

**Minutes of the meeting of the Council of Governors
Thursday 10th December 2009 at the Clinical Education Centre,
Russells Hall Hospital, Dudley**

Present:

Name	Status	Representing
Mr Alf Edwards	Chair of Meeting	DGOH NHS FT
Mr Graham Russell	Staff Governor	Nursing and Midwifery
Mr Darren Adams	Elected Governor	Stourbridge
Mr John Balmforth	Public Elected Governor	Halesowen
Mr Richard Brookes	Public Elected Governor	Brierley Hill
Mr Rob Johnson	Elected Governor	Halesowen
Mrs Rosemary Bennett	Public Elected Governor	North Dudley
Mr Bob Ferguson	Public Elected Governor	Central Dudley
Mr Simon Tovey	Staff Governor	Partner Organisations
Mr Atif Janjua	Elected Governor	Central Dudley
Mrs Jane Elvidge	Staff Governor	Allied Healthcare Professionals & Health Care Scientists
Mr Roy Savin	Public Elected Governor	Stourbridge
Cllr Anne Hingley	Appointed Governor	Wyre Forest DC
Mrs Diane Jones	Public Elected Governor	South Staffordshire
Cllr Steve Waltho	Public Elected Governor	Brierley Hill
Mrs Pat Siviter	Public Governor	Wyre Forest
Prof Linda Lang	Appointed Governor	Wolverhampton University School of Health
Mr David Ward	Public Elected Governor	Tipton

In Attendance:

Name	Status	Representing
Paula Clark	Chief Executive	DGOH NHS FT
Denise McMahon	Nursing Director	DGOH NHS FT
Jonathan Fellows	Non-Executive Director	DGOH NHS FT
Liz Abbiss	Head of Customer Relations and Communications	DGOH NHS FT
David Orme	Chairman	Dudley LINK
Helen Board	Foundation Trust Officer	DGOH NHS FT
Ruth Serrell	Acting Operations Director	DGOH NHS FT
David Badger	Non-Executive Director	DGOH NHS FT
Ann Becke	Non-Executive Director	DGOH NHS FT
Paul Harrison	Medical Director	DGOH NHS FT
Roger Callender	Assistant Medical Director	DGOH NHS FT
Steve Cotton	IT Manager	DGOH NHS FT
Garry Marshall	Siemens IT	
Mark Jones	PriceWaterhouseCoopers	
Julie Briggs	Member	DGOH NHS FT

Apologies:

Name	Status	Representing
Ms Pamela Boucher	Appointed Governor	Dudley Council of Voluntary Services
Mr Mark Cooke	Appointed Governor	Dudley PCT
Mrs Jane Elvidge	Staff Governor	Allied Health Professionals
Mrs Janet Robinson	Public Elected Governor	Rowley Regis
Mrs Rosemary Bennett	Public Elected Governor	Central Dudley
Mr Brian Hanford	Appointed Governor	Worcestershire PCT
Mr Paul Assinder	Director of Finance	DGOH NHS FT
Mrs Beverley Hill	Appointed Governor	Sandwell PCT
Mr Peter Totney	Public Elected Governor	Brierley Hill
Prof Martin Kendall	Appointed Governor	University of Birmingham Medical School
Dr P D Gupta	Public Elected Governor	Central Dudley
Mr Simon Biggs	Elected Governor	North Dudley
Mr Ian Mullins	Appointed Governor	Summit Healthcare
Ms Diane Lee	Appointed Governor	West Midlands Ambulance Service
Mr David Ore	Staff Governor	Non-clinical staff
Miss Nikky Gill	Appointed Governor	Dudley Youth Council
Mrs Mary Turner	Appointed Governor	Dudley Council for Voluntary Services
Cllr Lesley Faulkner	Appointed Governor	Dudley MBC
Mr Harvey Woolf	Public Elected Governor	North Dudley
Mrs Jane Beard	Elected Governor	Halesowen
Kathryn Williets	Non-Executive Director	DGOH NHS FT

1. Presentations

Presentation 1 (enclosure) – Hospital Standardised Mortality Ratio (HSMR). Paul Harrison gave a presentation providing information on the background of mortality rates and how they are calculated by Dr Foster and CHKS and what value this information is to the Trust and as a benchmarking tool to the wider Health Economy.

