

To: Council of Governors
From: Norbert Lieckfeldt, Corporate Governance Manag
Date: 21 January 2021
Subject: Governor Engagement Update

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To update the Council on the current state of Governor and membership engagement following the raising of Covid Alert to Level 5.

2.0 Background

2.1 The Government ordered a lockdown for London and the South East on 21 December 2020 and the Covid-19 alert level was raised from Level 4 to Level 5 on 4 January 2020.

3.0 Impact

3.1 Mindful of these changes, and the demand on other staff, the Chair, Corporate Governance Manager and Lead Governor have agreed the following changes in line with precedent from the first lockdown in March 2020 (see Appendix 1); these changes also have the support of the Chairs of the Communications and Engagement and Significant Business Committees:

- Except for Council of Governor Meetings and those Nominations and Conduct Committee meetings dealing with the recruitment of the Chief Executive, all other formal Council-related meetings have been deferred until at least 31 March 2021
- As with Board meetings, Council meetings will be reviewed to focus on urgent business and the Governors' strategic priorities.
- Likewise, all membership engagement events (Stakeholder Lunch Meetings) have been cancelled; future dates will be reviewed following 31 March 2021
- The planned Trust-wide Annual Plan meeting scheduled for 23 February 2021 has been deferred pending review as NHS England state that "The annual NHS finance and operational planning rounds would be delayed to quarter one of next year, due to "relentless pressure" on trusts, with current rules rolled over into 2021-22."

3.2 Mindful of the need for Governors to remain engaged and informed, the following will continue or will be established:

- We will continue with the programme of Governors Open Forums, giving Governors the opportunity to have conversations with individual Non-Executive Directors and to meet new NEDs.
- We have established a series of bi-monthly meetings for all Staff Governors and will be contacting the Appointed Governors to see if there is interest in meetings like these for them as well.

- Governors will continue to receive the regular staff Covid-19 updates, as well as regular updates from the Gold Command Directors, as well as other helpful information.
- We have established a fortnightly Zoom meeting as an offer for Governors to dial into, to check in with each other and raise any issues of concern. Any issues or concerns raised will be taken forward from these meetings and will be raised with the Trust and responses shared with Governors.
- Governors can continue to raise any queries directly with the Governors and Members Office as previously and wherever appropriate, feedback on any queries will be shared with all Governors.

3.3 In terms of staffing for the Governors and Members Office, the impact has been as follows

- Gold Command has increased its the frequency of its meetings to daily meetings; Membership Officer Meena Patel is seconded as Business Manager in support of Gold Command.
- The team's apprentice, Tajmina Khan, will be working as administrative supportive for the Trust's vaccination hub at Stratford Westfield as of 18 January 2021.
- Norbert Lieckfeldt is additionally supporting Cathy Lilley and the Board in the process of recruiting a substantive Trust Chief Executive

3.4 The Governors and Members Office will communicate these changes to all Trust members by letter or email and will ensure the Website provides accurate updates. In addition, TrustTalk will continue to be published as usual and Governors are invited to provide their own updates as previously.

4. The Council of Governors is asked to **RECEIVE** and **NOTE** the report.

Appendix 1

Governor Engagement Plan - updated for January 2021

Suggestion	Requirements	Actions/responsible
We will hold future Council meetings by virtual means	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitable platform for virtual meeting • Platform needs testing ahead of meeting • Ensure equitable access for all governors (video/telephone) • Agenda of Council of Governors (CoG) meeting to focus on essentials • Papers to be kept to a minimum and questions to be submitted in advance (if possible) 	<p>Zoom</p> <p>Have set up testing sessions and governors now well experienced in using the platforms; sessions now starting 30mins early to sort out connectivity issues; established team of four supporting sessions. Council making good use of additional facilities (eg Chait) to enrich the discussions</p> <p>Requires video and dial-in access; Trust iPads with internet access distributed to some governors to ensure equitable access; alternative arrangement with Governor w/out internet access being explored Accessibility – subtitles now available</p> <p>CoG meeting with focus on strategic items , COVID update, CEO recruitment and statutory decisions</p> <p>Questions on papers and wider matters submitted by governors in advance of the meeting; chat will be monitored and followed up post meeting</p>
Provide information and assurance for governors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current ad-hoc updates of topical information to continue • Regular updates to be provided on Trust developments; regular updates on Covid-19 management 	<p>Regular emails inc. NHS Providers briefings, fortnightly COVID updates etc</p> <p>Trust Covid-19 briefings for staff and Chief Medical Officer (CMO) updates shared with Governors</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board meetings in public now deferred • Short overview on Board discussions/decisions following each Board meeting; also on website for members and the public • Fortnightly Zoom meetings with Governors • Regular staff governor meetings • Remind governors of opportunity to submit enquiries • Remind governor of importance of their feedback to Gov/members Office about what they experience, or hear from members/public 	<p>Ensure Governors receive Board papers (esp Integrated Performance Report); continue with GOF to ensure Governors can hold NEDs to account</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>These are now held every other Wednesday 5pm; offer for Governors to log in and raise issues; all issues will be followed up</p> <p>Follow up Governor feedback on communication (TrustTalk, website etc)</p>
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership engagement deferred for the time being • Use governor2governor contact to check on each other (and feed back to office any issues, but respecting confidences) • Ask governors to identify local sources of support and share 	<p>Communication to go to all members highlighting current situation</p> <p>Happening informally between governors and between governors and Trust staff; Governors/Members Office are looking to establish directory of Governor contact details</p> <p>Listed in Skills Audit, will be analysed and turned into fact sheet</p>