

Meeting Title	Council of Governors		
Date	15 April 2021	Agenda item	CofG.4.21.11

## Governors Skills and Knowledge Audit 2021

Presented by	Laura Parsons, Associate Director of Corporate Governance/Board Secretary		
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Governance responsibility	Council of Governors		
Purpose of the paper	To present the outcomes from the Governors Skills and Knowledge Audit 2021		
Action required	For decision		
Previously discussed at/informed by	Council of Governors 21 January 2021		
Previously approved at:	Committee/Group	Date	

### Background

#### Governor skills and knowledge audit 2021

To support the improved performance and effectiveness of the Council of Governors, all Governors were asked to complete the governor skills and knowledge audit 2021. As previously advised, the audit will be used to support:

- The identification of individual and collective learning and development to support governors in the delivery of their role.
- Identification of particular areas of expertise that may support key activities and initiatives.
- To understand more about the level of networking and engagement activity undertaken by governors within our communities.

In January 2021 it was agreed that the results from the audit would be collated and presented back to the Council for review.

#### Completion of the audit

14 of 16 governors completed the skills and knowledge audit.

Governors come from a wide range of backgrounds and bring varied experiences. The following provides a summary of the outcomes of the audit.

The full responses are provided within Appendix 1. In order to protect any personally identifiable data the information contained in this appendix has been excluded from the public facing document.

#### 1. Individual and collective learning and development to support in the delivery of roles

The top five areas identified for further discussion/debate scoring 75% and above were:

- Quality, Safety and Patient Experience (92%)
- Performance, particularly with regard to national and local indicators (83%)
- Foundation Trust Strategy (75%)
- Workforce development in line with the People Plan (75%)

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- Integrated Care: Local strategic plans and partnerships (75%)

A number of additional areas were identified by governors. These included;

- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (how the Trust is delivering WRES, initiatives in place and challenges)
- Proposed NHS reforms
- The Green Agenda
- Coronavirus response and implications

#### ACTIONS PROPOSED:

To address the areas listed above the Trust will seek to utilise a range of methods which will include:

- The Governors induction programme
- Scheduling stand alone sessions
- Including items at future Council meetings
- Encouraging governor observation of Committees and Board
- Signposting of Governors to relevant external events, activities and publications
- Via activities the Trust may arrange to support governor engagement with members and the public.

## 2. Governors personal development needs

The national training provider, Governwell, delivers a number of key courses for governors. These are:

- Member and public engagement
- Developing skills in chairing meetings
- Effective questioning and challenge
- The governor role in non-executive appointments
- NHS finance and business skills
- Accountability and holding to account

The highest scoring areas identified by council members with regard to personal development were:

- Member and public engagement (75%)
- NHS finance and business skills (64%)

#### ACTIONS PROPOSED:

The Trust will seek to provide a bespoke session aimed at all governors to cover these two areas.

Governors are able to attend the nationally delivered courses however as part of the approval process each request will be reviewed so that the Trust is satisfied that the proposed learning will effectively support the governor in delivering their roles and responsibilities. The national schedule is available [here](#).

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### 3. Areas of expertise to support key activities and initiatives.

The Council of Governors as a collective body has wide ranging skills, knowledge and experience. From the information provided Governors have skills and knowledge that includes:

#### Specialist Skills and Knowledge in:

- Governance
- Risk management
- Audit
- Legal and Human Resources
- Data Protection
- Marginalised Community Engagement
- Learning and Teaching
- Change Management
- Management Consulting in Board and Team Development and Strategic Leadership
- Community Engagement, Recruitment and Selection
- Project and Programme Management
- Leadership, Recruitment and Selection
- Media
- Computing and Technology
- Hosting public events and discussions

#### Networking areas and engagement activity in or with:

- West Yorkshire Cancer Alliance on marginalised community engagement
- Hosting of public events and discussions covering politics, faith and spirituality and LGBT
- Community engagement
- Learning disabilities
- Equality, diversity and inclusion
- Coaching and mentoring
- Staff advocacy

#### **ACTIONS PROPOSED:**

Governors are asked to consider if they would like to invite their colleagues to provide any information/training on the above areas to support governors in their role.

The profiles of governors are available on the Trust's website [here](#). If a governor wishes to update their profile information then they should send a revised version to the corporate governance team.

### 4. Important areas of focus for Governors

Governors were asked to identify from the following five areas which they considered of most importance as areas of focus.

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- Statutory duties and responsibilities of the Council of Governors
- Building relationships with the Board of Directors
- Understanding Corporate Governance
- Understanding more about the role of the Senior Independent Director
- Media training

From the results received the two most important areas are:

- Building relationships with the Board of Directors
- Statutory duties and responsibilities of the Council of Governors

The Council has in place a quarterly private meeting with the Non-Executive Directors and a quarterly private meeting with the Chairman. The Governors are able to observe Committees and Board meetings and have access to the recordings of the Board meetings. The Council are in receipt of the appraisal reports from the Chair and the Senior Independent Director. All Directors attend the Council of Governor meetings. Invitations are now being extended to Non-Executive Directors to attend any special governor sessions scheduled. With regard to the statutory duties and responsibilities of Governors; these are available on the website, are included within pre-election material and are provided to Governors along with guidance on the delivery of your statutory duties and responsibilities during initial formal welcomes as part of the induction process. With regard to the delivery of duties and responsibilities any constitutional requirements, requirements with regard to standing orders or, terms of reference are referred to as a support for Governors on the delivery of their duties and responsibilities.

#### **ACTIONS PROPOSED:**

We would welcome further suggestions from Governors on other areas that they think would benefit the building of relationships with the Board of Directors. Please could these be shared with the Chairman and the Associate Director of Corporate Governance/Board Secretary.

It would be useful to understand more specifically what Governors would like to focus on with regard to their statutory duties and responsibilities. Please could your views be shared with the Associate Director of Corporate Governance/Board Secretary and the Head of Corporate Governance in the first instance.

#### **5. Electronic and hard copy communications**

The majority of our Council (92%) have access to a laptop/computer, the internet and email. However 70% have indicated that they would prefer to continue to receive hard copies of papers for meetings. 9% of our Council have indicated that they would require training and support to develop their e-communication skills.

#### **ACTIONS PROPOSED:**

The Trust will be seeking to work with Governors over the next year to understand more about the requirement of hard copies and see if we can reduce the level of hard copies circulated.

The Trust will also work individually with those governors identified to support the development of their e-communication skills.

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## 6. Work outside of Council meetings

It is recognised that the governors are volunteers and that the available amount of time is more limited for some than others. Governors are aware through the Constitution, the governors' standing orders and the governors' terms of reference of the minimum requirement of attendance at four meetings of the Council annually and attendance at the AGM/AMM. Aside from this attendance there are opportunities for governors to get involved in the wider governor engagement programme. Of the areas presented in the skills and knowledge audit, the two areas of most interest to Governors have been identified as;

- Membership Involvement and Communications (including options for consulting with and gaining feedback from members and the public)
- NED and Chair Appointments

The other areas highlighted were not as popular however, each had some interest shown which bodes well for when/if the council requests volunteers for these areas. These areas are:

- External Auditor Appointment
- Governor Focus conference
- GAC nominations
- Vice-Chair nominations
- Lead Governor nominations

### ACTIONS PROPOSED:

There are five governors who have signed up to join the revived 'membership task and finish group' to develop the membership plan. The recommendations from the plan will determine how governors will participate in this programme of work.

Non-members of the Governors NRC have the opportunity to observe this committee and governors are encouraged to do so. This would also support succession planning to the Committee. All committee meetings take place from 3pm to 4pm and the dates for 2020/21 are as follows:

- 15 June
- 21 September
- 14 December

Those interested in observing the committee should contact [Sheridan.osbourne@bthft.nhs.uk](mailto:Sheridan.osbourne@bthft.nhs.uk).

## 7. Next Steps

The Council is asked to review the information presented in this summary report, the actions proposed where required and, consider the information presented at Appendix 1.

### Decisions

The Council is asked to confirm if it agrees with the actions proposed.

Where the actions are confirmed, progress reports will be provided to the Council at future Council of Governors meetings.