

2/5/12

Hello Joseph,

I understand that you, Malcolm and Lynn recently met with the Chairman, Richard Hunt, to discuss your participation in Trust Board meetings.

I met with Richard recently, and I am now writing to let you know what we discussed.

We are obviously keen that Patients' Forum members remain involved in our activities, as well as the other involvement work we are doing with our Foundation Trust members, patient and community groups and Local Involvement Networks across London. As you will know from Beverley and Ruth's updates to the Forum, and through Malcolm being a member of the PPI and Learning from Experience Committees, we are currently running at approximately 100 patient involvement or public education activities per month.

A number of Forum members attend our key committees, and we expect that to continue until members of our council of governors have been elected. We will also continue to support the Forum until that time by providing a meeting room and refreshments when these are available (as you know, the Conference Room has not been recently available to any of us) and photocopying the papers when the meeting is held on our premises. We are also very happy to continue to provide speakers from within the Trust when there are topics on the agenda that relate to their area of responsibility.

In terms of the Trust Board meetings, I understand that the Chairman explained why it is not always possible or appropriate for those attending, in essence to observe, to actually engage in the discussion. Nevertheless, I believe he explained that these board meetings are "held in public" rather than being "public meetings". There will always be at least an opportunity to ask questions at the end of the meeting, although I believe you were hoping for a greater level of participation than that. Malcolm suggested the idea of questions, comments and issues being submitted in advance of the meeting, so that they can be referred to and included in the discussion. This would give you the opportunity to get your views across, whilst still allowing the meeting to run on track. We are amenable to this idea, although if more questions and comments are made than can reasonably be addressed during the meeting, then some of these might be dealt with separately.

At the most recent Board meeting there was an item where one of our patients came and talked about their experience. This is likely to become a regular feature of our Board meetings. Richard has suggested that, if a Patients' Forum member has themselves been a patient of the LAS recently, they could be invited to tell the Board about their experience in that part of the agenda thus using the Patients' Forum valuable experience. He has also asked me to attend a future Trust Board meeting to provide an overview of all our PPI and public education activity, which will also assist in raising the profile of our work.

In summary:

- We will continue to support and provide input to your Patients' Forum meetings.

- We will make provision for you to input comments and questions to the Trust Board by allowing you to submit these in advance of the meeting. If time does not permit all the comments to be discussed within the Trust Board meeting, they will be addressed outside the meeting.

- We will continue to hear about patients' direct experiences of using the Service at our Trust Board meetings, and on occasion this may be provided by a Patients' Forum member with recent experience of using the Service.

- I will give an overview of all our PPI and public education activities at a future Trust Board meeting.

I understand that Lynn gave the Chairman a copy of the Dignity Code. This is now being discussed by the relevant senior managers, in terms of deciding where responsibility for this should 'sit' in the organisation. We will respond to Lynn separately about that aspect of the meeting.

I hope you feel that the concerns you expressed are being considered and addressed appropriately. Richard felt that the meeting was a productive and helpful one, and wanted me to reiterate that we do intend to continue to work with Forum members in a way in which you feel your input is valued.

With best wishes
Margaret

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