Questions arising –

Mr Atif Janjua asked for more information about the ‘coding data’ that is used by Dr Fosters & CHKS. Paul Harrison replied that these are the same ICD and Charlson Index codes that we use as a Trust to categorise the treatments we provide to patients that form the basis for our Primary Care Trust payment claim. He explained that codes were applied to case files after the treatment and discharge of patients and are not used to calculate the risk of morbidity before any procedures are carried out.

Cllr Anne Hingley asked where the Dr Foster organisation sat within the NHS system and who are they accountable to. Paul Harrison replied that Dr Foster is an independent organisation and has 2 arms to their operation – Commercial and Academic. The former is the arm that sells the information to organisations like ourselves to assist us to identify problems. However, he concluded that recent changes to their systems and methodology have rendered their information worthless to the Trust.

Graham Russell asked if results used included deaths that came into our A&E. Paul Harrison confirmed it did and further explained that the DGOH is working with the Strategic Health Authority to develop a system of capturing deaths in the first 48 hours of admission.

Presentation 2 (enclosure) – Vision for DGOH. Paula Clark updated those present about the vision and values of The Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and the strategy adopted by the Board of Directors centred on Quality, Marketing, Workforce development and Finance that would deliver that vision.

Questions arising –

Mr John Balmforth, public elected Governor, Halesowen, asked how many nurses had the Trust taken on as a result of the recent Nurse Recruitment event and why this type of event had not been run before. Paula Clark replied that 41 had been interviewed on the day and 27 other applicants had appointments booked for later dates. Previously, nurse staffing had been covered by using bank and agency staff owing to the uncertainty as to whether the increase in activity was a temporary peak or part of an ongoing growth of patients choosing our hospital. Recently, after analysing this data, a decision was taken that based on continued growth in activity; the Trust would recruit its own nurses.

Mr Graham Russell, appointed staff Governor, referred to the 'Listening into action' and asked if this piece of work would really do anything for staff. Paula Clark replied that this programme had been trialled at other Trusts in the area with positive outcomes and all indications are that we expect major improvements during the 18 month programme.

Presentation 3 (enclosure) – IT Strategy & support. Steve Cotton and Garry Marshall gave an overview of the PFI contract arrangements and highlighted the benefits that the Trust enjoys as a result of this. The talk included disclosure of figures relating to IT Performance in relation to unscheduled downtime for the network infrastructure and applications. IT strategy in terms of functionality is fully scoped and work is being done with PriceWaterhouseCoopers to deliver on this.

Mr Janjua asked if the Trust had 'redundancy' fully built in. Steve Cotton replied that Siemens provide systems with huge amounts of inbuilt resilience with no single point of failure including things like double circuit wiring to each and every CAT5e outlet across the organisation.

Jane Elvidge asked for a valid explanation as to why the Pharmacy has been waiting for over a year for the implementation of a piece of software that would greatly increase the operation of that department and stated that MI Databank has also been down for over a year and causes a great deal of frustration for staff continually being told that they are way down on the work list. Garry Marshall replied that there is a need to make the PFI agreement more agile and Ruth Serrell added that to keep it in perspective there is conceivably 3800 staff that may all have urgent needs and concurred that the process is currently very frustrating.

Mr David Ward asked if the training was sufficient for all staff in the organisation especially on specialist pieces of clinical software. Steve Cotton replied that the strategy currently used is to 'train the trainers' whereby Siemens train Trust IT staff, particularly on clinical systems in addition to staff members having to complete competency tests.

Mr Darren Adams asked if there was any single thing that they could share with the council that is coming in the future to improve patient experience. Steve Cotton replied that there is work being done to centralise all clinical letters on Soarian in a safe and secure way. This should help speed up response to patient care requirements. Mr John Balmforth asked how long it will take to implement and how secure will it be. Steve Cotton replied that it is a 5 year project to get all patient records on line. Security is taken very seriously and all measures will be put in place as appropriate including continual improvement.

