

## Council of Governors Item 15

**Subject:** NED Walkabouts  
**Date of meeting:** 6<sup>th</sup> December 2022  
**Presented by:** Julian Farmer, Audit Committee Chair

### 1. Executive Summary

Non Executive Director (NED) Walkabouts were reintroduced in June 2022. Due to the continued covid pandemic and focus on the recovery of services, it was agreed that the walkabouts for 2022/23 would be within the non-clinical areas. In addition, Governors were invited to express an interest in joining the NEDs on their walkabouts and a number of Governors have been involved in the programme so far.

This paper provides an overview of the walkabouts undertaken in 2022/23 to date.

The Council of Governors are asked to note the report and Governors are encouraged to join future walkabouts.

### 2. Background

Walkabouts have traditionally been used by Executive Directors, Non-Executive Directors and Governors, and directly provide opportunity to:

- Be visible across the organisation
- Understand services and roles
- Show support and recognition
- Listen to colleagues

Indirectly they also provide an opportunity to triangulate with the assurances received in formal meetings/ papers.

NED walkabouts focus on asking the following questions (i) How your team works (ii) What we can do to improve (iii) health and wellbeing support (iv) How can the Board help?

NED Walkabout guidance is provided in Appendix A.

### 3. NED Walkabouts

The table below provides the schedule of walkabouts along with confirmation of those completed year to date.

NEDs	Areas	June 22	Sept/ Oct 22	Jan/Feb 23
Bob Burgoyne and	Robert Owen House	14.06.22 BB/AL		

NEDs	Areas	June 22	Sept/ Oct 22	Jan/Feb 23
<b>Andrew Lang</b>	Switchboard	14.06.22 BB/AL		
	Facilities		26.09.22 BB	
	Health Records		4.10.22 VD	
	Information Governance		4.10.22 VD	
	Comms/Fundraising		10.10.22 BB	
	Executive Office			•
<b>Nick Brooks/ Margaret Carney</b>	Human Resources	14.06.22 NB/MC		
	Digital	14.06.22 NB/MC		
	Research Department		11.11.22 NB	
	Library		26.09.22 MC	
	Risk Team and FTSU*		17.10.22 MC	
	Clinical Audit		11.11.22 NB	
	Learning & Development			•
<b>Julian Farmer/ Louise Robson</b>	Estates			•
	Patient and Family Support		11.10.22 LR	
	Volunteers		11.10.22 LR	
	Medical Engineering	14.06.22 JF/LR		
	Procurement/Supplies			•
	Finance Department		29.09.22 JF	
	Capital	14.06.22 JF/LR		
	Security		29.09.22 JF	

\*Freedom to Speak up (FTSU) was included as part of FTSU Month in October 2022.

The feedback from the walkabouts has been extremely positive, with summary reports provided to the Executive Group and cascaded to the areas visited.

There will also be the opportunity for discussion and feedback at the Council of Governors meeting.

#### 4. Recommendation

The Council of Governors is asked to note the update and Governors are encouraged to join future walkabouts.

## **Appendix A – NED Walkabout Guidance**

### **Purpose**

NED walkabouts are intended to help NEDs personal development and to fulfil the 'challenge and scrutinise' aspects of their role. Visiting operational departments will enable NEDs to triangulate information seen through board reports and the like with first hand face to face conversations with staff and will enhance their understanding of how the Trust operates. NED visits also provide staff with the opportunity to talk to Board members about what it feels like to work at LHCH in a relaxed and informal setting.

### **Approach**

A programme of visits will be prepared each year covering all LHCH activities with each NED taking a proportionate share of the programme.

The Director of Nursing, Quality and Safety will be consulted on the detail of the programme with particular emphasis on making sure that NED visits do not clash with other planned visits.

Before each visit the NEDs will identify any information requirements and share the planned visits at the next month's NEDs meeting. This will enable the Chair and Director of Risk and Improvement to brief NEDs on any issues relevant to the planned visit. Following this meeting the Director of Risk and Improvement will check with Executive colleagues if there are any further issues that NEDs should be aware of and if that is the case notify NEDs prior to the visit.

The Chair or the Director of Risk and Improvement should be notified of any intention to make an unannounced visit and the visit should be postponed if operational demands at the time do not provide the flexibility for it to be accommodated.

It is inevitable that during these visits staff will rightly raise issues that NEDs will be aware of and likewise there will be others e.g. operational issues that NEDs through their board attendance would not necessarily be sighted on. Many of these will be day to day matters that Executives and Managers will be dealing with as part of the normal running of the hospital. NEDs should not stray into operational management as many issues of this nature raised with NEDs should have been raised by staff with their line managers. So where staff raise issues the immediate response should be to ask have they:

- reported the issues to their line managers
- escalated the issue where they feel they have not been heard or there has been no action
- entered the issue in the risk register
- attended the daily safety huddle to raise concerns
- used the Trusts various means to raise concerns e.g. HALT / Whistle Blowing / Guardians etc

It would undermine the management arrangements if NEDs were seen to take away problems and for them to appear to be resolved by this means so pushing back as above is important without being dismissive of concerns that are raised. NEDs must use their judgement in picking up concerns that rightly should be escalated and the Chair should be immediately contacted if this is the case and in his absence the CEO or Director of Risk and Improvement or in their absence the appropriate Executive Director.

### **Reporting**

After each visit a note will be prepared setting out the key issues discussed during the visit. This will be copied to the Chair, Director of Nursing and Quality and Director of Risk and Improvement for comment before wider circulation to NEDs and Executive Directors. This will ensure that if there are any issues that need escalation or explanation this can be included in the note to provide evidence of action. These notes will be discussed at Executive Group meetings and a summary of feedback for the areas agreed with the NEDs by the Director of Risk and Improvement prior to circulation.