

FTGA National Development Day, Understanding Crises

14 March 2013, in London

Workshop Attended: Your relationship with the board in times of trouble. Chaired by Tony Halsall, NHS Confederation

Tony Halsell is currently working at the NHS Confederation where he has been responsible for establishing a new national Hospitals Forum. He has worked in the NHS for 33 years and is a nurse by profession. He held director of nursing and operations roles in a number of trusts prior to becoming a chief executive.

Tony has nine years experience as an NHS Chief Executive and has led two successful foundation trusts. The two organisations were very different in structure and character but both had the common feature of needing to learn to live in a new environment and to find ways to harness the potential strengths of the foundation trusts governance arrangements. This is particularly essential during periods of difficulty.

The workshop had a detailed discussion about the Governors in some FTs and how difficult they found the relationship with their Board of Directors, in fact some members went as far as to say that the Board and the Governors did not trust each other and communication was very poor.

Robert Francis QC (who was in the workshop audience) advised all trusts to have a number of meetings with their Board and agree on a way to work together and the sharing of information. He stressed that these meetings should take place on a regular basis to share ideas and all information, and to look at governance to see how this can be done better.

One interesting recommendation from Robert Francis QC, was that Governors are trained to make ward round during the night as well as daytime, and that their reports should go to the Board of Directors as well as Governors.

It was stressed by this workshop that governors must work together as a strong united team and that by doing so your FT will benefit.

Linda Cook