

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

AGENDA ITEM 10
8 September 2009

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

ACTIVITY ON BEHALF OF THE FOUNDATION TRUST GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION

Report by Mr Brian Gerbaldi

My activity for the Foundation Trust Governors Association since July 29th and my last report has continued to be busy despite the usual quiet period due to summer holidays and the small matter of the elections for the Executive. Taking the last matter first, due to the situation we inherited from the basic constitution drawn up by Trust Secretaries, all members of the Executive, including the Chairman and Vice Chairman, were up for contested election. This situation should never reoccur as I made changes to the Constitution, which were agreed by all delegates in Plenary. The Constitution now provides that members serve 2 years on first election and a further 3 years on re-election. The maximum anyone can serve is 5 years. I am pleased to advise that the Chairman, Sharon Carr-Brown from Royal Bournemouth & Dorset FT was re-elected and that I was also re-elected as Vice-Chairman. Whilst we have kept 4 other members of the old Executive, we unfortunately lost some excellent members, not least Dame Gill Oliver from Clatterbridge University NHS FT, who failed to gain enough votes to be in the 11 elected Governors places, and Brian Hanson from University Hospital Birmingham NHS FT, who failed to gain re-election to his own Trust. Both have worked very hard for the FTGA, travelling great distances to address new Trusts and Governors and have given invaluable input. We will particularly miss Gill as she is still a Governor for her Trust and is highly respected.

TRUST SECRETARIES: We discovered that there are two associations that represent Foundation Trust Secretaries and I have made initial contact with the administrators for both. One is part of the Foundation Trust Network and the other is the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators (ICSA) NHS FT Forum. It is important that we have a dialogue with both of these organisations. We are fortunate in CUH but many other Trusts are not so fortunate. Delegates advise that they do not receive FTGA publications or letters. Their Governors do not receive the Essential Briefs or updates and they feel some Trust Secretaries deliberately withhold this information. They refuse to give us the details of their delegates so that we may contact them direct. This needs to be addressed. The best way forward on this is discussion and understanding of each other's roles. Governors are not a threat to Trust Secretaries but I am afraid it appears some do not see it that way yet and put up petty obstacles to dissemination of information.

UNISON: Contact has been made with Karen Jennings, Head of Health Policy at Unison and Chair of the NHS Staff Council. Unison was originally against FTs, as they feared a back door privatisation strategy and break up of the NHS. They now see this is not the case and are supportive and push Staff Governors forward. We have made it very clear that we are non-political and Sharon went to great pains to stress that we will not become an extension of Union influence, anymore than we would management. However it is important that we share policy ideas,

purely at an advice level. This is not a formally agreed partnership but merely at dialogue level. We have invited Unison to perhaps take a workshop at one of our development days devoted to Staff Governor issues. Other Governors would also benefit from a better understanding of Staff Governors pressures and difficulties.

RCN: A letter has been sent to the Royal College of Nursing to also open dialogue towards closer understanding and we are awaiting a response.

MARKETING: We have appointed a marketing consultancy (This Way Up) to improve our presentations and corporate image. We felt we are now at the stage that this was a need that had to be addressed but are always mindful of the limited budget. National delegates sanctioned this move.

TRAINING: Sharon and I have had meetings with several organisations who supply training for Governors and we have made it clear that we do not support any commercial organisation or will allow our Association to be seen as endorsing same. For that reason, we have asked a government-backed organisation to present a workshop at a development day, purely as a training exercise for our delegates. Initially this will be at no cost to us other than expenses. If successful, it can then be developed into regional training days.

ATTENDANCES: I have been delegated to attend several presentations later this year on behalf of the FTGA, notably with the Audit Commission and Monitor. I will be reporting back to the Executive and will pass on any areas of interest to my colleagues at Cambridge.

ESSENTIAL BRIEFS: Essential Brief Number 9, "Governor Constituencies" will be circulated to all member Trusts shortly but can be downloaded now from the website. If anyone has not yet picked up the Binder and/or EB Number 8, the "NHS Jargon Buster", please do so now. You are missing out on a very useful tool. I was the instigator of this and it is the first one that we have to put into reprint immediately it was distributed. We understand that many have been "purloined" by Chairs, Chief Executives, NEDs, Board Members, Secretaries and Senior Clinical Staff (I wonder why their own organisations did not think to do it). Make sure you get and hang on to your copy.

LINKs: The DoH and Foundation Trust Network have published a protocol for LINKs and NHS FTs. The document sets out the different roles and responsibilities of LINKs and FTs for involving the public. It will be available on the FTGA website by the beginning of September. You can register for the LINKs exchange here <http://www.lx.nhs.uk/profile/register/index.php> and receive regular updates.

MEMBERSHIP: We have 7 new members from September 1st 2009 bringing us up to 76 member Trusts (62% of all FTs). 5 Boroughs Partnership have also applied to join but we have yet to verify their eligibility to become a member Trust. They must have a Board of Governors or a Shadow Board in place to become members and must be regulated by Monitor.

New Members:

- Northamptonshire Healthcare
- Northumberland, Tyne & Wear
- Sussex Partnership
- Mid Cheshire
- Kettering
- Birmingham Children's
- **Cambridgeshire & Peterborough**

I am personally very pleased to welcome Cambridgeshire and Peterborough as members.

ACTIVE: following the last development day where ACTIVE were the topic of much interest from the delegates, Rachel Slade has forwarded an overview document on ACTIVE which should be posted on the FTGA website early in September. We hope to include the ACTIVE DvD as soon as it is available.

NB As advised before, this is a short synopsis of meetings, etc., but, as with the Chairman and other Executive members, we spend a lot of time in discussion with the Kings Fund, with members and other interested parties on the telephone, internet and occasional meetings to answer queries from members, progress the FTGA message and improve our presentation and services to our members.

Brian Gerbaldi CInstSMM

National Vice Chairman: NHS Foundation Trust Governors Association