

# Chairman's Note

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Dear Board Member,

## Key considerations

Since we last met the key things on my mind have been:

- As a Board how do we seek to ensure that we are an exemplar in terms of the latest guidance now being issued by the Care Quality Commission about Board effectiveness and how should we measure outcomes in this area?
- As a Board how do we ensure that there is a continuous focus on ensuring best value in terms of balancing financial pressures with safety and quality in service provision?
- As one of the largest NHS organisations within our local health and social care setting how do we give practical effect to the concept of interdependence with our partner organisations and ensure there is a common understanding of the issues?

## Priority Items & Questions

In preparation for our next board meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> October I would like to highlight the following issues:

1. Since the last Trust Board meeting I have attended a conference organised for Trust Chairs where the agenda focused on a number of (what I think are) pertinent issues. These included the implications of new tests for Boards that are being introduced by the Care Quality Commission and will be used as part of their assessment process in future inspections. Of particular interest to us are the introduction of the 'fit and proper person' test which relates to the suitability of individual Board members and the 'well led' Board concept which focuses on how Boards collectively discharge their responsibilities. Given the upcoming CQC inspection which is likely to occur during 2016 this will be the subject of a specific session at our next Thinking Day.  
This poses the question in my mind – if we wish to be an exemplar in this area (and there is as yet relatively little guidance about how to put it into practice) what does success in this context look like?
2. Another theme at the conference was how Boards should be responding to the challenges of balancing financial pressures with ensuring safe and high quality service provision. This

particular session focused on some innovative work that is being undertaken which highlighted an approach emphasising best value rather than simply considering a focus on achieving lowest cost. Given the national pressures facing the NHS as a whole (both now and in the future) and in terms of our own Trust, this question of striking an appropriate balance has to be an important and ongoing focus for the Board and its Committees. This poses the question in my mind – as a Board how do we remain confident (or assured) that decision making within the organisation will continue to consider this balance in an appropriate manner?

3. I would also like to draw the Board's attention to the forthcoming meeting with Board representatives from the three clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) and our sister provider (the Partnership Trust) during the Thinking Day in October. The intention is (as we did in the April session when we last met together) to focus on a number of strategic issues which have implications across the health system in the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland region. Colleagues will know that I have previously drawn attention to the need to think and operate in terms of our mutual interdependence with other parts of the health and social care system. The challenges of providing efficient and effective health services against a background canvas of increasing and different needs within the population combined with finite limits to our collective resources underline the need for transformative change not only in our organisation but also within our partners. I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome Dr Nil Sanganee as the nominee of the three CCGs to our Board as a participant observer in place of Dr Richard Palin.
4. During this week I visited a cardiology ward and the breast screening service (both located at Glenfield) and the pathology service based at the Royal Infirmary. It was a useful opportunity to engage with staff and listen to their insights about their services. As always I am deeply impressed by the commitment to provide the best possible service to our patients. That continued goodwill is an essential ingredient in the equation of balancing financial pressures with maintaining quality. I also learnt that the family of a patient who had died recently in one of our hospitals had praised our staff for their care and support during the funeral service. I think this exemplifies what Caring at its Best is all about. The health fair which was organised to coincide with our recent Annual Public Meeting also demonstrated the commitment of our staff from across a wide range of services.
5. I look forward to seeing you at the forthcoming Board meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015.

Regards,  
Karamjit Singh

*Chairman, University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust*