

ITEM: 09/152  
Doc: 15

**Meeting:** Trust Board  
**Date:** 18<sup>th</sup> November 2009

**Title:** **The NHS Constitution**

**Executive Summary:** The NHS Constitution was published in January of this year, but the Health Bill, which contains the provisions for the Constitution, is due to receive royal assent this Autumn. The Chair of NHS London has written to all Trusts in September asking that awareness is raised about the Constitution both internally and with our local population.

The Board is asked to demonstrate clearly its commitment to the NHS Constitution.

The letter asks for a report on preparedness to go to Trusts' October board meetings (and so is at this November Board), with future regular review and report on progress of implementation. The report should contain:-

- Discussion on legal rights laid out in Constitution; risks to compliance and mitigation strategy
- Communications Plan in place to ensure staff and stakeholders are briefed on content and best practice encouraged and shared
- Process for nominating an NHS Constitution Champion, who is empowered by the Board to lead on embedding the Constitution locally
- How the Board will ensure that members are aware that patients and the public have important legal rights and NHS pledges to patients and the public. Board members should be fully conversant with these in their roles.

Trusts are asked to ensure that staff and public are engaged; that there is local publicity, that it is built into induction and that line managers continue to engage staff in this area.

Progress on implementation will be built into NHS Chairs' appraisal process.

The key elements of this paper in terms of reiterating the rights and responsibilities from the NHS Constitution are:

- Identified responsibilities for Executive Directors across the organisation to embed the principles of the Constitution
- The proposed communications plan
- NHS Champion to ensure that the Board is confident and able to demonstrate commitment to the NHS Constitution, and is confident of our preparedness for this agenda.

The risks are incorporated into the Trust risk register.

The paper has been discussed with the Executive Committee and Hospital Management Board in October.

It is proposed to identify two people to be NHS Constitution champions; one of the Trust Governors alongside the Trust Director of Primary Care.

**Action:** To demonstrate Board commitment to NHS Constitution.  
To be assured of our preparedness for this agenda.  
To discuss and agree proposed approach to implementation.

**Report from:** Siobhan Harrington – Director of Primary Care

**Sponsor:** Rob Larkman - CEO