

Visit to FTN offices in London (Birdcage Walk), for a

FTN / FTGA Recruitment Workshop, 1st February 2013

Generally considered reasons for taking the course:-

- Risk Management by
 - i) Avoiding Selecting wrong people for the role
 - ii) Avoiding any form of the many discriminations and their financial consequences
 - iii) Avoiding challenge by having defensible process
 - iv) Avoiding damage to Trust's reputation.
- Familiarisation with the overall Recruitment Process for NEDs and other positions
- To make participants aware of good practice in recruitment
- To provide an opportunity to practise recruitment skills.

The course took a look at the Foundation Trust Code of Governance and how this acts with the Trust's own Constitution, and how a Search and Appointment Team might work to achieve a good outcome for making a recommendation to the Council of Governors.

The importance of a strong and disciplined Recruitment Process and how this can be utilized to achieve the above, taking into consideration the length of time for a complete process to work effectively.

We must additionally be mindful of a well planned campaign with all the documentation properly prepared. The whole being carefully project managed.

Most importantly making sure the Trust/CoG is really sure it knows what it is looking for in the candidates in terms of Essential Expertise, Desirable Expertise and Essential Competencies.

Note:- Must ensure Governors are applied for with a careful mention of the fact most of the work is done in the evenings. Many Governors are elected and then find they have a problem attending committees.

Considerable importance must be placed on the necessity of providing adequate time for interviewing panels to conduct the interview(s), and make notes between each candidate interview. How the interview can be structured so that notes of responses to each predetermined question can be made so interviewers are not making notes whilst the candidate is answering their particular item.

It was gratifying to realize, with my own limited knowledge and experience of our Recruitment Process, that it is in fact quite good. However, it is felt there may be areas where the SUHFT might care to make relatively small adjustments to their current process to make it excellent. e.g. Looking at the time available for interviewing and note taking, with time available to consult between each candidate, and additional time after the whole group have been questioned.

We also need to become more organized in our approach to the questioning by the groups of Governors and the questions asked. Preparation is sometimes not too carefully considered. We should all be very mindful each and every candidate is able to ask to see all the work papers of all those who have anything to do with their appointment or rejection.

The course is considered to be very worthwhile, both for those who have experience of making appointments, and equally those who have little or no experience. For the one it provides a very good revision, and for the other a concise, practical guide of how to conduct a good selection process with the minimum of pitfalls.

Frank Haysom

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These are my notes on the above meeting which I found extremely interesting.

It was thought that the prospective application form needs looking at before going out to prospective NEDs, and that the Person/Job spec needs to be exceedingly specific. This could save a lot of time throughout the application/selection process. The procedure of this process needs to be in written format and timings need to be included.

The ladies giving the course felt that the advertisement for the positions needs to be looked at in minute detail in order to draw the right applicants, and to cut down on a waste of time during the whole of the process. It was thought that we need to know dates of NED's elections in order to have time to look at the above to get it right first time so none of this precious item is wasted.

It was also suggested that some of the problems arising at Mid Staffs were deemed to be attributed to the Trust's NEDs taking their eye off the ball and looking in the wrong direction – all the more reason for recruiting the best candidates in the first place.

Another thought was that maybe it would be a good idea to have a completely independent person on the selection panel, i.e. the Chair of another Trust.

It was put to us that offer of employment letters should be very carefully worded in regard to Employment Status, Public Appointments, no traditional Employment contract, are not bound by employment legislation, and covered by discrimination legislation, FOI and Data Protection.

Also the Nolan Principles must be made clear in order for applicants to be given the opportunity to own up to something in their private lives that may affect their application at a later date as this could also be a waste of time.

We need to be apprised of the NED applicants' skills. Criteria for selection should not be more than 6 in number as more could cause risks, and that evidence of relevance needs to be gained by the questions asked at interview.

Geraldine Alward