NHS Board Meeting

Wednesday 7th April 2010

Subject
NHS Ayrshire & Arran Consultant Recruitment Procedures

Purpose
To notify the Board on the revised recruitment and selection procedures for consultant appointments following publication of CEL 25 (2009)

Recommendation
To consider the revised procedures for Consultant appointments for the Board.

Approve delegation of authority to make such offers on behalf of the Board to Health Care Directors and Director of Primary Care Development as the Chairs of these Appointment Panels.

1. Background

1.1 NHS Ayrshire & Arran has an existing appointment process for Medical & Dental consultants which met the previous requirements of the Appointment Advisory Committee structures. This requires to be revised in light of the recently released Scottish Government Health Directorate Guidance.

2. Current Situation

2.1 Revised Regulations for the recruitment of consultants in NHS Scotland were introduced with the publication of CEL 25 (2009) - National Health Service (Appointment of Consultant)(Scotland) Regulations 2009.

2.2 The revised process significantly reduces the level of regulation previously associated with Consultant Appointments and allows the recruitment and selection process to be determined and owned by the recruiting Board.
2.3 Elements of the process that remain subject to Regulation and therefore subject to statutory control are:

- The inclusion of an External Advisor.
- The requirement for and composition of an Assessment Panel to conduct the selection and make a decision by vote.
- The delegation of authority to the Chair of the Assessment Panel to make consultant appointments on behalf of the Board.

3. Proposal

3.1 In service of the requirements in respect of papers submitted to the Board the full document, which is entitled “NHS Ayrshire & Arran Procedural Guidance On The Appointment Process for Consultant Medical & Dental Staff” and which exceeds 10 pages, is not presented here and is available through the normal channels. The following paragraphs capture the key features in the document and the issue being presented to the Board for decision-making.

3.2 Annex B of CEL 25 (2009) provided guidance to NHS Employers in Scotland on the revised process. This guidance has been reflected in the revised procedures for NHS Ayrshire and Arran. The procedures reflect the overarching principles for the appointment of consultants within NHS Scotland, namely:

- The consultant recruitment process is owned and determined by the Health Board as the Employer.
- The management of and decisions taken regarding the consultant recruitment process are the responsibility of the Board.
- Recognises that externality provides a valuable contribution to the objective assessment of applicants and the role of an External Advisor is included within the consultant recruitment process.

3.3 In devolving ownership and determination of the process of selection to Boards, consideration has taken place locally about whether enhanced recruitment procedures, similar to those used for senior appointments within the Board, should be adopted for consultant appointments. Following consultation it is felt appropriate to retain the current structured interview format in the interim. This is the recognised methodology used for consultant appointments across Scotland at present, and deviation from this norm may adversely affect applicant numbers. It is proposed that this decision will be reviewed in future as part of the development of Board recruitment processes.

3.4 The revised process requires that the Board should identify a Lead Officer who will oversee the recruitment process, supported by Human Resources and a Chair of the Assessment Panel who will have the delegated authority of the Board to make an offer of employment.
3.5 Following local consultation it has been identified that the Recruitment Lead role will be fulfilled by the Associate Medical Director and the Chair should be the Health Care Director for the Directorate in which the appointment is being made. This decision reflects the revised management structures within NHS Ayrshire and Arran where consultant staff are managerially accountable to the Health Care Director with professional responsibility aligned to the Associate Medical Director.

3.6 This decision, and the revised composition of the Assessment Panel, removes the requirement for involvement of a Non-Executive Director in the selection process.

3.7 The amended Regulations require that an external advisor is appointed to advise the Board throughout the recruitment process. The process of appointing an External Advisor is now done via the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges and the post cannot be advertised until the advisor has had the opportunity to comment on and where necessary, discuss the job description and personal specification with the Lead Recruitment Officer.

3.8 The revised procedures clearly identify roles and responsibilities at each stage of the recruitment and selection process as well as introducing a timeline for the process. This should enable a significant reduction in the time taken from identifying the need to recruit to the offer stage from 18-20 weeks previously to around 10-12 under the revised arrangements. This will have the consequential effect of ensuring service provision is not adversely affected pending an appointment.

4. Consultation on development of this report

4.1 The revised procedure has been subject of consultation with health care and medical managers and the Local Joint Negotiation Committee has also been consulted upon the new procedures. The proposal has been approved by all Directors.

5 Resource implications

5.1 All participants in the Recruitment and Selection process will require to undergo Equality and Diversity training. This training will be delivered using a certified online package, currently in use for Scottish Medical Training recruitment procedures. The module takes approximately 4-8 hours to complete and additional licenses may be required. Refresher training will be needed every 3 years. Assessment panel members who have not attended or undergone Equality and Diversity training will require to be identified at the outset of the process and will be expected to complete training prior to involvement in short listing. A data-base will be established to ensure training is recorded and maintained. These costs will be absorbed as part of efficiencies delivery.

5.2 The reduced time-line for the new process will improve service provision by enabling new appointees to take up post earlier than under the former arrangements.
5.3 The revised composition of the Appointment Panel releases Non-Executive Directors from their involvement in the process.

6. Risk assessment and mitigation

6.1 Unless NHS Ayrshire & Arran is compliant with the required Scottish Government Health Department Directorate guidance, it will not be able to appropriately appoint Consultant medical and dental staff.

6.2 Adoption of the present proposals will fully mitigate that risk.

7. Impact Assessment and Consequential Changes Proposed to Mitigate Adverse impacts identified.

7.1 An independent Equality Impact Assessment was carried out a national level as part of the work undertaken in reviewing the consultant recruitment process and the revised procedures are in accord with this process.

There is no identified adverse impact.

8. Conclusion

8.1 The Board is invited to:

8.2 • Consider the revised procedures for Consultant appointments.
• Approve delegation of authority to make such offers on behalf of the Board to Health Care Directors and the Director of Primary Care Development as the Chairs of these Appointment Panels.

Dr Bob Masterton
Executive Director – Medical Directorate
18 March 2010
(Claire Bulloch)