

Minutes of the Council of Governors meeting

Thursday 20th January 2011

Present: Michael Cassidy (Chair)
Geoffrey Rivett (public governor)
John Bootes (public governor)
Christopher Sills (public governor)
Patricia Bennett (public governor)
Sarah Weiss (public governor)
Clyde Baker (public governor)
Suri Friedman (public governor)
Doug Hiza (public governor)
Val Dimmock (staff governor)
Robert Duke (staff governor)
Dr Paul Cannon (staff governor)
Dr Swee Fang (staff governor)
Dr Helen Cugnoni (staff governor)
Jennifer Edie (partner governor)
Marion Goodrich (partner governor)

In attendance: Nancy Hallett, Chief Executive
Charlie Sheldon, Chief Nurse & Director of Governance
Dr John Coakley, Medical Director
David Bridger, Head of Governance (minutes)

Prior to the meeting the Governors were provided with samples of the food provided for patients through the steamplicity contract.

1. Chairman's welcome

Michael Cassidy Chair of the Council of Governors and Chairman of the hospital welcomed the Governors to the meeting.

2. **Apologies:** Deborah James (partner governor)
Dr Lesley Mountford (partner governor)
David Griffith (staff governor)

Sue Goodship (public governor)

Sarah Horsfield (public governor)

3. Declarations of Interests

None

4. Minutes of the Joint Board of Directors and Council of Governors meeting 21st October 2010

The minutes of the previous Council of Governors meeting were agreed. One omission was noted regarding a potential issue identified to one of the Council of Governors regarding the quality of hospital food to which it was suggested that Governors should be given an opportunity to sample some of the food provided to patients at the January meeting.

5. Appointment of the Trusts financial auditors

David Bridger presented a paper prepared by Jo Farrar Director of Finance outlining the process for the appointment of the trusts financial auditors. He explained that under the Trust constitution it is the responsibility of the Council of Governors to appoint the Trusts external financial auditors. The Trust will be tendering for audit services in 2011. He summarised the process proposed in the paper and notified the Council that a Governor will be invited to sit on the advisory panel evaluating the tenders. This Governor will then provide feedback to and seek approval from the Council of Governors for the appointment to be announced at the Annual Members Meeting. Any Governors wishing to be considered for this role should contact David Bridger and will be subject to formal approval by the Council of Governors.

6. Patient Experience and Quality Report

Charlie Sheldon presented a paper providing an update on patient experience at Homerton. He provided an overview of the number of complaints received by the Trust and the response times. Information in respect of patient experience particularly in reference to learning disabilities and dementia were also provided. Summary incident data was discussed including pressure sores for which the Trust has the 3rd lowest incidence in London. He noted that work is ongoing to reduce the number of falls and the Trust has a nurse specialist in post managing the programme of work to address this.

He provided verbal feedback on the recently published Maternity survey and stated that overall the Trust had scored “about the same” as other Trusts in all categories. An action plan is being developed to address areas where the Trust did not perform well which will be presented to the Council of Governors in the future.

Governors requested further detail with regard to Serious Untoward Incidents (SUIs) and enquired why numbers appeared to be increasing. Numbers were increasing due to improved reporting by staff and as a result of clearer definitions for such incidents. It was agreed that Governors would be provided with more detail regarding SUIs at future meetings. Governors suggested that the data presented in the report may be easier to interpret if the graphs were presented as bar graphs. The Trust agreed to look into the presentation of the information for future reports.

Further detail with regard to the presentation of mortality data was provided by Dr John Coakley, data for Homerton indicates that it is within the normal range. A brief discussion was had with regard to statistical validity of the mortality data presented.

Governors asked a number of questions regarding patient experience including:

- What the Trust is doing with regard to encouraging attendance for antenatal care? Initial contact is usually through the patients GP and the Trust is working with GPs to improve the levels of first contact. It is acknowledged that numbers are not particularly good as a result of a number of factors.
- What is the Trust doing to address patient discharge issues? It has been noted that the management of discharges has improved and feedback from surveys is encouraging.
- What is the current situation with regard to Maternity admission delays? Much work has been done to reduce delays and the situation is much improved with waiting times reduced to a maximum of 15 minutes.
- With large numbers of homeless people in Hackney what does the Trust do to find them accommodation? There are a structures and processes in place to address this and further detail can be provided to Governors at a future date if required.
- With regard to complaints clarity was requested regarding what constitutes a complaint and why response times were apparently low? Governors were provided with a definition of a complaint and it was explained that there was not a national target for response times. It was acknowledged that percentage response times need to be higher. In some cases holding letters are sent out to complainants whilst the complaint is being investigated.
- With regard to pressure sores the graph indicates these are higher this year? It was explained that the definition had recently changed along with improved reporting by staff. Governors were reassured that the Trust benchmarks well against other London Trusts.
- How is the Trust coping with flu? The Trust has been busy and the situation across London has been variable. The Trust has not cancelled any operations as a result. Detailed winter plans are in place across London coordinated by NHS London. Staff uptake for vaccination has been very high.

