

**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE GOVERNOR POLICY BOARD (GPB) MEETING**

**HELD AT ONE BIRDCAGE WALK, LONDON, SW1H 9JJ**

**ON THURSDAY 28TH JULY 2014, 11.00AM – 14.00PM**

**Board members present:**

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| Frances Blunden (FB) (chair) | Governor, Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust |
| Robert Alabaster (RA) | Governor, North East Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust |
| Sheila Barnes (SB) | Governor, Rotherham Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust |
| Peta Foxall (PF) | Governor, Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust |
| John Jones (JJ) | Governor, South Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust |
| Nick Marsden (NM) | Chair, Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust |

**In attendance:**

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| Nikki Coleman (NC) | Senior administrator for GovernWell, NHS Providers |
| John Coutts (JC) | Policy advisor, NHS Providers |
| Saffron Cordery (SC) | Director of strategy and policy, NHS Providers |
| Kim Hutchings (KH) | Head of development and engagement, NHS Providers |
| Claire Mescia (CM) | Programme manager for GovernWell, NHS Providers |

**Apologies:**

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| Kate Archer (KA) | Governor, Birmingham Women’s NHS Foundation Trust |
| Sue Davis (SD) | Chair, Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust |
| Roy Underwood (RU) | Governor, Doncaster and Bassetlaw Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust |
| Edward Waite (EW) | Governor, Royal Brompton and Harefield NHS Foundation Trust  |
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1. **WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR**

FB welcomed the group to the meeting and noted apologies from KA, SD, RW and EW. NM was introduced as new member of the board. It was noted that this was SB final GPB prior to ending her term as a governor on 1st August 2016, the board thanked SB for her valuable contributions both as a governor of Rotherham, Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust and as a member of this board.

1. **PREVIOUS MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record.

JJ requested a correction to the minutes from the previous meeting noted. Colour coded badges at the Governor Focus conference was in relation to trust type and not governor type.

There was a discussion on the governor role in significant transactions and financial assurance. FB said that in her opinion, governors need some understanding of the overarching ‘national picture’ context of NHS finances, particularly when systems are changing and new national bodies are introduced.

SB added that it is important for governors to attend board meetings so they can see the NEDs in action and is a useful way to develop knowledge.

PT agreed that when scrutinising finances, it is easy for governors to become ‘back seat’ NEDs which distracts them from the governor role and needs to be avoided.

CM confirmed that the governor role in NHS finances is covered comprehensively in the GovernWell training programme and asked the group whether additional resource was needed.

JJ agreed that additional support would be useful around questioning and knowing if the questions NEDs are asking of their EDs are the right questions to be asking.

NM added that, when addressing the skillset of their NEDs his trust specifically look to recruit individuals with financial capability to ensure there is the appropriate level of scrutiny and challenge. At least 12 governors attend the public board meetings at Salisbury to gain further assurance and this is followed up with an informal post board governor/NED meeting.

The group agreed it was important to provide information to governors on this issue.

**ACTION: CM to explore an initial article for the October edition of e-newsletter on the governor role in NHS finance.**

FB asked JC if any progress had been made in clarifying the practice of governors attending board sub-committees as observers. JC replied that no ‘one-size’ fits all and that there is varied practice.

It was agreed that it is important not to blur the lines of accountability and that having governors on committees could compromise positions of governance.

FB explained that in her own trust, governors are invited to be observers on committees with permission to ask questions but with no voting powers. JJ agreed that a similar practice took place at his trust. He added that this was one of the few ways to see the NEDs in action.

It was agreed that success is dependent on an open culture, where every group and subgroup is working towards achieving the same objective.

The group agreed it would be beneficial to have an article in a future edition of the governor focus newsletter to outline the governor role in relation to board committees.

**ACTION - JC to consider an article on governor role in relation to board committee**

CM informed the group of a number of community engagement example case studies which had been collected since the last meeting including examples of high quality member recruitment packs CM added that the valuable information gained would be used to develop an e-news item.

1. **ELECTION LATEST**

KH informed that board that following a discussion with Electoral Reform Services about possible options for a revised GPB election process a subcommittee of the GPB has been formed to comprise KH, PF, RA and JJ. The subcommittee will meet virtually to discuss the options and they plan to bring a recommendation for a way forward to the next meeting.

