

Council of Governors' meeting, Tuesday 25th March 2014

**Agenda item 17/14: Recommendations from the Membership,
Engagement and Recruitment Group**

For Council consideration and approval of recommendations

Council members are asked to find herewith a report on Governor engagement with five recommendations for Council to consider.

The Group proposes that the recommendations be approved.

Anna Milanec
For and on behalf of
Judith Craven
Chair, MERG

17 March 2014

Report on governor engagement for Council of Governors meeting 25 March 2014

Situation

The numbers of governors attending events/ taking opportunities to enable them to engage with members and the local population is low, with it largely falling to the same small number of participants each time. It therefore becomes problematic in ensuring that Governors fulfil one of their statutory roles.

Background

It is the council of governors' responsibility to represent the interests of the trust members and of the public, and it is defined as part of their statutory duties.

A key link between the population we serve and the trust itself, governors are afforded a number of opportunities and benefits from engaging with our members and the wider community throughout the year, based on an annually produced membership and engagement strategy.

Assessment

We have 41 members of the council of governors and the following lists attendance at the key engagement meetings/opportunities in the past year fully supported by the communications and engagement team.

Date	Event	Venue	Members of the public attending	Governors attending
2013				
15-Jan-13	Member Meeting	The Kursaal Function Suite, First Floor, Eastern Esplanade, Southend-on-Sea SS1 2WW	108	7
19-Feb-14	Healthy Living and Wellbeing Event	Connexions (Shoebury)	200+	0
13-Mar-14	Southend Connexions Careers Fair 2013	Connexions Shoeburyness Centre, Delaware Road, Shoeburyness SS3 9NS	200+	0
21-Mar-13	Southend Cohesion Week - Healthy Living Fair	Plaza Centre, Southchurch Road, Southend-on-Sea SS1 2PT	100+	6
15-May-13	Member Meeting	The Lakeside Suite, Oyster Fleet Hotel, Knightswick Road, Canvey Island SS8 9PA	56	8
23-Jun-14	Hospital open day	Southend Hospital	200+	3
27-Jun-14	Meet the Professionals - for Belfairs	Southend Hospital	60	1

	Academy Y10 students			
25-Jul	Member Meeting	The Deanes School, Daws Heath Road, Thundersley, Benfleet SS7 2TD	49	7
07-Aug	Southend Tenants Community Event	Manor Football Pitch, Southchurch Park	500+	0
01-Sep	Southend Community-in-Harmony Partnership 'Big Event'	Priory Park, Victoria Avenue, Southend-on-Sea SS2 6NB	500+	4
10-Sep	Member Meeting	Shoebury Youth Centre, Delaware Road, Shoeburyness, Southend-on-Sea SS3 9NS	91	7
08-Oct	Fresher's Fair	South Essex College, Southend	200+	1
20-Nov	Member Meeting	Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Victoria Avenue, Southend-on-Sea SS1 9SB	112	5
2014				
16-Jan	Member Meeting	Mill Arts & Events Centre, Bellingham Lane, Rayleigh SS6 7ED	103	6

As we are currently planning the engagement work streams for 2014/2015 we need to understand better the barriers which prevent governors from attending such opportunities.

Whilst the trust has an obligation to facilitate engagement between governors and the public / members, we must also ensure events we undertake and attend offer the best value in helping governors to fulfil their responsibilities and provide meaningful feedback from the foundation trust membership and the general public.

There may be concerns by some governors that they are not sure how much they are able to interact with the public in case they 'give something away' which is confidential.

To assist with this, a governors' development session on 22nd May 2014 on 'governor accountability – member and public engagement' is being held for all governors.

There is, however, a wider issue. Namely just how effective are these "set piece events" in receiving and giving feedback on the views of members/the public so as to influence the Trust service provision?

In the main, these meetings seem to merely fulfil the purpose of giving medical information to interested parties, but do little in terms of Governor/member/public interaction. Whilst that may be laudable of itself, it does not discharge the Governor duty.

Recommendations

We understand that the secretary has already been approached with a request that the Chairman place an item on to the March Council meeting agenda with regard to the specific matter of governors' engagement with the public and how they can be supported to achieve more meaningful engagement.

On this basis the following recommendations were agreed at the MERG meeting on February 6 2014;

- Redefine membership meetings into three times a year "Health Talks" widening their appeal to beyond our members. This will aim for a qualitative rather than quantitative approach, concentrating governor attendance on three key dates. These could take the form of a health fair, facilitated discussions tables and clinical presentations. Governors could then take a more active role in planning content and discussion topics to better reflect the issues they seek to gain feedback on from the community.
- A planned programme of governor attendance at local groups and committees listed under the umbrella of voluntary service organisations in the area (e.g. SAVS in Southend and CAVS in Castlepoint). At meetings with more than, say, ten attendees (and subject to invitation) governors would speak to these groups about the hospital and hear from them about their views on hospital services. This information could then be fed in to the Annual Plan/ Quality Account process.
- Introducing regular "governor surgeries" would enable governors to hold better quality conversations with their electorate and gain a deeper understanding of their opinions, both positive and negative, which governors need to reflect back to the organisation. These, shorter, sharper sessions could be held in-house and provide a drop-in element allowing the public and members flexibility. A planned programme could be drawn up to allow the widest possible involvement of the council of governors.
- Targeting member recruitment campaigns to the harder to reach groups we seek to ensure our membership is reflective of our population. Setting up a stand in gyms or colleges to attract younger members or attending events for specific groups rather than the current "catch-all" approach. This could work in tandem with a targeted approach via the trust's Twitter feed to reach a different audience than traditional media
- Forge closer links to staff engagement opportunities – we often forget that staff not only work here but also live in the community we serve. They have the power of word of mouth to help us spread information among their family and friends outside of the organisation.

Claire Hankey
Head of communication and engagement
For COG meeting 25 March 2014