

# Membership and Engagement Strategy

## 1. Introduction

The delivery of the Strategy will be supported by various stakeholders including the Council of Governors, Executive Team, Trust Secretary, Equality and Diversity Team, Patient Experience Team, Hospital Charity, and the Trust's partnership organisations.

The steps and actions underpinning the delivery of this Strategy will be led by a recently appointed Membership and Engagement Manager, who has been seconded to the Trust Secretariat from the Trust's Communications Team.

The Governors' Membership Engagement Group will monitor the progress against this Strategy and other related actions, and report to the Council of Governors as appropriate.

## 2. Overview

A major objective of this Strategy is to reverse the decline in public membership of Milton Keynes University Hospital Foundation Trust (MKUH FT) and to seek to ensure that the make-up is representative of a city which is known to be the fastest growing in the United Kingdom.

For 2020/21 the Trust had a total of 8,426 members, with 5,372 being public members and 3,054 being staff members. In comparison, the total number of members in 2019/20 was at 8,379, with 5,382 being public members and 2,997 being staff members. An analysis of the membership data revealed that the Trust had a declining public membership and had lost a net of 301 members since 2015/16. A further analysis of the membership data indicates that demographically, in 2020/21 there were 0 members under 16 years and 20 members between the ages of 17 and 21.

An outline of the overall declining trend in public membership is set out below:

- i. 2015/16 – total 5673
- ii. 2016/17 – New members (154); members leaving (291) – Total 5536
- iii. 2017/18 – New members (101); members leaving (87) – Total 5550
- iv. 2018/19 – New members (15); members leaving (101) – Total 5464
- v. 2019/20 – New members (0); members leaving (78) – Total 5382
- vi. 2020/21 – New members (28); members leaving (38) – Total 5372

The staff membership, however, is representative of the staffing body and increasing. It needs to be noted that members of staff are automatically invited to become staff members, and they are free to 'opt out' if they prefer.

Another major objective is to support the members of the Council of Governors so that they can fulfil their remit of engaging with and representing the interests of their constituents. Currently there are no constituency events because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but under the auspices of this strategy steps will be taken to develop the

appropriate resilient media which will help Governors to engage with and represent their constituents and the public in a more sustained manner.

### **3. Approach to implementing the Strategy**

#### **a. Media**

- Trust website and intranet – Actively update the dedicated webpages to promote membership of the Trust, the Governors, Trust events, Governor events and meetings.
- Regular member recruitment campaigns – The Membership and Engagement Manager will organise regular campaigns to recruit new members and address demographic gaps. Governors will be encouraged to regularly promote membership opportunities and recruit new public members via their friends/family, colleagues and local community networks/contacts.
- Trust leaflets and messages – All promotional and communication leaflets and messages, as appropriate, will include updates on Governor events and meetings and promote public membership of the Trust.
- Social media – Take steps to utilise the social media platforms appropriate for sustainably supporting Governor and member events and meetings. Actively utilise the Trust's social media handles to promote public membership and events such as Council of Governor meetings, Trust Board meetings in public and Annual Members Meetings.
- Members' Newsletters – Provide updates on developments in the Trust to the public and staff members through the biannual newsletters, which also set out how they can share their view as members. These newsletters should also be available via the dedicated Trust intranet and internet webpages.
- Email – Regular email news alerts sent to both staff and public members promoting key Membership/Governor information including Council of Governors Meetings, Governor Elections, Annual Members' Meetings and Trust Board meetings in public.
- Questionnaires – Membership questionnaires developed to determine engagement needs/wants of public and staff members and future priorities.
- Youth And School Events – These events will be organised with various internal and external stakeholders to engage with schools and youth organisations. The aims being to recruit young members and to generate interest in the NHS.

## **b. Governor Support**

- Membership and Public Engagement Packs – Packs with news/information and other promotional materials issued to Governors as support, particularly during constituency surgeries and other meetings.
- Membership Recruitment Packs – Governors issued with recruitment material and encouraged to utilise their own networks and community groups in addition to taking part in recruitment campaigns to promote, recruit and engage with members and the public.
- Constituency Surgeries – Implement the appropriate social media platforms to support sustainable/resilient constituency and public engagement activities by the Governors.
- Embed Public Governors in Committees and Groups – Work with all stakeholders such as the Patient Experience Team and the partnership organisations to embed/include all public governors in their meetings and activities, as appropriate. The Membership and Engagement Manager will liaise with all relevant committees and groups so that all Governor activities in the Trust and in the Community are reported through the Council of Governors.
- Partnership Organisation Newsletters – Liaise with the communication teams of partnership organisations to report relevant governor activities and promote public membership of the Trust.
- Events/Stalls – Support the public and staff governors with support materials for stalls during events in the Trust, at social and community centres, outside supermarkets, at community days, open and fun days, etc.
- Encourage/Support Governors to attend local community groups to engage and promote their role and membership of the Trust.
- Staff Governors – Organise regular staff fora and weekly focus events to raise their profiles, promote their roles and engage with staff.
- Ongoing Training Support and Guidance – The Membership and Engagement Manager’s remit includes the provision of professional communications support and advise to all Governors.
- Feedback from activities – The Trust Secretary’s remit is to provide the effective media for ensuring all feedback is reported to the appropriate quarters and efficiently responded to.

## **4. Objectives**

- For MKUH FT to have a representative public membership which truly reflects the communities that it serves with Governors actively representing the interests of members as a whole and the interests of the public.
- Raise the profile of Governors, both public and staff, and the awareness of their role and activities
- Increase the Trust membership and the public's awareness of and involvement in the Trust's activities.
- Support the Governors' engagement with their constituents and the public through events and constituency surgeries.
- Enhance the Governors' involvement in and contributions to the various patient experience groups in the Trust.

## 5. Conclusion

As some of the elements of the approach to implementing the Strategy are being tested for the first time, some amount of training and education is expected to be provided to help with the progression of this Strategy. It is therefore intended that this will be a living document shaped by Governors as it continues to be rolled out and engagement activities increase.

In view of the foregoing, it was also thought that it'll be more beneficial to have a sustainable and actively engaged membership as opposed to setting a specific growth target for the public membership. The initial aim, as earlier stated, is to reverse the decline in public membership and then to ensure that the make-up is representative of a city of Milton Keynes.

The Membership and Engagement Manager will develop an annual programme of activities and events to support the progress of this Strategy

## 6. Recommendation

The Council of Governors is asked to approve this Strategy and support its roll out.