

Council of Governors

SUMMARY REPORT

Meeting Date: 13/12/2022
 Agenda Item: 10

Report Title:	Council of Governors review of effectiveness Report	
Author(s):	Amber Wild, Corporate Assurance Manager	
Accountable Director:	Deborah Lawrenson, Director of Corporate Governance	
Other meetings this paper has been presented to or previously agreed at:	Committee/Tier 2 Group/Tier 3 Group	N/A
	Date:	N/A
Key points/ recommendations	Recommendation: for the Council of Governors to have undertaken a self-assessment of its effectiveness during the year and to discuss its findings.	

Summary of key points in report

The Council of Governor annual self-assessment is attached at **appendix 1**. Nine Governors responded with completed questionnaires.

The Chair will take away key areas raised for further discussion with the Lead Governor and Director of Corporate Governance and an update on progress made will be brought to the Council of Governors meeting in February 2023.

Recommendation for the Board/Committee to consider:

Consider for Action		Approval	X	Assurance		Information	X
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The Council of Governors are asked to consider the self-assessment and discuss key issues raised.

Please identify which strategic priorities will be impacted by this report:

Covid-19 Recovering Effectively	Yes		No	X
CQC Getting Back to Good	Yes		No	X
Transformation – Changing things that will make a difference	Yes	X	No	
Partnerships – working together to make a bigger impact	Yes		No	X

Is this report relevant to compliance with any key standards ? State specific standard

Care Quality Commission Fundamental Standards	Yes		No	X
Data Security and Protection Toolkit	Yes		No	X
Any other specific standard?				

Have these areas been considered ? YES/NO					If Yes, what are the implications or the impact? If no, please explain why
Service User and Carer Safety and Experience	Yes	X	No		Considered as part of the questionnaire where relevant
Financial (revenue & capital)	Yes	X	No		
Organisational Development /Workforce	Yes	X	No		
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion	Yes	X	No		
Legal	Yes	X	No		
Environmental sustainability	Yes	X	No		

Council of Governors self-assessment summary

13 December 2022

Governors Review of Effectiveness amalgamated form – 2022

	Question	Strongly agree	Agree	Unable to say	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Comments
1	Chairing of the Council of Governors is effective and everyone has the opportunity to 'have a voice' and contribute to the debate	XXXX					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Chair of the Council of Governors (CoG) ensures that all the major issues concerning NHS Sheffield are discussed. Any CoG member is able to raise their hand and discuss an issue if they so wish.
2	The Chair and Non-Executive Directors effectively engage with the Council of Governors	XX	XX				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are numerous opportunities to engage with the CoG Chair or any of the Non-Executive Directors (NEDs), if CoG members so choose. • The Chair definitely engages, as do 2 or 3 of the NEDS. However, one or two are consistently absent from CoG. • Do not work for the trust and no contact outside of formal meetings
3	I am assured by the NED reports/presentations on their leadership of Board sub-committees	XX	XXX				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I attend a couple of the Board sub-committees myself and they are fine. CoG members are also able to get a copy of Board sub-committee minutes on request. • COG are fully dependent on the NEDs and the officers for assurance on the proper and legal operation of the Trust. This can feel difficult as we are asked to make decisions on arm's length information.

4	<p>The Chair and Non-Executive directors are operating effectively in holding the Executives to account at the Board and its sub committees</p> <p>Please answer if you have observed these meetings</p>	X	XX				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CoG Chair and other NEDs do hold the NHS Board of Governors and their sub-committees to account. They regularly raise issues which are minuted and they feedback to the CoG what the issues were and the answers given by the Board. • I have been present at numerous Board Meeting and sub-committee meetings and have observed Chair and NED follow up on a number of occasions. • This appears so from the information we receive at COG • I've not seen one of these meetings happen yet as a new governor. • I am assured of this from the reports we receive at CoG. I have not observed Board meetings myself
5	<p>The Council of Governors receives information such as reports, presentations, briefings, and verbal updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are they user friendly? • do they provide the right level of information to support our discussions and decision making? • have they improved over the last year? 	XXXX	<p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p>	X	X		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CoG members receive a large volume of briefings, reports, presentations and verbal updates. This is very useful to remain abreast of developments regarding our Trust. • Accessibility and user-friendliness has remained at a good standard. • Information is huge delivering transparency. • NEDs have been clear in picking out the main issues and communicating those to the CoG. • Communication with the CoG has improved this year compared to last year. • Not always pre-meeting or sometime very last minute

