

## Membership Strategy

### Plans for 2009/10

The major actions taken by the trust to increase membership, and the actual number of people recruited through each, are recorded in the following table.

ACTION	DATE	TOTAL
Membership stand at Goole Fun Day	5 <sup>th</sup> July 2008	16
Membership stand at Grimsby Carnival	27 <sup>th</sup> July 2008	42
Membership stand at Annual Members Meeting	18 <sup>th</sup> September 2008	2
Grimsby 20,000 leaflet drop (targeting more deprived areas)	w/c 27 <sup>th</sup> October 2008	21
Talks to health and social care students at North Lindsey College	7 <sup>th</sup> October 2008	60
Half page advertisements in Scunthorpe Telegraph / Target (local papers)	w/c 19 <sup>th</sup> November 2008	12
Talks to health and social care students at Franklin College	1 <sup>st</sup> December 2008	107
Talks to health and social care students at Grimsby Institute	11 <sup>th</sup> December 2008	51
Sending respondents to national patient surveys a summary of the results and enclosing an invitation to become a member	Ongoing	14

It can be seen that liaison with local colleges has been by far the most successful activity, both in terms of numbers recruited and cost-effectiveness.

Although not complacent, the trust is reasonably assured that its public membership reflects the composition of the local population, with regards to ethnicity, gender and socio-economic group, to an acceptable level. Despite the success of the initiative in 2008/09, however, younger people are still poorly represented and the trust intends to concentrate its recruitment efforts on this area. The main focus of this will be on continued and expanded liaison with local schools and colleges. One other initiative which will be continued is the contacting of respondents to the national patient surveys: this is not so much for recruitment purposes (as the numbers recruited are actually quite low) but most particularly because informing people of survey results is considered to be good practice.

The Membership Working Group now takes the view that it should concentrate its efforts on engagement with members rather than on increasing their numbers. The target for this year is, therefore, for a modest increase (50 people) of members aged 22 and above, but increase the membership of younger people by a further 50% (that is, 150 people). That is not to say that there will be no attempt to recruit older members: if that were the case then the membership would actually shrink. The trust will continue to participate in outside events and will start this year to have occasional membership stands, manned by governors, in key areas of its hospitals. In addition, in an attempt to reduce the number of members lost through not notifying a change of address, a simple form is being added to every newsletter along with a freepost address for return.

An interesting development for 2009/10 is that at least one primary care partner organisation is planning to adopt a membership model. Discussions have already begun on exploring means by which the two trusts could collaborate on membership issues.

## **Review of membership**

The Membership Working Group (a sub group of the Council of Governors) has responsibility for reviewing all matters relating to membership of the trust and the authority to take any required action. As well as staff and public governors, the group membership includes a specified non-executive director and alternate, and the Trust Secretary; other trust staff attend as required. Minutes of meetings are forwarded to every Council of Governors and these are supplemented by a verbal report by the chairman of the group.

The Membership Working Group meets every two months and a standing item on the agenda is a consideration of a detailed report which shows changes in membership numbers and analyses the current membership by:

- constituency,
- gender,
- age,
- socio-economic group,
- indices of multiple deprivation,
- ethnicity.

The remit of the group includes engagement activity as well as recruitment.

## **Engagement with members**

In this second year of existence as a foundation trust governors are becoming more familiar with, and comfortable in, their role and there has been a considerable improvement in the range and effectiveness of engagement activities as a result. Governors have interacted with members individually in surgery sessions, and have arranged and participated in seven open meetings during the year. Support for these members' events has been encouraging, with an average of more than 50 people attending. In addition to all of this the trust has continued its practice of recording members' areas of interest on the database and using this as the basis for invitations to discussions and consultations.

This greatly increased level of activity makes it all the more disappointing that the turnout at the annual elections for one of the public constituencies was substantially reduced compared with the previous year. Although the turnout for North East Lincolnshire remained the same, and that for the staff constituency was only slightly reduced, in North Lincolnshire it dropped from 45% to 36%. Nevertheless, perhaps some caution should be exercised in using turnout rates alone as a measure of member involvement: in this case it is notable that there were ten candidates for only two seats.

The trust will continue with the three actions instituted last year to promote participation in elections. These were:

- publicising the annual election in the September newsletter,
- issuing press releases about the election in the preceding three months,
- encouraging staff to stand and vote in elections.

In addition, the trust is considering a system for reminding members to cast their vote during the election process.