

Governors' Bulletin

January 2017

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. We 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 Council of Governors meets in public at least every quarter. 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 the recent work we have carried out on your behalf, and will be issued following each quarterly meeting.

The Thursday 5 January meeting, held in Norwich, heard how over the past few months the Governors have played a key role in a number of areas. Highlights include:

- **Who is talking to me?**

Governors are asking the Trust to reconsider how service users and their carers can recognise a member of staff's name more easily and the staff group or profession they belong to. We feel that the lanyard and staff badge could be simplified. When people are feeling vulnerable, they need to understand who it is they are talking to and whether they are a nurse, doctor or someone else.

- **Service user and carer engagement strategy**

At our meeting, we had the opportunity to discuss progress on the implementation of the strategy with the staff involved. Whilst good progress is being made, there is still work to do to achieve a consistent approach across the Trust's various localities, user forums and hubs. We particularly feel that one of the reasons why user and carer events are not always well attended is because of the travelling involved and sometimes the need to arrange cover.

Governors would support the use of social media and other forms of engagement to supplement face-to-face meetings.

- **Adequacy of staffing levels**

Staff Governors have received a lot of feedback from staff about the adequacy of staffing levels. The Board of Directors will shortly receive a report on this very subject. It is acknowledged that the Trust has considerable recruitment and retention challenges which place pressure on individual workloads in what is already a stressful working environment.

Governors will also be considering the report following the Board of Directors' consideration of the matter.

- **Developing a new Membership Strategy**

Governors are looking afresh at the Membership Strategy. In particular, we will focus on how we engage and communicate with Members, examine what Members want from the Trust and how we can improve the dialogue between Governors and Members.

- **Remuneration of Non-Executive Directors**

Governors noted that the level of remuneration of Non-Executive Directors (NEDs) had not increased since 2008, and had fallen below the NHS and local average. Governors reported that the performance of our NEDs is currently very good and noted that the Trust is no longer in Special Measures. There is also a need to demonstrate, in line with the Values of the Trust, that the role and performance of the NEDs are valued.

Given all these circumstances, the Council decided to increase the remuneration of the NEDs, including the Chair, to bring them up to the national and local average. We have therefore approved an increase from £11,000 to £13,000 for NEDs and an increase from £45,000 to £46,500 for the chair. Governors acknowledged that the contracted hours are often exceeded.

- **Member events**

The popular Member events held in Norwich and Ipswich will continue but each half-yearly event will have a different subject. The Norwich event on 2 March will focus on substance abuse and mental health, which is sometimes called dual diagnosis. The Ipswich event on 2 November will look at peer supported open dialogue, which builds on the recovery approach and originated from Finland.

Further information will be released shortly.

- **Crisis services in Norfolk and Suffolk - who determines the priorities?**

Governors have again expressed their concern and frustration at the disparity of crisis services throughout the Trust. In the main, this is because the seven clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) have different priorities, which means that the Trust cannot provide services if it is not funded to do so.

We acknowledge that there will be some regional and local variations to reflect the demographics of localities, but the point of access for people in crisis should be consistent in terms of availability of staff. The same applies to perinatal services which are provided in Norfolk but not in Suffolk. We hope in the future to better understand the priorities of all seven CCGs.

Our next Governors' meeting will be a special "Substance misuse and Mental Health" half-day event, taking place on 2 March at The King's Centre, Kings Street, Norwich, NR1 1PH between 12.30pm and 4.30pm. Everyone is welcome to attend and you can book your place by clicking here: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/Substancemisuseandmentalhealth2017Mar>

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

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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

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