

RD&E Council of Governors

Business Plan 2011

In the Fundamental Review of the Council of Governors (CoG) it was agreed that a business plan encompassing the key priorities of the CoG, its regular cycle of business and how it proposes to manage itself will be developed. The development of a business plan was one of the outcomes of the review and it was proposed that such a plan be developed for the calendar year - 2011.

This document sets out the proposed business plan for approval by CoG on the 19th January 2011. However, there are still uncertainties about the way governors fulfil their role with regard to their involvement in the Trust's routine responses to the Care Quality Commission and how they contribute to the Trust's Quality Account submission. It is suggested therefore, that the content of the Business Plan is kept under review to enable CoG to assimilate any changes that may be required.

Introduction

The CoG Business plan aims to set out the overall priorities for the governors over the forthcoming calendar year. On the basis of these priorities, the business plan identifies the key activities that the governors will implement during 2011, when these are scheduled and who is responsible for implementation.

In constructing its first business plan, governors have taken into account:

- The need to link the forthcoming agenda and work plan of the CoG to the RD&E's Board and wider expectations from the Trust's regulators.
- The understanding that ongoing developments mean that not all aspects of the plan can be pinned down at this stage and that there needs, therefore, to be some flexibility going forward
- The clarification on the distinct role of governors that has emerged from the fundamental review of governors, Monitor guidance and other guidance.
- The need to enhance the effectiveness, impact and added value of the governors to the Trust.
- Ensuring that in challenging times, the Governors will continue to act in the best interests of the Trust first and foremost.
- Capacity limitations of both the governors and the Trust secretariat to support the work of the CoG.

Aims

The CoG has set the following aims for 2011:

- To continue to clarify and strengthen the role of governors as a core component of the RD&E's governance structures
- To contribute to the effectiveness of the Trust by appropriately undertaking its statutory powers, holding the Board to account and ensuring that the Board takes into account the views of the Trust's stakeholders.

Priorities

The CoG has established that its main priorities over the next year are to:

1. Stakeholder views: Make progress on developing the CoG's capacity to better understand and represent stakeholder opinion to the Trust.

2. Membership: Develop the role of members and membership as part of the Trust's overall approach to stakeholder engagement.
3. Quality matters: Make effective contributions to Trust work on quality and patient experience.
4. Effectiveness: Enhance the effectiveness of the CoG by ensuring that its knowledge base, processes and operations are fit for purpose.
5. Holding to account: Continuing to work closely with the Board whilst at the same time developing processes to hold the Board to account.

The CoG's objectives and delivery plan are contained in its Annual Plan of Action (Annex One).

Organisation

As a result of the fundamental review, the changes in the context in which FTs are operating and the prospective changes in integrating individual governors into various existing Trust groups linked to its Governance Committee, the CoG will need to ensure that the way in which it operates and the structures it has in place will enable it to carry out its role effectively over the coming year and beyond. On the back of the fundamental review a change was made to changing the steering group but it is likely that additional changes may be needed – for example more task and finish groups – to enable it to function in a way that maximises the contribution of governors but in a way that retains accountability to the broader CoG and membership.

A Key Consideration

A key consideration in the operation of the Business Plan is the capacity of governors and the Trust secretariat to cope with the workload. Whilst there will be an opportunity for governors to become more involved in the governance of the Trust, it may be that some will not wish nor have the ability to commit more time to an extra workload. Similarly, the Trust's Secretariat has a limit on its own activities. It will only be worth doing if it results in governors giving adding value in enhancing the governance of the Trust.