is a summary of some of the more significant matters discussed:

### **1. Representing Interests Register**

We asked a number of questions of the Board of Directors, including:

**Employment support-** we asked what the Trust is doing to work with other agencies to help service users get into work.

**Crisis Services-** we are concerned that the crisis service is not responsive enough- we have agreed to explore this further.

**Staff engagement-** we asked what the board is doing to improve staff engagement in the Trust- we note improving figures in the annual staff survey last year and await this year's results for further consideration of this topic.

**High community caseloads-** we are concerned at the continuing pressure on staff and agreed to explore this further.

**Professional development resources-** we noted the reduction in staff training budgets over the years with concern and the possible impact this is having on staff recruitment and retention.

### **2. Chief Executive's Report**

We heard about continuing work to manage the allocation and use of inpatient beds across the Trust and that discussions have been held with Social Services in Norfolk about ways in which delayed discharges due to an absence of appropriate community placements can be alleviated. If this issue was resolved the Trust is likely to have about the right number of beds to meet current demands and it would not be necessary to use services provided by other organisations (such as Mundesley Hospital) or those outside Norfolk and /Suffolk.

### **3.Sustainability and Transformation Plans/Partnerships**

We had updates from two governors who are monitoring progress on the Norfolk and Waveney and Suffolk and North East Essex STP's which are providing the focus for interagency work to deliver more integrated care, more appropriately located and to enable the NHS to live within likely resource levels in the face of increasing demands due to an ageing population etc. In summary the Suffolk and N.E.Essex STP appears to be dominated by the merger of two Acute Hospital trusts and Mental health is not being given the prominence it deserves. In Norfolk, in contrast, there is a separate area of work focussed on several important developments in Mental health services and a sense of collective working amongst the partners. Our two nominated governors will continue to monitor progress.

#### **4. Chief Executive Appointment**

We discussed the proposal by the Board to appoint the current Finance Director, Julie Cave, as interim Chief Executive following the retirement of Michael Scott. We acknowledged the importance of continuity over the next few months in order to ensure that the Board focusses on effective implementation of an Action plan to address the concerns raised in the latest Care quality commission (CQC) Report of inspection. We were assured by the chairman of the interim nature of the appointment and decided to ratify the Board's decision.

#### **5. Staff governor constituency**

At a previous meeting we had decided to explore making changes to the basis of the four Staff Governor positions in the council of Governors in order to ensure representation from Suffolk-based staff (all four current Staff governors are Norfolk-based). We discussed the options for this and after a vote decided on balance to keep the current arrangements on place, but recognised that a wider review of the balance and basis of governor constituencies is needed and plan to carry this out next year.

#### **6. Improving Services together**

We received an update on progress with developing the various means by which Service Users and carers are engaged and influence trust plans and services. A large number of activities are underway across the trust and though the system of 'locality hubs' is moving forward, in some areas this is not as far forward as it could be due to a number of factors. These 'Hubs' will gather together information from a range of local forums and process this to the Trust's Service User and Carer Partnership. We were pleased to hear about developments in the Trust's Youth Council and associated activities.

#### **7. Member Involvement**

One of the Governor's sub groups put forward a report on the need for Governors to be proactive and systematic in their engagement with the public and their specific constituencies so as to ensure that they are able to fulfil their role of 'representing the interests' of Trust members and the public. We heard of developments currently underway to improve the opportunities for members to be involved in the trust's work including the recruitment of a new Membership Officer, new display material and attendance at various events to talk with members and explain Trust services and developments. We unanimously agreed with the principle of governors being proactive and systematic in engaging members and the public and agreed that further work be done to develop the ways and means for this.

#### **8. Care Quality Commission Report**

Members may have heard of the recent Report of the CQC and its recommendation that the Trust be placed under 'special measures' as it judged the Trust 'inadequate', notwithstanding that it found many examples of good practice and found that the Trust was achieving a 'good' rating in the quality of its caring. Governors have expressed their deep disappointment at this Report and are to meet soon to consider ways in which we might

maximise the assistance that we can give to ensure that the Trust makes effective progress in meeting the CQC's concerns.

**Nigel Boldero**

Norfolk Public Governor and Chair of the Trust Member and Governor  
Development Sub Group, NSFT