							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving but still often full of NHS jargon and acronyms • Some reports can be difficult to absorb due to the complexity of the subject, however they have got better over time. • Where an issue is on going and you have missed meetings catching up can be difficult. • There are too many questions here! • The reports are generally quite dense but informative. I do wonder if everyone is able to understand these, and they are very information-heavy at times. • I'm not sure that we <i>do</i> make decisions (or any that are not effectively rubber-stamping things that are <i>fait accompli</i>), and perhaps a criticism is that we still receive too many reports for information only. • Agendas do seem to be reactive. The work plan needs to be reviewed
6	<p>I feel supported to fulfil my role; I have access to advice, support, and engagement opportunities such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • drop in sessions with the Chair • governor buddying scheme • governor induction and get to know you lunch • workshops 	<p>XXX</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p>	<p>XX</p>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being a CoG member is very rewarding. I have access to all the advice, engagement, information, and support I need if I asked. The drop in session with the CoG Chair are useful as small groups can share information and clarify earlier communication. The Governor Buddying scheme is developing slowly but steadily at the pace CoG members are comfortable with. The new Governor Inductions process is really good now that the worst of COVID-19 seems to have passed. The lunch workshops are also good where CoG members can meet in person and interact.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> development sessions on areas of interest such as community mental health team engagement in programmes of work/opportunities to give views and feedback such as service user and carer experience, human rights etc <p>Has this improved over the last year?</p>	X					<p>Development sessions are really interesting so people with one interest in NHS Sheffield can hear other aspects regarding our service.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Various engagement programmes, workshops and presentations have taken place. Again people could give feedback or just observe how people addressed certain issues. There has been a significant improvement in engagement opportunities from last year, mainly due to the end of COVID-19 restrictions. I haven't needed or used any of these initiatives, but all are very welcome and reflect positively on the support available for CoG members. I feel I'm unable to tick 'strong agree' here as someone who has been a governor solely in the covid era and only had the opportunity to undertake online-first activities .
7	<p>I have support, where I need it to engage with my constituency (if not please say what support you would find helpful).</p> <p>Has this improved over the last year?</p>		X	XX		X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It has only been relatively recently, that it has been possible for CoG members to engage with their constituency. This work has been massively delayed for two years by COVID-19. I feel confident that if CoG members were to ask for support to deliver a raise awareness stand in their constituency, the request would be fulfilled. Yes it has. Two in-person sessions have taken place in 2022, which was been disrupted by COVID-19 and the death of the Queen. I have had no support engaging with my constituency (the University). This is a source

							of disappointment and concern; there has been virtually no senior engagement across organisations in all of my time on the CoG, and for as long as I have worked in Sheffield (since 2016).
8	The Nominations and Remuneration Committee effectively fulfils its role and provides the Council of Governors with appropriate reports to support discussion and decision making	X	X	X	X		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Nominations and Remunerations Committee functions well and feedbacks to the Board of Directors and the CoG clear information regarding what the issues are and the suggestions to progress matter in hand. • I feel the information we are given is limited and directs COG to agree the decision already made by the N and R committee. My experience is that no counter arguments are put and it's a rubber stamp job. • I believe it is active in ensuring it meets its obligations and objectives but not seen it in action as yet. • I have long been concerned that NRC does not always represent the wider CoG membership. It has a privileged place in terms of Trust governance. We know relatively little about NRC meetings.
9	The external auditors, to the best of my knowledge, are working effectively with the Trust and have provided the Council with their report on the Annual Report and Accounts	XX		XX			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a CoG member who observes the FPC sub-committee I have not seen any indication regarding the independent auditing of the Trust's financial accounts. • Don't know enough about this aspect to give a fair comment. • The person delivering the external audit explained how it worked and what each bit meant and gave us an appraisal of how we

