

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 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 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, 1 October 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:

Staff views on Lorenzo

Lorenzo is the Trust's new electronic patient record system. It was installed across the Trust earlier this year, and last quarter we drew to the attention of the Board of Directors the problems staff were experiencing following implementation. The Trust responded to us, and has dealt with many of the initial issues, including training.

However, our Staff Governors reported on 1 October that the system is still posing problems, including difficulty in searching for patients, too few laptops / PCs, and slow access, resulting in clinicians seeing fewer clients, and taking work home. Governors have no doubt that Lorenzo is essential to the working of the Trust and the safety of patients, and that it is working effectively in some areas of the Trust. We asked the Board of Directors to review the continuing problems from the staff perspective, and to respond.

Involvement of service users and carers on staff selection panels

Governors are pleased that it is the policy of the Trust to have a service user or carer on the selection panel for each new member of staff. This demonstrates a level of engagement with service users and carers much greater, we believe, than in other NHS and public sector organisations locally. However, service users, family carers and partner organisations across both counties have complained about the lack of effective organisation of the selection panels, with service users and carers being invited to sit on panels either at the last minute, or in interviews for which they don't have the appropriate expertise. Governors asked for assurance that the locality-based administration is being sufficiently improved.

Putting People First

Putting People First is the Trust's collaborative exercise with staff, service users and carers to develop the Trust's values, bottom up. To date, 1,300 people have taken part, with the Trust involved in nearly 2,000 hours of listening. Through this iterative process of involvement and listening, the Trust has developed and launched its values, now called **Working together for better mental health ...respectfully ...positively ...together**. Governors welcomed Putting People First, which they said had been embraced in both counties. Our thanks go to all those staff, service users and carers who took the time to get involved.

Financial Recovery Plan 2015/16

Governors received a very straightforward presentation from the Interim Finance Director, John Doyle, on the measures the Trust must take to keep within its budget this financial year. These include: resolution of the central Norfolk contract dispute; reducing the use of temporary staff and thus of their levels of pay; better terms for purchasing and procurement; and control measures to ensure that staff keep within their budgets. The key message is that everyone can contribute their bit to financial recovery.

Board of Governors to become Council of Governors

We voted to change our name to Council of Governors, which will take effect after approval by the Board of Directors on 22 October. This will better reflect our role of holding the Board of Directors to account and representing the public interest. This will also help to differentiate between the Board of Governors and the Board of Directors.

Electing Governors for 2016 / 2018

Ten places on the Council of Governors are coming up for election shortly:

- **Public Governors:** three for Norfolk and one for Suffolk
- **Service User Governors:** one for Norfolk and one for Suffolk
- **Carer Governor:** one for Norfolk and one for Suffolk

Nominations will be open from 3 to 18 November 2015, with the election taking place between 7 and 30 December 2015.

Anyone interested in standing as a Governor is invited to attend an information event on:

- Thursday, 5 November 2015, Hellesdon Hospital, Norwich, 2-3.30pm
- Friday, 6 November 2015, Endeavour house, Ipswich, 2-3.30pm

To stand for election as a Governor, and to vote in the election, you must be a Member of the Trust. It is free to be a Member, and you can apply for membership via the Trust website:

www.nsft.nhs.uk/Get-involved/Pages/become-a-member.aspx

Council dates for 2016

We decided four of our six meeting dates in 2016. These will be:

- Thursday, 7 January 2016 in Norwich
- Thursday, 7 April 2016 in Ipswich
- Thursday, 7 July 2016 in Norwich
- Thursday, 6 October 2016 in Ipswich

We also expect to hold two special Council of Governor / Member meetings in March in Norwich and in the autumn in Ipswich. We will publicise these dates in due course.

Our next **Governors' meeting** will take place on Thursday, 7 January 2016, starting at 12.30pm, with a venue in Norwich to be confirmed. 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

Guenever Pachent

Lead Governor

Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust