

Agenda Item 21/16

Membership Engagement & Recruitment Group (MERG) Report for CoG Meeting 22/6/2016

Vice Chair - Pam Challis was elected.

Terms of Reference – MERG now includes **Education & Training** and the **Newsletters**. A report to the Trust Board referred to our role in “reviewing the Education & Training of the trust’s workforce”. We have clarified that our role for staff training is confined to receiving and commenting on reports. For Governor training, guided by Geoff Stokes, we are rethinking our approach after an inspiring discussion. A report will be submitted to the next meeting.

Newsletter production now has a lively team of volunteers. Our major issue is the cost of distribution of hard copy. With 16,000+ members and only 3,500 emails captured, electronic circulation, which also involves costs, currently has a limited reach. We have a suggested approach which involves limited hard copy production for use in public outlets, email and website.

The report to the Trust Board also included a responsibility for MERG to “**network with other foundation trusts and monitor and receive reports from NHS Providers before consideration by the Council of governors**”. These responsibilities are not in our Terms of Reference. This matter is under review.

Engagement & Recruitment – The group did some soul searching about the objectives of membership. With some 16,000 members, including all trust employees, out of a possible 300,000, we are slightly above the average for trusts (circa 13,000). The engagement opportunities developed by the membership manager were praised but also questioned re effectiveness and lack of governor participation (other than a willing core). Again, Geoff Stokes led interesting discussion, concluding in the need for a sub group. Rachel Clark agreed to lead this and together with Joe, Frank and staff Geoff (Trust Sec.), Claire (Communications) and David (Membership Mgr.), the sub group has had two fruitful meetings. The full MERG will discuss the report and bring recommendations to a future CoG meeting.

Big Lottery Bid – An initiative to obtain £10,000 Lottery money to promote Health & Well Being via a series of public meetings, working with the local authorities, is progressing. Local Authorities seem willing to provide venues and appreciate the potential we have for supplying otherwise expensive expert speakers. Governors have accompanied David Fairweather to meetings in each of the Authorities. An update will be given at the COG meeting.

Youth Governors – Three volunteers have met with governors and staff but further involvement has perhaps understandably been limited. This initiative is ongoing and will hopefully be extended beyond Southend.

Thanks to those governors who have supported and in some cases, initiated our public engagement events. Group members requested that I **strongly** encourage more governors to attend these events, particularly in their own areas. Thanks also to the staff who have provided essential support for the groups many activities.

Joe Cooke
Chair - MERG