

**From:** Cathy Lilley, Associate Director of Corporate Governance  
**To:** Council of Governors  
**Date:** 9 July 2020  
**Subject:** Self-certification of Governor Training and Development

## 1. Purpose of the Report

- To share the recommendation of the Nominations and Conduct Committee from their meeting on June 24<sup>th</sup> who have reviewed this self-certification and recommend to the Council to **AGREE** it formally.

## 2. Background

- NHS FTs are required to make annual self-certification declarations to NHS Improvement (NHSI) that they can meet the obligations set out in the NHS provider licence. This licence includes requirements to comply with NHS Acts and Constitution, and with governance requirements.
- Four self-certifications are required including one in relation to the corporate governance statement FT4 (which is all about systems and processes for good governance).
- As part of the overall corporate governance statement the Board must review whether governors have received the appropriate training and guidance to carry out their roles: *The Board is satisfied that during the financial year most recently ended the Trust has provided the necessary training to its Governors as required in s151(5) of the Health and Social Care Act to ensure they are equipped with the skills and knowledge they need to undertake their role.*
- The FT4 declaration will be signed by the Chair and CEO on behalf of the Board of Directors and having regard to the views of governors.

## 3. Governors' Training and Development

- A self-assessment has been undertaken by the Associate Director of Corporate Governance and Corporate Governance Manager.
- The Trust adopts a variety of methods for supporting governors with their training and development including:
  - Governor improvement plan
  - Governor briefing sessions
  - Joint Director/Governor Council Meetings
  - Internal meetings and visits
  - External events and meetings
  - Communications and regular provision of information
  - Fuller details are in Appendix 1.

## 4. Recommendation

It is recommended by the Committee that Council of Governors at its meeting on 9 July 2020 agree that governors have received the appropriate training and guidance to carry out their roles.

## 5. Action

1. The Council of Governors is asked to:

- **RECEIVE** and **NOTE** the report
  - **AGREE** that the Trust has provided the appropriate training, development and guidance to Governors to ensure they are equipped with the skills and knowledge to carry out their roles in support of the FT4 declaration.

## Appendix 1

### 1. Covid-19 Information and Engagement Plan

Following the lockdown and social distancing requirements the Council and Board agreed a Governor Engagement Plan to ensure governors are supported and informed to be able to carry out their statutory and regulatory duties and can continue to contribute to the discussions about the Trust's strategy, provide feedback and ask questions. This is regularly reviewed to ensure it continues to meet governors' needs.

The plan focuses on

1. Regular updates and information for governors about issues relating to Covid-19 through sharing the regular Covid-19 updates for staff as well as regular updates from the Chief Medical Officer
2. Maintaining contact between the Trust and governors, and between governors, through regular online meetings; the Trust has been supporting governors who are digitally excluded through Trust iPads and other IT support.
3. Enabling governors to carry out their statutory and regulatory duties with appropriate support from the Trust.

### 2. Governor improvement plan

- Prospective governor workshops were held across the Trust's constituencies prior to elections in September 2019 supported by the Corporate Governance Manager and experienced governors
- Induction session in November 2019 was open to both new and experienced governors.
- The Trust organised a training day for governors on  *Holding NEDs to Account/Effective Questioning and Challenge* . This was delivered by NHS Providers with high attendance. Learning from this training event has informed the Covid-19 Information and Engagement Plan and will flow into the planning of future Council meetings.

### 3. Governor briefing sessions

- Briefing sessions for governors have been developed covering a range of topics identified by governors to support them in understanding their role.
- The following sessions have been held covering:
  - Freedom to Speak Up
  - Annual accounts
  - Quality Improvement
- A planned development session on the Council's communication culture led by Dr Donna Willis had to be deferred due to the Covid-19 crisis.

### 4. Internal meetings and visits

- Governor Open Forums: These meetings, held 5-6 times each year, provide the opportunity for governors to meet informally and without Trust staff present to discuss issues of interest or concern. A summary

of queries will be reported back to the Trust Chair who will address these in public at the following Council meeting.

- In addition, non-executive directors including the Chair are now routinely invited to part of this meeting which provides the opportunity for governors to discuss topical issues and ask questions.
- Borough or Service Director Meetings are held quarterly across the Trust's different constituencies (City and Hackney, Luton and Bedfordshire, Newham and Tower Hamlets). These are formal meetings which offer governors the opportunity to learn about local service developments and feed back to service directors any issues or concerns they may have heard from their public. In addition to regular service updates, governors are now setting a forward plan of items they wish to look at in depth at each meeting.
- Following the Covid-19 crisis, these meetings were held in abeyance for a few months; they have now restarted via videoconferencing, initially with meetings to offer governors local updates to service changes in response to Covid-19.
- Our CEO and other Board members are regular attendees of our Council meetings where they present on a specific topic, lead on discussion groups, and respond to questions from governors. All governors are also routinely sent the CEO's and Chair's report to the Board separately in addition to the Board papers to highlight the feedback to the Board of previous Council discussions.
- Email briefings: Aside from the regular Friday update email, these are usually sent to ensure governors are kept up to date in a timely fashion on local or Trustwide news. Updates are gleaned from the internal Newsletter (e.g. service updates and changes), topical events and/or local media coverage. governors will also draw the Trust's attention to local media coverage which will be shared with the Trust's communications team.
- Site visits: governors set their own annual programme of six annual site or service visits across the Trust – recent visits included the Trust's Single Point of Access Team in Dunstable in late 2019. Further site visits (for example to the Coborn Unit, the Trust's in-patient unit for children and young adults) had been planned for Spring and Summer 2020, but had to be deferred due to Covid-19. These visits are designed to provide the governors with an insight into the breadth and depth of our services and this information is shared with other governors.
- Governors also attended the following Trust meetings:
  - Visits to the Empathy Museum as part of ELFT's Dignity at Work campaign
  - Freedom To Speak Up Guardian conferences both in London and Bedfordshire
  - Trustwide Suicide Prevention Conference
  - Trustwide Quality Improvement Conference
  - Celebration event for Trust volunteers (including governors)
  - Health Research in East London symposium
  - World Mental Health Day event in Luton
  - Trust Leadership Programme as 'expert witnesses'

- East London Mental Health Transformation event (to plan the CMHT redesign as part of the pilot work in East London)
- Public Feedback Session on Extended Mental Health Crisis Care in Bedfordshire and Luton
- Event to help plan and shape the new Bedfordshire Inpatient Facility
- Annual Plan Meetings in London, Luton and Bedfordshire
- ELFT Staff Network Conferences (ELFTAbility, ELFT LGBTQ Network)

**5. Other events and meetings**

- Governors attend various events that can widen their knowledge including NHS Providers events, local CCG meetings, Healthwatch meetings, etc. They share experiences informally usually within their constituency. A Task and Finish Group of the Council's Communications and Engagement Committee is currently scoping additional opportunities for governors to engage more widely with local stakeholders and partners.

**6. Communications**

- Literature available for prospective governors – on Trust's website and in hard copy
- Governors are kept regularly informed through the weekly governor e-newsletter and direct emails, including a regular update from the Chief Medical Officer.
- Governors knowledge is kept up to date through the sharing of best practice and centrally published information, as well as advising of external events that might be of interest:
  - NHS Providers Governors newsletter and briefings circulated
  - Reports and best practice shared include:
    - Trust's regular Quality Improvement Update
    - Selected Updates from NHS Improvement and NHS Providers Newsletters
    - Invitation to consultation events