

To: Council of Governors
From: Jamu Patel, Committee Chair
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Date: 12 November 2020
Subject: Communications and Engagement Committee Report

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 To update the Council on the work of the Communications and Engagement Committee.

2. Background

2.1 The Communications and Engagement Committee has been established to carry out specific duties on behalf of the Council, including reviewing the Trust's Membership Strategy and communications with members and among Governors.

2.2 The core membership of the Committee is as follows:

- *Joseph Croft, Staff Governor
- * Caroline Diehl, Hackney Public Governor
- * Carol Ann Leatherby, Newham Public Governor
- * Beverley Morris, Hackney Public Governor
- * Jamu Patel, Luton Public Governor (Committee Chair)
- * Felicity Stocker, Bedford Public Governor
- Aidan White, Newham Public Governor (Apologies)
- * Keith Williams, Luton Public Governor

* = in attendance on 19 October 2020

Apologies are only recorded for core members of the Committee.

2.3 The Communication and Engagement Committee meetings are open to all Governors. Those Governors who are not core members but wish to attend should notify the Membership Office in advance.

2.4 The Committee met on 19 October 2020. In addition to the core members, also attending were

Janet Flaherty (Head of Communications and PR)
Dawn Allen (Public Governor, Bedford Borough)
Norbert Lieckfeldt, Corporate Governance Manager (minutes)

Cathy Lilley (Associate Director of Corporate Governance) sent apologies.

3.0 19 October 2020 Meeting: Key Decisions and Discussions

3.1 Media Activities Update

- 3.1.1 Janet Flaherty gave Governors an update of the media activities in the Trust. There has been considerable interest in filming in some Trust services but during lockdown it was felt the dilemma between non allowing access for family members but enabling journalists to enter Wards could not be reconciled.
- 3.1.2 There were a number of important awareness campaigns in October which were at risk of crowding each other out, eg Black History Month, Infection Control Week, Freedom to Speak Up week, flu vaccination campaign etc.

3.2 Annual General Meeting/Annual Members Meeting

- 3.2.1 The committee discussed the AGM 2020 which for the first time was held virtually and the following feedback was noted:
- Good and well-organised, well chaired, moved along quickly.
 - Presentations were useful and well-timed
 - Important to celebrate successes but must make sure there's time and space for those who have not had the right experience; needs more time and space for criticism
 - Really interesting and prepared; very clear slides and easy to read at a glance; lot of time for questions and comments, well managed.
 - Hear from service users. Missing tea/coffee and cakes!
 - Very positive feedback from members, the one minute silence was very emotional.
 - All presentations were excellent; should not have been longer, people were leaving in the final 15 mins

3.3 Communications Guidelines

- 3.3.1 The Committee agreed Communication Guidelines for Governors to support them in communicating their role to the wider public (see Appendix 1).
- 3.3.2 The Guidelines are iterative and will be added to as and when issues arise that may cause uncertainty.
- 3.3.3 The Committee will review these guidelines after six months, and thereafter annually.

3.4 Forward Plan

- 3.4.1 The Committee started work on the Forward Plan – important steps were the Membership Strategy, working with People Participation and improving communication with members.

Appendix 1 – Communication Guidelines

1.0 Background and Principles

- 1.1 One of the roles of Trust governors is to bring the views of the public to the heart of the Trust’s decision-making.
- 1.2 As a result, all ELFT Governors will at times engage with their wider communities and appointing organisations in their role as an ELFT governor, both formally and informally: at formal ELFT public meetings, other public meetings relating to their role which they wish to attend, or even in face to face conversation.
- 1.3 Being a Governor is a public office – all members of the Council of Governors are published on the ELFT website.
- 1.4 It is not always obvious which organisations Governors might find helpful to engage with, how they should do this, and how to feedback to ELFT.
- 1.5 Governors are volunteers and they are the Trust’s critical friends; the Trust therefore acknowledges that Governors may not always feel they have the answers and/or detailed knowledge.
- 1.6 If in any doubt, feel free to contact the Governors and Members Office for help and guidance.

2.0 Guidance

- 2.1 At times, ELFT will have arranged for Governors to attend a meeting, or a visit, formally in order to represent ELFT. The Governors and Members Office will have offered advice about the meeting/visit in advance and how to report back on the meeting and the organiser will know in which capacity governors attend.
- 2.2 However, often governors are engaging with their communities BOTH in a personal capacity, as well as an ELFT governor. That can be more difficult.
- 2.3 Our advice is to be clear about this – letting the people you are meeting with know that you are engaging both personally (representing ourselves, our own families and communities) and that you are also an ELFT governor.
- 2.4 It can be helpful to stay in touch with your fellow Borough or staff governors. The Governors and Members Office will facilitate the sharing of contact emails and identify alternatives (e.g. nhs.net email addresses) if Governors prefer their home email to remain private.
- 2.5 Below are some examples of situations that might arise and some guidance on how to respond. This will be iterative and will be added to as issues arise.

3.0 Examples

| Guidance | Examples |
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| If in any doubt, feel free to contact the Governors and Members Office for help and guidance. | |

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| <p>Governors are the Trust's Ambassadors. They must not be seen to be unduly critical in public of the Trust or its staff</p> | <p>At a public meeting a member/member of the public tells Governors about their poor experience with a Trust service. Governors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • listen attentively • acknowledge their story • apologise for their experience if appropriate (“I am sorry you have had such a difficult experience”) • signpost to Trust service such as the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) if appropriate¹ • consider if Governors require assurance that systems are in place to prevent such occurrences (raise with Governors and Members Office) |
| <p>Governors are not to respond to media enquiries</p> | <p>If a journalist contacts a Governor with a request for a view or information on an issue, the correct response is to always refer to the Trust's Communications Team or the Governors and Members Office</p> |
| <p>Governors have various opportunities to raise queries and issues</p> | <p>At public meetings, members must have priority to ask questions as Governors can address their questions to the Governors and Members Office, at COG meetings and at Borough/Service Director Meetings (BDMs)</p> |
| <p>Governors can share information that is in the public domain</p> | <p>It is permitted to share information from the Council meetings with the public (except information expressly marked Confidential or addressed in private parts of the Council meetings). Council of Governor Meetings are meetings which are held in public (except where otherwise advised on the Agenda) Council papers are published on the ELFT website. Equally, information from Board meetings held in public is not confidential. Borough/Service Director Meetings may contain privileged information, please check at the time or afterwards if in doubt</p> |
| <p>When attending external meetings, you may wish to declare that you are an ELFT Governor; be mindful that most people do not know what an NHS Governor is!</p> | <p>“Hi, I am X and I am an ELFT Public/Partner/Staff Governor, although I am speaking in a personal capacity. One of my roles is to take the view of the public back to the Trust so I may</p> |

¹ Will need to supply information for governors in easy accessible format

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| | raise what I hear here with my fellow Governors and the wider Trust” |
| For meetings or issues of wider interest (such as attending a Conference with limited spaces on behalf of the Council, or meetings such as HealthWatch with information of interest to local Governors). | Governors are encouraged to write a brief summary of the main points and share with the Governors and Members Office for distribution. |