

24 OCTOBER 2011

Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust - Foundation Trust Consultation and Communications Strategy

Ward(s) All

Portfolios: Cllr B. McCracken – Social Care and Health

Report:

Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust (WHNHST) is an aspirant NHS Foundation Trust (FT) and as such is required to undertake formal consultation with its local communities and stakeholders as part of its application to become an NHS Foundation Trust.

The consultation does not serve as a debate on whether or not the Trust should become a FT, but is a consultation on our proposals for our service, strategy and how the Trust will run should it be successful in its application.

WHNHST's FT application timetable states that it will be undertaking a 12-week public consultation from February 2012. The consultation will aim to gather feedback from the Trust's local community on the strategy and governance arrangements in place for its progression to NHS Foundation Trust status. The Trust will need the approval of the Strategic Health Authority (NHS Midlands and East) in order to launch this consultation.

To support the consultation a suite of consultation materials will be made available on day one of the consultation period. The consultation materials will contain information on the Trust's proposed governance arrangements, its vision for being an FT and the benefits and risks of being a FT.

Once the public consultation has closed, the Trust will need to consider the feedback received during the consultation exercise and decide whether it is sufficient to warrant any changes to our proposals.

Following the assessment of feedback gathered during the public consultation, the results of the exercise will be communicated to its stakeholders.

Recommendations:

That, subject to any comments Members may wish to make the strategy for Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust's Formal Foundation Trust Consultation be supported.

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Foundation Trust Consultation and Communications Strategy

Section 1 – Introduction

Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust (WHNHST) is an aspirant NHS Foundation Trust (FT) and as such is required to undertake formal consultation with its local communities and stakeholders as part of its application to become an NHS Foundation Trust.

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WHNHST's FT application timetable states that it will be undertaking a 12-week public consultation from February 2012. The consultation will aim to gather feedback from the Trust's local community on the strategy and governance arrangements in place for its progression to NHS Foundation Trust status. The Trust will need the approval of the Strategic Health Authority (NHS Midlands and East) in order to launch this consultation.

Within this strategy WHNHST sets out how it will carry out its formal FT public consultation to ensure that all groups within its community have a say in the future of local health services.

To support the consultation a suite of consultation materials will be made available on day one of the consultation period. The consultation materials will contain information on the Trust's proposed governance arrangements, its vision for being an FT and the benefits and risks of being a FT. The main item is the consultation document and it is proposed that there will also be a summary consultation document, presentation for use at meetings and events and a dedicated section on the Trust website.

Once the public consultation has closed, the Trust will need to consider the feedback received during the consultation exercise and decide whether it is sufficient to warrant any changes to our proposals. For example, revisions may take the form of changes to the composition of the Council of Governors.

Following the assessment of feedback gathered during the public consultation, the results of the exercise will be communicated to its stakeholders.

Section 2 - Why Consult?

2.1 Why we need a consultation strategy

It is good practice to ensure that public consultation follows the key principles set out below – these also form the criteria of the Cabinet Office *Code of Practice on Consultation*. They are:

- Consult widely throughout the process
- Be clear about what the proposals are, who may be affected, what questions are being asked and the timescale for responses
- Ensure that the consultation is clear, concise and widely accessible
- Give feedback regarding the responses received and how the consultation process influenced the policy
- Monitor the effectiveness of consultation.

2.2. Benefits of consultation

There are many benefits to consultation for an organisation, including:

Patient focused service - Government policy has developed within the Health Service, in particular Patient Choice and Equality Schemes, to ensure both patients and the public have a greater say in their health care. This is extended with the creation of FTs giving greater accountability to members of the public.

Greater public participation - consultation ensures that each stakeholder has the opportunity to give their views, input and expertise on the future of local health services.

Development of Services that meet the needs of local people - consultation informs the decision making process to enable NHS Trusts to target future health services and ensures that they reflect the needs of the local community.

Improved Reputation - consultation can develop the relationship with local stakeholders and therefore the image of an organisation. It can also strengthen the Trust's role in the community

Generates new ideas and increases public awareness and education about NHS services.

Section 3 – When we will be consulting

Subject to approval by NHS Midlands and East, the WHNHST formal FT consultation will begin in **February 2012 for a period of 12 weeks.**

Section 4 – What we are consulting on

The consultation will aim to gather feedback from the Trust's local community on the strategy and governance arrangements in place for its progression to NHS Foundation Trust status. We will ask the public, patients, our staff and stakeholders for their views on specific questions relating to:

- Our plans and priorities as a Foundation Trust
- Proposals for our approach to membership
- Proposals for our Council of Governors

The Trust's consultation does not serve as a debate on whether or not it should become a FT, but is a consultation on its proposals for its service strategy and how the Trust will run should it be successful in its application.

