

Case Study

July 2020

The Company

A NHS Foundation Trust in the East of England (approx. one-year contract)

The Business Situation

The Foundation Trust (FT) was looking for additional corporate governance support to work with the Trust Secretary to address concerns raised in Care Quality Commission (CQC) reports. This was primarily to support the Council of Governors and the individual Governors, but also to help the Trust Secretary with the Board of Directors and minuted meetings held in public and in private.

The Service

- The Council of Governors had started an evaluation process to help them with their statutory duties and their priorities from the CQC reports. As part of this, new sub-committees and forums of the Council were established with clear Terms of Reference and reporting arrangements. Our consultant worked with the key individuals to action and report back on the agreed plan to the Council.
- The role and remit of the Council's Nominations & Conduct Committee was also reviewed, with changes made to their Terms of Reference. Our consultant supported two separate recruitment processes for new non-executive directors, with one concluding during the coronavirus lockdown.
- The Code of Conduct had been reviewed by the Governors previously, and our consultant built on this to update the Code for the Council. A paper was also prepared based on Governors' comments and previous work on meeting procedures, behaviours and expectations.
- Our consultant also supported the annual elections to the Council of Governors, and reviewed the election documentation, and the induction and ongoing training programme for Governors. While the planned, in-person training programme was cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic, the induction was held and received positive feedback.

Uplifting governance

Registered Office: Third Floor, 5 St. Bride Street, London EC4A 4AS.

t: 0845 055 8260 e: info@bhcsecretaries.co.uk w: www.bhcsecretaries.co.uk

Registered Office: Registered Office: Third Floor, 5 St. Bride Street, London EC4A 4AS. Registered in England No. 5620693

- A role description for a Deputy Lead Governor was developed and an election held to the role. Our consultant proposed a nomination and election process for such Council and Governor roles, which was agreed by the Council.
- The Governors had agreed to use MS Teams prior to the coronavirus pandemic. Our consultant worked with the Governors and key FT staff to implement this, and then worked with the Trust Secretary in supporting the Governors to be able to continue their duties virtually, during the pandemic. This included the interviews for the non-executive director role mentioned above.
- The FT's constitution had not been comprehensively reviewed for some time, and so our consultant started from the model documents and previous discussions and decisions. A review of Trust-specific arrangements also took place, such as constituencies and the definition of "significant business" with a review of other FTs undertaken to inform this work. A task and finish group of both Council and the Board members was set up to review options and make proposals, which was lead by our consultant.

The Key Benefits

- **Experience** – from previous knowledge of the specific FT, and working in other FTs, our consultant was able to hit the ground running and deliver the work required within specific timeframes.
- **Relationship Management** – specifically with the Trust Chair and Trust Secretary, and the Council of Governors and individual Governors, and the Board of Directors.
- **Flexibility** – Bridgehouse provided scalable support which meant we were able to adapt in line with the resourcing needs of the FT.
- **Continuity** – the FT appreciated the consistency of resource provided. Reliable and stable, Bridgehouse provided a service which felt like an extension of the existing in-house team.

The Client Told Us

" The delivery of service by Bridgehouse has been exemplary. From start to finish, dealing with the team has been a flawless experience. Our dedicated consultant, Andrea Goldsmith, provided fundamental assistance, aiding us to improve and strengthen a number of key governance processes. We were especially appreciative of the pragmatic and scientific approach to working – Andrea's logical style has been excellent and left us with a number of clear processes that our in-house team can now build upon for the future. We were also extremely impressed with the quality of Minutes produced - they really were superb – solid notes with an incredibly fast turnaround time too. I shall not hesitate to call on Bridgehouse again in the future and will be happily recommending them to my networks. "

NHS FT Trust Secretary, July 2020