
From: [REDACTED] (IMPERIAL COLLEGE HEALTHCARE NHS TRUST)
Sent: Tuesday, July 14, 2020 6:36 PM
To: [REDACTED] (NHS ENGLAND & NHS IMPROVEMENT - X24) <[REDACTED]@nhs.net>
Cc: DIXON, Michelle (IMPERIAL COLLEGE HEALTHCARE NHS TRUST) <[REDACTED]@nhs.net>
Subject: RE: In confidence: AGM- questions about our chair

Hi [REDACTED]

Hope you're well.

To follow on from Michelle's email yesterday please find attached our latest AGM reactive lines ahead of tomorrow's event. Just to flag that the lines prepared around Paula have been amended slightly.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Many thanks

[REDACTED]

From: DIXON, Michelle (IMPERIAL COLLEGE HEALTHCARE NHS TRUST) <[REDACTED]@nhs.net>
Sent: Tuesday, July 14, 2020 9:17
To: [REDACTED] (NHS ENGLAND & NHS IMPROVEMENT - X24) <[REDACTED]@nhs.net>
Cc: [REDACTED] (IMPERIAL COLLEGE HEALTHCARE NHS TRUST) <[REDACTED]@nhs.net>
Subject: In confidence: AGM- questions about our chair

Hi [REDACTED] - we've still a bit of work to do on our full reactive Q&A for our AGM on Wednesday. I thought i would send the section on our chair in advance so you get a chance to review. It's essentially what we've used previously for public board and ad hoc responses to letters. I'll send to Tim and Paula this evening too for any updated view. See what you think. I'll send the monitoring report tomorrow when it's been updated with latest social media. Very best, Michelle

Our chair [Sir Gerry – unless asking a direct question of Paula]

**In light of the Post Office Horizon developments, do you think Paula Vennells should resign as chair/why don't you think Paula Vennells should resign?
How can the Trust justify/defend the Post Office's actions? Will you not condemn the Post Office's actions?**

How have you been able to confirm that Paula Vennells is a 'fit and proper person' under the CQC's regulation for directors?

Paula was appointed by NHS Improvement in April 2019 and was open about the on-going Horizon issues during her time at the Post Office. Following the Post Office legal ruling and settlement at the end of 2019, our own board examined whether there were any specific implications for the Trust in terms of Paula's position.

Since then, the board has drawn on external legal advice – and input from NHS Improvement - to look again at the information arising from those developments to help inform its response to the CQC who are following up a referral made to them about the suitability of our chair under their fit and proper person regulation. In both cases, the board concluded that all of the information it has remains in line with what was understood by NHS Improvement at the time of Paula's appointment in April 2019.

The board has no additional insight into the complexities of the Post Office issues over the past 20 years and so are only able to draw on their own direct experience of Paula's conduct and contribution to the Trust which has been entirely positive.

We are not in a position to defend or condemn any actions or developments at the Post Office other than to recognise the awful impact on many subpostmasters. We have no particular insight into the complexities of what has been happening over the past 20 years. The latest developments remain in line with what was understood at the time of Paula's appointment. This is the Trust's AGM; it is not the time or place to go into detail of events at the Post Office.

What will you do if the CQC say they have not been assured that Paula Vennells is a 'fit and proper person'?

We will of course review the CQC's response as soon as we have it.

Our chair [direct questions to Paula]

The Post Office's long-running issues relating to the Horizon computer system are well documented - they are really complex and predate my time at the Post Office, running well over 20 years. I am desperately sorry for those affected.

I will always be sorry that we were unable to solve the issue whilst I was CEO, and for the distress it caused. I am very proud of our progress at the Trust in improving care for our patients and local communities and I am committed to helping to achieve much more.

I have had – and continue to have – extremely valuable support from NHS Improvement and my colleagues on the board – they are able to speak for themselves about my role as chair

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