Section 5 - Who we will consult

Before WHNHST can begin to communicate and consult with its external stakeholders it needs to identify its stakeholders for consultation.

Stakeholders can be defined as all of the groups that could have a significant impact on the organisation and can influence the perception of its reputation. The organisation needs to consult with all of those stakeholders that are eligible to be members (including staff).

This includes groups that:

- are recipients of our services (e.g. current patients and service users, their carers and families)
- are potential recipients of our services (e.g. new markets in which we want to provide services)
- are the agents through which those services are delivered (our staff and partner organisations)
- contribute directly or indirectly to the delivery of those services (partners and key suppliers)
- have a general interest in the quality and impact of our services (members of the public, journalists, third sector organisations and other civil society organisations, policy and decision makers)
- have a specific interest in the quality and impact of our services (commissioners, GPs, clinical commissioning groups, other parts of the health economy, regulators)
- are purchasers or likely purchasers of our services (all potential commissioners)
- can impact upon whether or not we can change the nature of the services we run (local authority OSCs, regulators)

Section 6 - Promoting the Consultation

It is important that the consultation exercise is publicised as widely as possible to ensure that all interested groups have the opportunity to have their say and share their views.

6.1 Communication Channels for External Audiences

The table below shows some of the ways in which we will communicate with external audiences about our FT consultation.

Table 1: External consultation methods

Target Audience	Communications method
General public, patients, hard-to-reach groups, local community and volunteer groups, etc.	WHNHST to host a number of public events
	Attend community events, member events, volunteer events, etc. hosted by other organisations and groups
	Presentations at Local Neighbourhood Partnership meetings
	Specifically target hard-to-reach groups such as BME community, young mothers, etc.
	Use social media to promote the consultation
	Dedicated section on Trust website where people can view the consultation document, view podcasts and feedback online
	Liaison with MyNHS Walsall Parliament and its membership to promote FT messages
	Explore advertising the consultation in other stakeholder's newsletters
Membership	Membership magazines/newsletters
	MyNHS Walsall Parliament website
Local and regional press	Arrange meetings for editors/journalists with the Trust Chair and Chief Executive
	Issue regular press releases to local and regional media about the consultation and offer the press interviews with senior staff
GPs and Practice Managers, Primary Care Trust and Clinical	Regular updates in the monthly GP e-bulletin
	Regular updates in the quarterly GP Choices magazine

Commissioning Consortia	Present at Local Medical Committee meeting
	Present at Clinical Commissioning Group meetings
	Present at Joint Clinical Forum
MPs	Invite to meet with Trust Chair and Chief Executive.

6.1.2 More about external consultation

The Trust will be using every available opportunity to consult and where possible meetings will be held in locations and at times that are suitable to both public and staff audiences, ensuring disabled access and facilities.

The Trust will also continue to participate, present and debate its proposals to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC), Local Involvement Network (LINKs), other NHS organisations, community organisations and the voluntary sector.

A 'consultation calendar' will be developed showing the meetings and events it will consult at and the lead person from the Trust who will attend that meeting. This calendar will be further developed and populated during the pre-consultation period.

6.2 Communication Channels for Internal Audiences

We will consult thoroughly with staff through a variety of channels to help ensure that they are able to give their views on:

- the arrangements for staffing classifications
- the arrangements for the number of staff governors to be elected from each classification.

Briefings will be held with Staff Side via Joint Negotiating and Consultative Committee (JNCC) and as well as corporate communications channels such as Team Brief, Chief Executive's Update, the intranet and the Talking Heads group. Managers and other key staff will also be trained to deliver the messages to their own teams.

We also plan to recruit some 'staff champions' who can be trained to deliver the appropriate messages to their colleagues.

The table on the following page identifies our internal audiences and the channels of communication that we can use to reach them.

