

Briefing Paper from Day 2 Virtual Governors Focus Conference

Feedback from Virtual Governors Focus Conference (NHS providers 4th of November)

The virtual Governors Focus Conference run by NHS providers on the 4th of November covered the following topics.

- An introduction to the role of the Governor Advisory Council and the role of NHS providers
- The development of digital services in trusts and the potential role of governors in supporting and encouraging their board to invest to save.
In summary:-
- Governors need to support their board in ensuring that the basic IT infrastructure was resilient and up to date.
- That all executives should be responsible for IT in their own domains with the support of Non-Executive Directors , rather than an IT Director.
- Patient benefits included access to their own notes , more transparency, and less complaints.
- A showcase by Governors from Sussex Community FT on their developing membership and engagement programme with regards to increasing their diversity to reflect the demographics of their population.
- At the end of the sessions there were facilitated discussion groups where Governors commented or added their trust experiences on these topics.

As one of our key responsibilities as Governors is to represent our members and patients, a summary of Sussex COG FT work and other governor inputs at the discussion groups is set out below for information and potentially discussion.

Suffolk Community FT :Membership Engagement/Diversity

- Sussex Community FT COG decided that their aim was to ensure the Council was more representative of the communities it serves.
- COG agreed that four new appointed governors would be introduced to represent: children, young people and their families and the work of the Trust's 500+ volunteers. Plus, two extra seats were added in its public constituencies. These were added to an ongoing round of Governor elections
- A very extensive and intensive Nominations and Elections Campaign ran for 2 months. It was a joint Communications and Council of Governors campaign. This included a social media campaign: press releases. Information shared by governors through their local networks, personal blogs, social media, community networks/meetings; CCGs and Healthwatch; posters in public/staff spaces: Face to face staff meetings: Internal communication channels: intranet, weekly message from Chief Executive/Chair, team briefings.

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Outcomes

- 25 members stood for 14 elected seats. Six constituencies elections held with all seats filled. 11 public applications (50%) were received from new people/members. Seven members attended an interview for the four new appointed governor roles.
- All seats were filled and increased diversity.
 - The Council is working more effectively, receiving a wider and more diverse contribution; The COG was involved in the design of the new Council and are now actively supporting the delivery of the Trust's three-year Membership Engagement Strategy.

Follow up questions and sessions

- Having explored and spoken to young people through colleges etc and taken guidance from youth organisations, it was decided not to directly recruit young people. The chosen route was to recruit youth workers working within a variety of children / youth organisations.
- Whilst there was interest from different ethnic groups about standing for the COG, this was not followed up by actual nominations, apart from staff members and volunteers.
- There was considerable forum debate about whether there should be an appointed Governor/s from ethnic groups to help encourage future nominations and increase diversity.
- Governors, could with communications support, help with reaching out to increase membership and representation by speaking publicly about their role to various audiences eg sixth form colleges, health peer support groups, health charities
- Working with community leaders was seen as critical to obtain engagement with the diverse communities
- Digital membership might help increase involvement of younger people.

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