

To: Council of Governors
From: Felicity Stocker, Chair
Author: Norbert Lieckfeldt, Corporate Governance Manager
Date: 14 March 2024
Subject: Communications & Engagement Committee Update Report

1. Purpose of the Report

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

1.2 The committee last met on 26 February 2024 and

- Received an update on recent communications and media developments
- Received an update on the ELFT charity
- Received an update on the membership engagement plan (with special focus on plans for a review of TrustTalk and the annual planning meetings)
- Looked at joined NED/Governor Site Visits, and
- Considered a governor focus group on governor engagement

2. Background

2.1 The committee has been established to carry out specific duties on behalf of the Council, including reviewing the Trust's membership engagement plan and communications with members and among governors.

2.2 The committee meetings are open to all governors. Those governors who are not core members but wish to attend should notify the Governors & Members Office in advance.

3. Meeting: 26 February 2024 Key Discussions

3.1 Communications & Charity Update

- Janet Flaherty, ELFT's head of communications, provided an update about recent media activities; amongst others, she highlighted:
 - A recent incident concerning letters which failed to be sent to GPs; attracted some media interest following an apology and explanation placed on the website.
 - Report being published in March concerning an undiscovered death in Newham, with multi-agency involvement including ELFT.
 - Comms advice to staff concerning the current measles outbreak.
 - Doctor's strike underway, impacts being reviewed; Comms message planned to acknowledge and thank other staff for their support of the services during recent strikes.
 - The ongoing merger of two GP practices in Luton.
 - Launch of a new Bedford, Milton Keynes and Luton service user and carer group.
 - First refreshed Population health webinar being held on 5 March.
 - Introduction of a chatbot in Specialist Children and Young People Services Newham ([SCYPS](#)) to speed up referrals to the children and young people's physical health service, in addition to usual referral routes.
 - Recent visit by the Secretary of State to the Evergreen in-patient unit in Luton for children and young people.

- Ongoing primary care webinars being very well received, with an average of 400 attendees per session.
- Imminent launch of Nature in Mind in Newham; an offer for young people on a waiting list to be seen by a mental health clinician to connect with nature, involving visits to the wetlands in Walthamstow with a psychologist, to be close to nature and learn outside of a structured educational environment. Will be promoted locally as one of a number of measures to support young people's mental health. Some possible interest from BBC Countryfile.
- ELFT Charity first annual report has been published; is available online and will be promulgated via social media.
- Story on the ELFT Charity webpage of a pantomime for children with neuro-diverse challenges; charity paid for a minibus to transport the children.
- ELFT has joined the Pennies from Heaven scheme, a commitment to donate the additional pennies from monthly salaries to the ELFT charity; 175 staff signed up to date.
- The Committee **NOTED**
 - the ICB also communicate with GPs around the measles outbreak, with info on vaccinations on websites.
 - Nature in Mind initiative; too soon to measure outcomes.
 - Requested access to a complete list of local voluntary organisations is made available to our Community Connectors.
 - Noted the Pennies from Heaven is salary-related but can be used to donate additional sums to our charity from people in organisations outside of ELFT if they are signed up to the scheme.

3.2 Membership Engagement Plan (MEP) Update

Membership Officer Tina Bixby provided an update to be covered under a separate Agenda item.

In discussion, the Committee

- Noted the success of adding messages to payslips; will consider options around adding a message about becoming a member.
- Highlighted the lack of visibility of disabled people in ELFT's membership information. Acknowledged it is important to promote positive role models and raise the profile of disabled people, particularly in senior positions.
- Suggested consideration to a wholly online publication with a clear focus on the purpose of the magazine; may attract a wider audience. Noted there will be exclusion risks for some parts of the community if it is solely online.
- Noted cost for printing and posting to members is c£5,600 every quarter with an added cost for staffing and production. As a staff magazine, the cost for production is held by the Comms team.
- Requested a greater focus on service user stories, promoting visibility of disabled people.
- Noted the suggestion for an ELFT calendar containing service information however that would not engender the two-way interaction the organisation is seeking.
- Noted the need for more work to highlight where to find the online version via the website.
- Agreed with the proposals for the direction of travel for the Trusttalk magazine.

3.3 Governor Communications

Tina Bixby updated, highlighting:

- The Friday Governor update will have a slightly different format, to include a roundup of articles of interest for that week; suggestions for articles to be emailed to the Membership office.
- Will be sharing a governor feedback form to be used when attending meetings/forums, useful to share this information with other governors.

3.4 Joint Site Visits

The joint visits between non-executive directors and governors have been running for nine months; new expressions of interest have been requested for the upcoming visits to the two new Luton GP practices, the Coborn unit Galaxy ward and the Topaz ward in Newham.

3.5 Governor Engagement

Norbert Lieckfeldt advised he is planning to hold a focus group on change ideas to enable governors to engage more easily with the programme of meetings and other events and will revert to the Committee with a proposal at a future meeting.

4.0 Recommendation

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