The Governors noted the content of the report.

7. Quality Account Update

Charlie Sheldon presented the Governors with an update with regard to the Trusts Quality account. He provided an overview of the Trusts three priorities and summary progress with regard to achievement of these. He also provided a summary of progress with the Trusts Commissioning for Quality Improvement (CQUIN) targets.

Governors raised questions regarding the first priority enquiring why the Trust wanted to see more incidents reported. It is acknowledged that increased incident reporting is an indicator of a good safety culture within an organisation and as such incident reporting is being encouraged. The Trust would hope to see a reduction in the severity of incidents reported.

Is the Trust managing to achieve the CQUINs? The total value for the CQUIN is in the region £1.5-2m. It was noted that the Trust has issues implementing the VTE target.

Does the Trust have problems with bed blocking? The situation has improved over the last 2-3 years and nationally the Trust performs well with less than 2 patients a week delayed.

8. Financial Planning 2011/12

Nancy Hallett provided the Governors with a verbal report on financial planning for the Trust in 2011-12. She informed the Governors that the income for the Trust for the coming year has reduced by approximately £15m which is a cause for concern for the Trust. The Trust therefore needs to make significant saving whilst maintaining patient safety and attempting to preserve jobs. The Trust is looking to target non-pay costs and back office functions in the first instance. A programme of work is in place to achieve the savings required and targets have been given to managers to reduce costs.

Governors raised a number of queries including:

- What is the yearend target for 2011-12? The Trust is required to remain in balance at year end and in addition to the work planned is looking at efficiency gains and purchasing power.
- Can the Trust reduce costs of ticketed items? To some extent this is possible but three quarters of the Trusts costs are salaries.
- Can the Trust improve running costs? The Trust is looking to see if it can automate as many functions as possible.
- Has the Trust looked for suggestions from staff and the public? The Trust has been getting suggestions from staff on how to make savings. With regard to the public the Trust will be looking to the Governors as public representatives for suggestions and these would be welcomed.
- What about the issues regarding the local population being under represented on the national census? This is widely acknowledged with suggestions that that there is a 50k difference in population compared to the census.

Governors requested in year reporting with regard to the Trusts financial position. This was agreed.

9. Community Health Services (CHS) update and strategic changes in NE London

Nancy Hallett provided the Governors with an update on the work to ensure the safe transfer of community health services to the Homerton. This is scheduled to take place on 1st April 2011. Due diligence work has been completed and all paperwork submitted to Monitor for review. The Board to Board meeting with Monitor will take place in early February.

She noted the publication of the draft Health and Social Care Bill and further detail will be provided to Governors regarding the implications of this at future meetings. Governors requested a summary of the new bill to be provided particularly with reference to the implications regarding their changing role.

She informed the Governors that prior to implementation of the proposed GP commissioning consortia it has been confirmed that East London and the City Alliance (ELCA) formed from the three inner NE London has been established as the interim commissioning body.

With regard to the ongoing hospital services review the Trust had presented its case for a Homerton led phased integration with Newham and Whipps Cross to NHS London. The Boards of Barts and the London NHS Trust, Newham and Whipps Cross Hospitals are currently considering three options for integration. A final decision is expected from NHS London in early February 2011.

The Governors thanked her for the update and requested that further information be provided as and when this was available.

9. Governor Committee Membership

David Bridger presented a table outlining group and committee opportunities for Governor involvement. He requested that any Governors interested in volunteering for these opportunities should let him know.

10. Schedule of meetings

Governors were provided with a timetable of dates for the future Council of Governors meetings. There was one amendment that was the change of date for the next joint meeting which will take place in May and not February.

9. Any other business

Geoffrey Rivett provided feedback on the recent induction session held for newly appointed Governors. This had been well received and the induction process will be further reviewed to incorporate comments received. It is acknowledged that there is requirement to meet Governor development needs through more formal study sessions. Marion Goodrich suggested that any review of Governor induction needs to ensure that CHS are also incorporated.

Christopher Sills noted that the Governor declarations do not request information on spouses. This issue may need to be reviewed in light of the new Health and Social Care Bill which also identifies this as a new requirement.

Governors provided comments regarding the food that was sampled prior to the meeting. Generally positive comments were received however some Governors found the food to be quite bland and lacking seasoning. This was noted.

10. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting will be a meeting of the Council of Governors on Thursday 17th February 2011.