							<p>were doing over all. That was really helpful to see.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The external auditing process has always been questionable; not because of anything we do at SHSC but because the idea that a firm who we select and pay is going to be truly independent is a barely credible proposition. We do this because we have to and (I have to say) there is little value here. I don't give any particular credibility to this part of our work. • I have seen this with the accounting (KPMG I think?) and I thought that was effective. However, when people deliver PowerPoints or other mass pieces of information, whilst they may be very knowledgeable on what they are speaking about I often don't find that it is delivered well to enable those with no knowledge of the matter to understand.
10	Administrative arrangements for the Council of Governors work well (circulation of papers, minutes, actions, and forward planning)	XXX	X				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration of the CoG works very well most of the time. I have heard other CoG members voice concerns at the late appearance of meeting notification and minutes. This only happens when there has been a last minute development. • The secretariat are invariable helpful and generally brilliant! • Would like more time where possible
<p>General observations on areas of good practice and improvements made in the last year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impetus that CoG members should have more opportunities to meet in person is good practice. • Hopefully there can be a quarterly event where all CoG members can meet for presentations and workshops, or just to observe. • The COG is well attended, well organised and well chaired. I feel that everyone is welcomed and allowed to put forward their views and comment as appropriate 							

- I am told that SHSC has a large number of Governor positions compared to other Trusts. This potentially gives us a broader spectrum of people to call from
- I liked that as a Trust we opened up the newly renovated Burbage ward (New name TBC) for a day to help staff and Governors that don't normally get to see what a ward looks like and talk to the team about how it will run. What I particularly like about this is that it helps break down and may be even dispel some of the myths, and stigma that can be associated with a mental health wards.
- CoG meetings are balanced, well attended, inclusive and very well chaired. The Council appear to be operating in more consensual ways, and with greater harmony. NEDs mostly attend and invariably participate in constructive and assuring ways. I would like to give particular credit to the Lead Governor, who does a superb job.
- The NED recruitment process demonstrated that - a lot of 'awkward' and probing questions asked
- Some meetings seem to be better than others. Mainly the ones called at last minute e.g. Jan retiring or the new Ned's remuneration seem to be a lot better structured, flow better, be more concise to the point with relevant information, be more engaging, etc than the ones that go on for about 2.5hrs and are all over the place, more unstructured, etc.

General observations of areas where improvement is needed and suggestions or examples of how these could be improved

- There is little where CoG governance and oversight could be improved in relation to where we are at the moment.
- I feel it would be good practice for all meetings CoG members might be interested in attending, are regularly sent out in an email by the 7th of each month.
- The Governor Diary needs to be made larger, especially for CoG members who may be visually impaired. It also needs to be in Word, as CoG members may not be able to access or use Excel.
- CoG members can be supported to have a quarterly surgery in their own constituency, so they can more easily become aware of any public concerns.
- There appears to be an In crowd who has knowledge and insight that the rest of us don't have. However, I think the chair works hard to be inclusive so it's not too bad.
- I carry out this role as part of my other duties in the Trust so I need plenty of notice to attend any session.
- I also want to say that Amber Wild does an amazing job at coordinating loads of information. without her I would not know half or what I know.
- I do not have many other comments beyond what's mentioned above, but I would suggest that there are too many extraordinary meetings.
- The relationship between the wider organisation and the governors has been hampered to a degree by the public health arrangements of the past couple of years, but hopefully this can change going forwards
- The Online – First (due to NCovSars2) format of the meetings has been a slight hampering factor to this – hopefully more hybrid and F2F meetings in the future will be able to address this
- We are not bringing enough service user feedback on SHSC to the meeting and there is not enough suitable opportunities provided by SHSC for governors to obtain it to feedback, share their informed views and challenge constructively. If I'm honest, not only did I think there would be a lot

more opportunity for this when I applied to be a Governor, I also thought the meetings would include a lot more of the main difficulties which service users were experiencing being discussed as main topics to ensure action was being taken to improve care provided.

- There are too many members on the council to allow every member to make a significant contribution