

Minutes of the Council of Governors
Thursday 29th June 2011

Present: Geoffrey Rivett (public governor) Chair
Doug Hiza (public governor)
Sarah Weiss (public governor)
Suri Freedman (public governor)
Florence Osaigbovo (public governor)
Sarah Horsfield (public governor)
Patricia Bennett (public governor)
Christopher Sills (public governor)
John Bootes (public governor)
Clyde Baker (public governor)
Jaime Bishop (public governor)
Robert Duke (staff governor)

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

Three members in attendance.

1. Chairman's welcome

Geoffrey Rivett, Vice- Chair of the Council of Governors welcomed the Governors to the meeting. One matter arising was discussed relating to the publication of the members newsletter. Governors were assured that this had been drafted and is awaiting final sign off before being submitted for publication and distribution.

2. Apologies: Michael Cassidy (Chair)
Professor Stanton Newman (partner governor)
Dr Helen Cugnoni (Staff Governor)
Val Dimmock (staff governor)
Nancy Hallett (Chief Executive)

3. Minutes of the Council of Governors meeting 19th May 2011

The minutes of the previous Council of Governors meeting were agreed.

4. Annual Report and Accounts 2010/11 and 2010/11 Quality Account

Charlie Sheldon notified the Governors that final draft of the Annual Report, accounts and Quality Account had been submitted to Monitor. Final publication is due on 29th June and the document is currently with the designers. Governors will be provided with a copy at the next meeting.

5. Patient Experience and Quality Report

Charlie Sheldon presented the Patient Experience and Quality Report for March. He provided a summary of the key aspects for the report. It was explained that for the year 2010/11 a total of 57% of all complaints had been responded to within 25 days this was much lower than the 80% plus target the Trust should be achieving. The contract for provision of the Trust's patient experience tracker has come to an end and the contract for this is now out for tender. It is hoped that the new service will include alternative solutions for patients to provide feedback.

Charlie Sheldon went on to provide the Governors with a summary of the findings of the Care Quality Commission (CQC) review of compliance with dignity and nutrition for older people. He explained a key area raised by patients was the length of time some had to wait for their meals at lunchtime. This issue is currently being looked into by the Director of Environment. He notified the Governors that the Trust had submitted an action plan to CQC in response to the recommendations in the report. The Trust will be subject to a full review some time in the future.

Governors raised a number of questions on both the patient experience report and the CQC report, including:

What are the themes of the complaints? Approximately 40% are related to the patients treatment or care, some are staff attitude and there are also a number relating to discharge problems.

Questions regarding incident data in the report including pressure ulcers, serious incidents and medication errors. Governors were provided with further details regarding trends and what the Trust is doing in response.

The use of volunteers for supporting patients unable to feed themselves. This is being introduced with volunteers being trained.

What is the Trust doing about promoting independence for patients at mealtimes. This recommendation related to the provision of adaptive cutlery for patients which the Trust has addressed.

Are patients given choice of Kosher meals. Patients' are given a choice however there is an issue related to patients not being made aware that there is a choice.

The Governors congratulated the Trust on what was viewed as a positive report from the CQC.

6. Chief Executive's Report

Dr John Coakley presented the Chief Executive's report. It was noted the report should have included an attachment. He provided detail on:

Finance and Performance: the Trust budget is on target and there have been no MRSA bacteraemias reported for 163 days.

Readmission Policy: Dr Coakley provided the Governors with an explanation of the readmissions policy and how this relates to the Trust contract with NHS East London and the City. The Trust is receive a penalty of £1 million however the commissioners will re-invest over half of the amount into services that support discharge planning. The Governors discussed the readmission policy at length

including how penalties are determined and what the Trust can do to manage readmissions appropriately.

Ward Changes: Work continues to reduce overall patient length of stay whilst maintaining patient safety and quality which is leading to a reduction in the number of overnight beds that are routinely kept open. This has allowed closure of some wards for repair and refurbishment.

Buildings and Environment: work upgrading the corridors has begun and work will soon begin on the main and back entrance to the Trust.

CHS: There have been no issues associated with the merger of CHS into Homerton. The Trust is reviewing its internal management arrangements post transfer to assist with service integration and Service Line management. Dr Coakley provided the Governors with a summary of service line management and how this will be used at Homerton.

7. Governor Elections

David Bridger notified the Governors that the Trust will be holding elections to recruit new Governors to fill vacant positions on the Council. Elections will be held over the summer for the following constituencies, Hackney, Outer boroughs and staff (clinical and non-clinical)

8. Governor Handbook

Charlie Sheldon and Geoffrey Rivett presented the draft Governor handbook. This had been written to provide new and prospective Governors with sufficient information to assist them with their role. Following incorporation of any comments this will be returned to a future Governor meeting for approval. Comments provided by Governors included inclusion of information on how Governors can get more involved with the Trust and details of existing Governors.

9. Governor Issues

Geoffrey Rivett raised three items:

1. The process of recruiting new NED's to replace two NED's has begun and the Nomination Committee of the Council of Governors will be required to scrutinise these appointments.
2. The Trust has begun the process to review the constitution and this is currently being reviewed by the Trust solicitors against Monitors model constitution.
3. He provided the Governors with a summary of the new NHS reforms obtained from DH. A copy will be circulated to Governors.

Governors discussed the proposed closure of one of the Homerton wards.

The issue of space within the Maternity waiting area was raised. Charlie Sheldon agreed to look into this issue.

Clyde Baker notified the council that the meeting to agree the appointment of the Trusts external auditor will be taking place on 2nd June.

9. Any other business

None

10. Questions from the public

Two questions were received.

1. Governors are elected to represent the community, previously Governors went out and met with community groups, this does not appear to be happening.

Governors agreed that they should be better engaged with their membership and discussed how this could be achieved including identifying community groups that they could meet with.

2. Are Governors involved in changes within the hospital such as the closure of wards?

The role of Governors was explained and this was not to manage the Trust but to be informed and consulted by Directors of the Trust.

11. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting will be a meeting of the Council of Governors on Thursday 28th July 2011. A suggestion that the meeting be in the form of a seminar was considered, but governors preferred to delay a seminar until a later date.