



I support Blue Cross



Dear Carole, Therese, Anne and Linzi,

The excellent contributions from our new lead/deputy lead governors to our *January News Letter* have finally encouraged me to seek your advice on a matter which I've already discussed with a wide number of others and on which I've been working since I was first elected over three years ago:

'In the spirit of *better lives together* the Council of Governors requests our Trust Board to consider inviting its elected Lead or Deputy Lead Governor to join it as an associate, non-stipendiary member with participatory rights'*.

(* including /excluding voting needs specifying- what do you think?)

I first discussed this idea in 2019 at a 'Govern Well' NHS Providers' course with a rather disillusioned governor from another trust who told me a similar proposal had been rejected as 'naïve' by her board. Since then I've sought the views of former governors, both in our trust and outside it, constituents, ex- NEDS, patient participation groups, health professionals, fellow researchers in public health involvement and care homes together with other interested parties amongst whom the majority have been encouragingly supportive and sometimes enthusiastic.

Over the last few years our refreshed trust leadership, increasingly diverse board and growing culture of openness have all exemplified genuine inclusiveness and have clearly demonstrated an enlightened, receptive approach to us all evidenced by the recent CQC report's content and upgrading. Such positive, frequently prompted governor/constituent initiatives as former governors working within the complaints team, clarifying volunteers' tax responsibilities, ensuring clearly written job descriptions, accompanying NEDS on their walkabouts, joining and participating in board committee/ and trust board meetings have all enhanced and facilitated considerably our key governor roles in representing effectively our community's concerns as well as further clarifying the sometimes nebulous nature of 'holding to account NEDS / management' at first hand.

In essence this would now seem an opportune time to aspire to further governors' meaningful involvement in playing an increasing part in meeting our trust's considerable future challenges to the benefit of both the community and public body we serve. Thank you for your consideration, reflections and advice in preparation for our next meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Sid Brown, 1st March 2022. ([REDACTED])

Copy: Eleanor for forwarding to the above with thanks.

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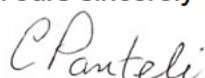
Dear Sid,

Thank you for your letter of 1 March addressed to me, Therese, Anne and Linzi with some suggestions about how the Board of Directors and Council of Governors can work more closely together and how the views of services users, patients and carers can continue to be heard at Board level through Governor representation and/or involvement.

You specifically asked about whether the Lead or Deputy lead Governor could be invited to undertake an associate role on the Trust Board, with participatory rights. Whilst we encourage the Lead and Deputy Lead Governor (and any other Governors) to observe our public Board meetings, our FT Constitution does not allow for Governors to be formally part of both bodies (the Board of Directors and the Council of Governors). However, we are keen to explore how the patient voice can be heard at Board level and David Sims, our Medical Director, is starting to consider the benefits of a Patient Director role, which is gaining some traction in certain Foundation Trusts. This could build upon the work already undertaken through the Trust's Involvement Strategy, *Your Voice Matters*, and I would hope that he will be able to develop some proposals before the end of this calendar year.

Once again thank you for taking the time to put this on our agenda, which Therese and I discussed with Anne and Linzi at our meeting on 7 April. I will ensure that your letter, and this response, is included in the Council of Governors pack for the May meeting for wider Governor awareness.

Yours sincerely



Carole Panteli
Interim Trust Chair