Table 2: Communication methods for internal audiences

Target Audience	Communications method
All Staff	Consultation materials and podcasts on intranet
	Chief Executive's Update
	Cascade magazine
	Senior Management Team Brief
	Global emails (when appropriate)
	Talking Heads meetings
	Trust induction
	Staff Q&A sessions
Staff Side	JNCC meetings
Clinical and Medical staff	MAC meeting (Clinical Directors in attendance) Grand Round (all medical staff in attendance) Surgeons meeting
Individual teams	Team meetings – develop presentation and briefing notes to be delivered by manager/supervisor
Community staff	Road show around community sites

6.2.1 More about consulting with staff

In order to ensure information is cascaded as widely as possible within the organisation, senior executives and team managers will be tasked with communicating the Trust's consultation plans to other team members.

A number of meetings will be held for employees of the Trust at which a presentation on the Trust's FT plans and proposals will be given, followed by the opportunity for staff to ask questions and give feedback.

These will include monthly Team Brief sessions, drop-in question and answer sessions, presentations at Trust-wide and divisional meetings, meetings with corporate and service team managers, sessions with the Trust's volunteers and presentations at the induction for newly recruited staff.

Opportunities will also be made available for those staff that do not work daytime working hours.

The Trust's monthly Team Brief sessions will include a consultation presentation/update during the consultation period.

Drop-in question and answer sessions will be held a number of times a month during the consultation period both at the hospital and in community settings. The times of day that these are held will need to be considered to ensure that staff are able to attend.

All staff meetings will be attended by a member of the Trust Executive team with someone in attendance to record attendance and the feedback and this data will be included in the post-consultation document.

6.3 Managing feedback

The outcome of the consultation will directly impact upon the shape of the governance of the organisation and our application to become an NHS Foundation Trust.

Immediate feedback will therefore be sought and recorded at every event.

We recognise that not every person or group will want to or be able to attend a public event so to overcome this and remove barriers the consultation materials will be posted on the Trust's website www.walsallhealthcare.nhs.uk with an online form for feedback. Pre-addressed FREEPOST forms will also be made available for stakeholders to send in their feedback.

Section 7 – The WHNHST Consultation Materials

Once this consultation and communications strategy has been approved, work will begin to develop the suite of consultation materials. The main piece of material is the consultation document which will be made available on day one of the 12-week formal consultation period. It is proposed that this document will include the following information:

- the background of the Trust
- an explanation about what an NHS Foundation Trust is
- an explanation about the public consultation process and the purpose of the consultation
- the key questions the Trust is consulting upon
- the 'vision' element of the Trust's business plan – mission, vision, values, future plans, proposed governance and membership arrangements
- conclusions from any engagement or pre-consultation work and a description of how this has fed into the consultation proposal
- an overview of the process
- the name of the Consultation Coordinator (Director of Strategy)
- a membership form
- signposting to the Trust's website
- agreed corporate messages
- information about the Board
- how to ask questions and become involved

- the availability of different formats of the consultation document
- details of how comments will be analysed, and the results fed back
- timescales.

Where appropriate the consultation document should be available by request in a range of community languages, and to people with a visual disability.

It should conclude with a series of questions, to help with analysing the feedback. It should also be jargon free and clear and written with consideration for its intended audience, in 'Plain English' and include a glossary.

7.1 Consultation material formats

The Trust will develop a suite of consultation materials including:

- Full consultation document
- Summary consultation document
- Easy-to-read document
- PowerPoint presentation for use at meetings and events
- Section on Trust website
- Membership recruitment leaflet

Instructions on how to request documents in different formats/languages (i.e. through PALS) will be available on the back of all consultation materials in a variety of languages.

Section 8 – Reporting on the Consultation

The Trust will be required by Monitor to provide the level of detailed information outlined below as evidence that:

- a robust public consultation has been undertaken and a representative membership base has been developed;
- staff and stakeholder involvement in the development of the integrated business plan has been actively sought and impacted; and
- the organisation can demonstrate a continued commitment to expand and progress the wider culture change and social responsibility required to operate as an NHS foundation trust.

Following conclusion of the consultation the outcomes will be communicated to stakeholders.

Section 9 – Next Steps

On approval of this strategy, the next steps will be taken:

- Gain approval on plan from the OSC (meeting on 24th October)
- Share the consultation and communications strategy with MyNHS Walsall Parliament Steering Committee
- Develop action plan for conducting the consultation
- Develop consultation calendar
- Identify staff to lead at consultation events
- Identify staff to attend and collate feedback
- Approval to move to consultation from NHS Midlands and East
- Develop key messages and presentations for consultation
- Develop consultation documents appropriate to the target audiences
- Timetable and approach for distribution of consultation materials
- Develop consultation feedback document