

**PAPER**  
MC 07/2010

## **Report to the Meeting of the Members' Council**

**For Information**

**16 February 2010**

### **Governor Away-day Update Report**

#### **Executive Summary**

Governors attended a Governor Away-day in December 2009 to broaden their knowledge and understanding of the statutory and non-statutory roles of a Governor, explore how to further develop this role and to look at ways in contributing toward some of the Trust's business objectives.

Please refer to appendix A 'Notes from the Away Day for Governors' and appendix B 'Governor Away-day Action Plan' for more information.

#### **Recommendation**

The Members' Council is asked to note the report. If the Members' Council would like to suggest any additional objectives, or would like to comment on existing objectives, as set out in this report, then they should email [nathan.james@obmh.nhs.uk](mailto:nathan.james@obmh.nhs.uk).

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**Date:** 8 February 2010

## **Appendix A**

### **Notes from the Away Day for Governors, 3rd December 2009,**

Ten Governors were able to attend the first afternoon session which was facilitated by Prof. Susan Llewelyn, Course Director of Oxford Doctoral Course in Clinical Psychology.

The group considered a range of issues. First they considered the question: What brought you to be a Governor? Answers included:

- Wanted to make a difference.
- Wanted to give Trust staff a voice at a high level and improve communication from top to bottom, and vice versa.
- Wanted to improve communication to carers.
- Wanted to make use of personal experience to highlight issues with services, and to share ideas on how to improve them.
- Wanted to help to support staff support and care for patients.
- Wanted to encourage a more holistic approach to best practice.
- Contributing a lay person's view of mental health.
- Wanting to encourage the Board of Directors to improve services.

Everyone present talked about their wish to contribute, but agreed that they were not always sure how best to achieve this. As part of this, they discussed some of their experiences so far as a Governor:

- Confusion about what the role is for.
- Difficult to achieve what you personally want.
- Not sure how best to communicate and deliver.
- Not confident in own effectiveness
- Not sure how much can Governors really achieve and influence at a high level.

Nonetheless, Governors were able to locate some of their strengths and achievements so far, including:

- Fulfilling statutory responsibilities (appointments, the accounts and the annual plan)
- Participation in the Staff Conference.
- Governors continue to meet at the Members' Council.
- Members' Council have appointed Auditors.
- Governors have got to know the Board of Directors.
- Some liaison between Governors and Board of Directors.

Further, Governors were also able to describe their vision of how they would ideally like their role to develop:

- Two way communication with Board of Directors and Constituents.
- Work as part of a team.
- More input to Trust meetings.
- More clarity about the Governors role (above and beyond the statutory responsibilities).
- Discussion having an input to Annual Plans.
- Ability to speak clearly about issues.

From this, Governors were able to develop some ideas about what they would like to achieve over the next year or so, both in terms of how they would like to work, and in terms of what issues they would like the Trust to think about, or do:

### **Ways of working**

- Agenda – Governors would like to make more input toward the Members' Council meeting agenda, because at present Governors feel meetings are so full that there isn't enough time to discuss certain issues. Perhaps some items could be distributed in advance to save time. There was no support for extending the length / timing of meetings.
- Governors would like more of an opportunity to discuss how the Trust conducts its business.
- They would like to encourage more regular consultation between Board of Directors and frontline Staff.
- Governors would like to have some more information to clarify the roles of Non-executive Directors
- Governors would prefer some more flexible group seating arrangements at the Members' Council meetings, possibly cabaret style, to encourage participation.
- Governors would like to suggest some more small working groups to discuss specific issues.
- Induction: Governors would like to request for guidance and opportunity for learning, such as shadowing.
- Some more thought/discussion about how Governors can funnel information to the Trust and vice versa

### **Suggestions for specific issues for this year**

- More visibility for clinical leadership.
- Discussion of guiding principles behind decisions (cost savings, etc).
- Consideration of implementing some of the ideas for involving service users and carers in service design.
- Encouraging carer involvement in assessment of care.
- Encouraging holistic assessment of care, and treatment of carers as team members
- Consultation to stakeholders to raise awareness and opportunity to voice opinion.

## Appendix B

### Governor Away-day Action Plan

Action	Who	Deadline
Governors to suggest which working groups they would like to establish as part of the Members' Council. One working group to review and plan some of the objectives below.	Members' Council	31 March 2010
Create a working procedure to enable Governors to have more input into the Members' Council Agenda.	Members' Council, JCH, NJ	31 March 2010
Enable Governors more opportunity to discuss how the Trust conducts its business.	Members' Council	31 March 2011
Create a working procedure to enable Governors to engage in consultations between the Board of Directors and front-line Staff.	Members' Council	31 March 2011
Distribute more information about the role of the Non-Executive Directors.	JCH, NJ	31 March 2010
Include an option to shadow personnel within the Trust as part of the Governor Inductions to enhance Governor knowledge and learning.	JCH, NJ	30 April 2010
Create a working procedure to enable Governors to feedback Trust matters/interest and vice versa.	JCH, NJ	31 March 2010
Include the following on all Governor forum meeting agendas - Discussion of guiding principles behind decisions (cost savings, etc).	NJ, Execs	31 March 2010
Speak with Emma Heath/David Bradley with reference to creating involvement opportunities for Service User's and Carers in service design.	NJ	31 March 2010
Speak with Emma Heath/Mike Hobbs with reference to encouraging carer involvement in assessment of care.	NJ	31 March 2010
Identify how communication can be improved between Board of Directors, Governors and Constituents.	NJ	31 March 2011