Mr David Orme asked how big is the team that provide support and backup in the event of a major catastrophe such as a major swine flu epidemic. Garry Marshall explained he has a current team of 27 plus a couple of vacancies to fill. Behind that first line team is the whole of the Siemens Healthcare organisation that can provide support on a remote basis using current technology. Steve Cotton explained that the Trust IT team is made up of 11 staff including two trainers.

2. Welcome & apologies

Alfred Edwards, Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded all attendees to sign the attendance register. Apologies received are listed above.

3. Minutes of the Council of Governors meeting 20th August 2009

(Enclosure 1)

The minutes were agreed by the Governors as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4. Matters arising

- Swine flu/winter pressure update. Liz Abbiss reported that so far the expected high numbers that had been predicted had not materialised in line with reported national figures of 11,000 recorded to date. Should it change, the Trust has plans in place to immediately implement a response team. The staff Swine flu vaccination has had fairly low take up so far with only 30% of staff coming forward. Actions are now in place to visit staff in their workplace.

5. Update from the Communications committee

Darren Adams, Chair

With reference to enclosure 2, minutes of previous meeting in October 2009, Darren Adams explained that actions arising included a discussion with Alf Edwards regarding our target for the MRSA numbers that have the community target lumped together with our Trust. Alf Edwards has indicated that there is to be a 'national' change on this.

The communications sub group has added a further standing item to their agenda to review recent press and media coverage related to the Trust with a commitment to bring any pertinent items to the full Council.

The meeting had also looked at the progress of the committee in its first 12 months and agreed future work plans including;

- Expand membership
- Develop strategy to encourage Governor engagement
- Recommend actions that our Trust can take reflecting best practice from other Trusts
- Using info from PALS/Complaints look at trends
- Review of Governor resource manual using recent survey feedback.

Only ten responses have been received so far and Darren appealed for those Governors who had not yet responded to complete the forms and send them back without delay

6. Update from the Patient and Public Experience Group

Nothing to report

7. Update from Development sub committee

David Badger, Non executive director

At the last meeting held on 1st December 2009 a review of all the feedback gained from the Networking session held in October 2009 provided a legitimate basis for Board meetings to continue to be held in private. Further work was in progress as to how the Board of Directors could be held to account by the Council of Governors and information relating to this would be brought to the next full Council meeting to be held in February 2010.

8. Foundation Trust Membership update

(Enclosure 3)

Liz Abbiss, Head of Communications and Customer Relations

Liz presented the latest Membership report. She explained to the Group that figures had seen some drop in October as a result of a database cleanse where a number of 'leavers' had negatively affected figures by 239. Definition of leavers relates to members who have gone away or deceased.

Analysis of the current levels of membership in relation to the required demographics showed that most age groups were mostly well represented except the group aged 22 to 35 years and activity was taking place to increase membership in this sector. Other membership development areas include Rest of the West Midlands and the South Staffordshire areas.

Under representation also affects the Ethnic groups across all geographic areas and activities are being developed to increase membership in this area including developing a relationship with the local BME community group and contributing to the Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council engagement calendar.

Mr Janjua, public elected Governor, Central Dudley offered to supply details of community events that he is aware of as well as contacts in the Asian Women's Network and St Thomas's network.

9. Appointment of External Auditor

(Enclosure 4)

Jonathan Fellows, Chair of Audit committee

Jonathan presented a paper to the meeting and explained that the appointment would be for a 5 year period commencing April 2010 in accordance with Monitor Audit Code for NHS Foundation Trusts. The Trust had received 5 responses from Companies where KPMG were excluded from the assessment owing to the late arrival of their tender. The remaining four were subjected to a review process on a points based system where 30% of the assessment was based on the costs of audit and 70% based on other factors used to qualify their organisation such as quality of service, staffing levels and governance etc. After this process had been concluded, the recommendation of the Project Team to the Council of Governors is to appoint Deloitte LLP.

Alf Edwards proposed that the Council accept this recommendation and that they were happy with the process. The next step is Board of Director approval before any of the tenders be officially notified.

