

ITEM: 09/148
Doc: 4

Meeting: Trust Board
Date: 16th October 2008

Title: **Response to Consultation on the NHS Constitution**

Executive Summary:

A consultation on the NHS Constitution was launched in July by the Department of Health and runs until October 17th when all responses need to be received.

The documents are all available on the DH website and include

- The NHS Constitution
- A Consultation document
- Handbook to the Draft Constitution
- Launch video (to be shown)
- Launch audio
- Quick guide leaflet
- Your Guide to the Proposed NHS Constitution (32 pages)
- Staff Guide to the Proposed NHS Constitution (32 pages)
- Impact assessment
- Leaflets and Constitution available in 10 different languages

The video stresses that the NHS Constitution will provide a firm foundation for the future of the NHS.

The Consultation document has been discussed at the Joint Consultative Committee; awareness of the consultation has been raised amongst staff and the public locally. Information was available to the public at our Fun Day in September and Islington PCT held a consultation day here at the Whittington on October 10th.

Attached is the proposed response to the Consultation.

Once the Constitution is finalised there will be implications for the Trust in terms of aligning the strategy and policies of the organisation. The document is also of value in terms of understanding patient and public expectations of the NHS and so is valuable in informing our customer-focused marketing strategy.

Action: To approve the proposed response

Report from: Siobhan Harrington – Director of Primary Care

Sponsor: David Sloman – Chief Executive

Financial Validation Lead: Director of Finance	Name of finance officer N/A
Compliance with statute, directions, policy, guidance Lead: All directors	Reference:
Compliance with Healthcare Commission Core/Developmental Standards Lead: Director of Nursing & Clinical Development	Reference: C17
Compliance with Auditors' Local Evaluation standards (ALE) Lead: Director of Finance	Reference:
Evidence for self-certification under the Monitor compliance regime Lead: All directors	Compliance framework reference:

From the Chairman's Office

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Dear Colleague

Whittington response to draft NHS constitution

The Whittington would like to thank the Department of Health for the opportunity to respond to the recently published draft NHS constitution. Through the consultation process we have raised awareness of the consultation with staff and public locally. The document was discussed at our Joint Consultative Committee and staff have been encouraged to submit responses as they wish. With regard to public involvement, we had a stand at our fun day in September, with information regarding the consultation on the draft constitution, and on October 10th held a consultation day on site with our Islington PCT colleagues.

Overall as an organisation, the Whittington welcomes the development of an NHS constitution. It is evident that a lot of work has been put into the draft constitution.

With regard to the consultation questions:-

The Trust believes that all NHS bodies and NHS funded organisations should be obliged by law to take account of the NHS constitution.

2. and 3. The constitution should be renewed regularly; as should the handbook.

The statement of purpose and set of principles are appropriate.

5. and 6. The section on public and patient rights is very clear. A shorter executive version could be developed. The concept of a pledge is welcomed as it helps to stretch and focus organisations.

The Trust supports choice, and clarifying the legal position regarding choice is valuable.

There are a broad range of pledges within the draft constitution; the pledge relating to continuous quality improvement is one that we particularly welcome.

Laying out patient responsibilities and expectations of patients and the public, alongside those of the NHS staff and organisations, is welcomed. At this time, we find the responsibility of keeping appointments or cancelling in reasonable time, very helpful.

The mechanisms for complaint and redress are clear and sufficient.

The staff rights and pledges are helpful and in line with how we work with staff locally. We welcome the pledge encouraging staff to put forward ways to deliver better and safer services for patients and their families.

The Trust thinks it is useful for the constitution to set out staff responsibilities.

There may be a risk by publishing a separate statement of accountability, which people may not read or take into account.

We welcome NHS values being included in the constitution.

The Handbook is very detailed, and should not be lengthened.

There will need to be a Communications strategy to raise awareness of the constitution, using many media, and should be introduced and studied in schools.

The implementation process will need to be a whole system approach across the NHS.

We do hope these comments are helpful and were overall impressed by the draft constitution.

Yours sincerely

Joe Liddane
Chairman