Appointment of the Trust's Freedom To Speak Up Guardian

Background

The appointment of Freedom To Speak Up Guardians (FTSUG) in NHS trusts was recommended by Sir Robert Francis, following his review and subsequent report into the failings in Mid-Staffordshire. This recommendation was subsequently supported by the Secretary of State for Health in July 2015 and it became mandatory for every NHS Trust to have an FTSUG in place by October 2016.

FTSUGs have a key role in helping to raise the profile of raising concerns in their organisation and provide confidential advice and support to staff in relation to concerns they have about patient safety and/or the way their concern has been handled. Guardians do not get involved in investigations or complaints, but help to facilitate the raising concerns process where needed, ensuring organisational policies are followed correctly.

At The Queen Elizabeth Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (QEH) it was also decided that the FTSUG would chair the Trust's proposed Staff Forum as part of their role. The Forum is a JSCC backed proposal which would see staff able to highlight both achievements and issues to a panel which would report back to the Executive.

Appointing to the role

There is no fixed guidance as to the type of person who should be appointed as FTSUG and across the county different Trusts have taken different approaches. While some Trusts have appointed Non-Executive Directors, Governors or senior members of staff to the role, others have opted to look externally to their organisation to fill the position.

At The QEH it was decided that the most appropriate course of action would be to appoint someone external to the Trust as this would ensure the person is able to provide the necessary independent oversight and challenge. While the external recruitment process was undertaken, Maureen Carson, Non-Executive Director, was appointed as interim FTSUG in October 2016.

A total of 12 applications were received for the role and of these three candidates were invited to take part in the interview process. This consisted of a presentation, followed by discussion around a particular scenario which might be experienced by the FTSUG and further questions relating to the Trust and its values.

The interview panel consisted of:

Maureen Carson, NED
Dominic Chessum, Head of Communications
Matron Julie Calton.

The Preferred Candidate

Of the two candidates who accepted the invitation to interview the interview panel felt that one candidate stood out.

Angela Adams is a qualified nurse who has a wealth of experience in a variety of managerial, operational, leadership, practice development and project management roles. She has more than 35 years' experience of working in the NHS and during this time has gained significant expertise in managing complex serious incident investigations, interviewing and supporting staff, fact finding and writing reports in a constructive and sensitive manner.

Recommendation

It is recommended that, subject to satisfactory references, the Board approve the appointment of Angela Adams to the role of Freedom To Speak Up Guardian for the initial period of one year.