10. Any other Business

- Update on A & E performance. Paula Clark told those assembled that at the meeting with Monitor on 19th November 2009, the A & E breach of the 4 hour target was reflective of the Hospital as a whole and the subsequent letter received by the Trust explains that at their Board meeting on the 16th December 2009, it was decided to warn us that we are choosing not to intervene at present as we have been able to demonstrate that we are working hard to rectify issues surrounding the 4 hour target; 98% and 99% has been achieved in the interim period whereas the last 2 weeks have not done so well particularly relating to the availability of packages of care from the social Services sector of our local health economy. Although term funding recently released by the Primary Care Trust should have a positive effect going forward. Monitor have been advised of our under performance in the last few weeks. Paula Clark concluded that the target for quarter four will be met but not likely to hit target for the year as a whole.

John Balmforth, public elected Governor, Halesowen, asked if we are ready for the 'press'. Paula Clark replied in the affirmative and further explained that we are not alone in the region; on Monday of this week, no ambulances were available to respond to call outs at one point as all were stacked on A & E aprons across the area waiting to unload. Ruth Serrell reminded the Council that the whole health economy is involved, not just our Trust and explained that 100 patients stuck in the system is equivalent to one of our wards and the blockages encountered is due to the lack of step down and packages of care. Our Trust is working closely with Social Services and internal staff to recognise that a bug push is required by all.

Mr Janjua asked whether we should invite the local press such as the Express & Star into the Hospital and are they given our good news stories. Liz Abbiss confirmed that all local media receive a good quantity of good news stories but always seem to focus on printing the negative news. Conversations have also been had with the local weeklies to run a regular page 2 and work is being done to build a news bank to feed this. Rosemary Bennett added that she had seen some letters of praise published by the Express & Star.

John Balmforth asked if our A & E could ever be closed if completely blocked. Paula Clark replied that it is possible to run a series of divers for an hour or so but stressed that this can only be used in extreme circumstances. However, if we are inundated, it is likely that all A & E facilities across our patch would be in a similar position and would not necessarily be effected.

Jane Elvidge, staff pointed Governor, shared an experience with the Council whereby upon contacting her local GP practice at 6.15pm, had been advised that there were no appointments available to see her GP and to go to the local A & E. This she thought raised the question as to whether Dudley Primary Care Trust were doing enough around signposting so that only A & E cases went to A & E and other less serious symptoms could be directed to walk in centres for example. Liz Abbiss replied that there is currently a piece of work in progress now with the PCT to improve signposting in this regard. David Orme, Dudley LINK, added that they were doing all they could to broadcast this message to its members.

David Ward, Public Elected Governor for Tipton, asked if a person who was only drunk could be classed as ill enough to be admitted to A & E. Denise McMahon, Director of Nursing, replied yes they would if they had suffered a collapse or other injury but not just because of drunkenness. She also explained that this was a national problem where beds were un-necessarily taken up on weekend nights but we had a duty of care to ensure that such people were discharged to a safe environment and not putting them in a vulnerable situation. John Balmforth commented that from his former experience in the Police force, it is not an offence to be drunk. David Ward stated that it is unacceptable for our staff to be confronted with such individuals. Denise McMahon said we have a zero tolerance policy on aggressive and abusive behaviour and have on occasion had to call the Police and can prosecute.

Steve Waltho, public elected Governor, Stourbridge, commented on the publicity side of things; he explained he was used to it in his capacity of local government councillor and is of the opinion that the local press do not give our Trust an 'easy ride' and that it does affect our staff. He then referred to a story that ran in the paper the previous day relating to A & E patients having to wait on trolleys for up to 18 hours. The piece had then quoted a comment from him when he has not even spoken to them. On the basis of this and the continued unbalanced nature of their reporting, had prompted him to write a letter setting out how he feels about these actions and encourage them to be on our side as part of the Community providing a valuable and vital service.

11. Date of next meeting

Alf Edwards closed the meeting at 8.30pm and wished all a Happy Christmas and Happy New Year. The next Council of Governors meeting will be held at 6pm on Thursday 18th February 2010 in the Clinical Education Centre at Russells Hall Hospital.