**ACTION – KH to communicate with the election review subcommittee to discuss options for a revised election process.**

1. **PROGRESS REPORT**

CM presented the April – June 2016 progress report to the board. The key points raised were:

* The governor support team led a very successful campaign to raise the profile of NHS governors during National Volunteers Week from the 1st – 12th June with CM and FB invited to attend the launch event at the BT tower. The campaign included a daily showcase of the different type of governor role on the NHS Providers website, FB wrote an article for the NHS England website, and NHS providers invited member trusts to take action and use volunteer’s week as a platform for raising the profile of their own governors.
* The web analytics for the governor support pages of the website have remained good. However more work is needed to raise the profile of the area.

**ACTION – GPB members to provide comments/ideas and suggestions on governor support section of the NHS providers web page via governor support team.**

* The induction toolkit, ‘So you are thinking of being a governor’ and other practical resources available on the website have rated highly in web analytics.
* Two recently published blogs have received a high number of views. In particular the blog JC produced in response to a governor query on ‘The governor role in a crisis’ rated very highly.
* The July edition of the governor focus newsletter will be published this week. It will include a wide range of articles most notably a piece on Brexit, and a policy update for governors.
* New guidance documents have been published in response to feedback received from governors.
* Regional development workshops are due to resume this autumn.
* GovernWell course evaluation statistics remain high and feedback positive. In light of the current climate where NHS training budgets are low CM urged the board to raise the profile of GovernWell within their trusts.
* CM concluded the progress report by giving formal thanks to SB and EM for their contribution and continued support of the programme.

The board discussed the progress report. The group noted difficulties in disseminating information to governors in some trusts.

JC suggested that a presentation to the Company Secretaries Network to discussion the issue could be beneficial.

1. **CQC NEW STRATEGY**

The GPB discussed the recently published CQC strategy 2016-2021 and highlighted some of the key themes.

The strategy made direct reference to governors on page 8 and this will be discussed further at regional development workshops.

The CQC are looking to develop guidance by the end of the year for CoGs on how to use CQC reports moving forward.

**ACTION – expressions of interest in contributing to CQC guidance for governors to CM.**

1. **SUPPORT FOR LEAD GOVERNORS AND SURVEY RESULTS**

CM reported that a survey of lead governors ahs recently taken place, aiming to understand the need for support for lead governors. The results of the survey were discussed in the meeting and it was suggested that a group of lead governors should be invited to meet with representatives from NHS Providers.

**ACTION – CM to set up a meeting with a small group of lead governors and representatives of NHS Providers.**

1. **SHARING LOCAL INTELLIGENCE AND PARTNER UPDATES**

RA updated the board on North East Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust’s approach to monitoring attacks on staff post Brexit. The trust is also awaiting its CQC inspection report. He concluded by informing the board that his council of governors have been involved in wider community engagement events, but that any future events are at risk due to lack of financial resources.

JJ had instigated a skills audit of the council of governors at South Essex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, which will be refreshed every 5 years.

JJ has also requested an agenda item at his council to governors meetings to report back on the discussions held at the GPB meetings and asked the board if they felt this was appropriate. The board agreed.

JJ also informed the group of his trust’s merger with North Essex Partnership NHS Trust. South Essex Partnership NHS Trust has sought guidance from Monitor about what the process means for the existing councils of governors and the election process for the new council of governors.

1. **GOVERNOR FOCUS CONFERENCE**

The value of the Governor Focus conference was discussed. It was agreed that a further a conference should take place in 2017.

1. **REFLECTION ON GPB EFFECTIVENESS**

FB asked the board to reflect on its effectiveness after a year in operation. The board were asked to discuss the following:

* Have we made a difference?
* What could we have done better?
* What does good/effective look like?

SC highlighted that the purpose of establishing the GPB is to represent the governor voice in a way that adds value and allows the governor voice to be heard.

It was felt that communication with governors could be improved. FB suggested that the past year has been focussed on evidence collecting and suggested that the next year should be focussed on action.

**ACTION – CM to identify where GPB work has influenced other actions in future progress reports.**

1. **AOB**

CM raised an issue on behalf of Sue Davis. Sue wanted to canvas the group on their experience of governor involvement in sustainability and transformation plans. SC confirmed that the NHS Providers policy team has work underway relating to STPs and has been working in collaboration with NHS Improvement.

FB confirmed that in her own trust, the CoG have been receiving updates on the their STPs.

1. **CONFIRMATION OF NEXT MEETING DATE AND VENUE**

The next meeting will take place on Thursday 3rd November 2016 at One Birdcage Walk, London, SW1H 9JJ.