

Governors' Bulletin



April 2019

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

The Council of Governors* met on 11 April at Diss. This was the first meeting chaired by our new Trust Chair, Marie Gabriel and attended by our new Chief Executive, Jonathan Warren. At Council meetings we seek assurance on matters of importance, ask questions about NSFT's services, its funding and efficiency and use our knowledge to represent the interests of those who use the services of the Trust and their carers. Below are the main highlights from the meeting.

Improving the quality of our services

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) – the independent inspector of NHS services - has told us the quality of NSFT's services must improve. We agree and are pleased to say that there is now a real focus on this by measuring what the Trust offers and how well it does it. One of the first things the Trust is concentrating on is "restrictive interventions". We want to reduce how often they happen, and we can already see this on some wards.

Investment in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) is needed

NSFT does not choose how much funding it is given for the services it is expected to provide – that's what Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) do. A Governor has raised the issue of 'low level' mental health support provided by CAMHS because this region spends less than a third of the average in England. We know that the CCGs have many competing demands when allocating funds but with so many young people waiting for treatment, we want the Trust's leadership to raise this with the CCGs when they negotiate the next contract.

Partner Governors

We are fortunate to have partner Governors from our two county councils and our two universities. The councils deliver care to people and the universities teach people who want to work in mental health services. Working alongside them is vital to ensure the right values are promoted to those who will be caring for vulnerable people in the future.

Cultural values are important too

Our new Chief Executive had only been in post for nine days when we met. Governors were very pleased to hear that he believes that changing the Trust's culture is key to improving quality. While being in special measures is worrying for service users, it is also very hard for staff, so the Trust must improve morale, ensure staff treat people with respect and express the Trust's values in their everyday work. A criticism of the Trust by Governors is that too many layers of management have disempowered staff. The new Board of Directors is tackling this by removing some management layers and putting in place something called "Care Groups". The Chief Executive was very clear that he wants teams to respond to local circumstances and to take local decisions. Governors are very much of the same view.

Improving the effectiveness of the Board of Directors

The CQC has rated the effectiveness of the Board as inadequate. As Governors we have a set of priorities to help ensure the Board's effectiveness is improved. One of the Board's key roles is to help shape the Trust's culture. We need a new culture, one where the Trust's values ("positively, respectfully, together") are practiced, where the Trust is open, and it learns from experience. We also need a new strategy - something that is credible, not just words on a piece of paper.

Both the Board and the Council of Governors want the strategy to be shaped by people who use our services, carers and staff so that it is based on what works and what is needed and is delivered by the new local management teams. We also want to make it possible for members of the Trust to become more involved and, lastly, we want to ensure the recent review of mental health services in the two counties will help develop our own strategy.

Sustainable Transformation Partnerships (STPs)

STPs have been formed to bring together the whole health sector to deliver integrated care: Norfolk and Waveney STP and Suffolk and North East Essex STP. This means that acute hospitals, community services, the councils, CCGs and mental health services work together to see how best to deliver the health care needed. As Governors, we have asked the Trust's leaders to ensure we have a strong voice within the STP, to help shape the future with other health providers and commissioners so that mental health needs are equal to good physical health.

Co-lead Governors

It is a requirement of the Health Act that the Council of Governors has a Lead Governor. The role is there to perform certain statutory functions but the real essence of the role is to lead Governors and be a conduit with the Trust. At the election for Lead Governor we had a tie in the votes cast, so the outcome is that Nigel Boldero and Howard Tidman will share the role. Both are well suited to do this, and we thank them for taking this on.

Contacting Governors

Governors have a generic email address which is governors@nsft.nhs.uk. This can be used by any Trust member to contact Governors. We welcome all comments and observations.

*Governors are elected by 'Members of the Trust'. These are people who live locally and contact the Trust, asking to become Members. In effect, this means the Trust is answerable to local people.

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...



Positively...



Respectfully...



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