

Chairman's Note

Trust Board paper D

Dear Board Member,

In previous notes to the Trust Board I have commented on the priorities for which we as a unitary board should continually be seeking measurable delivery outcomes. These are the quality of our services; ensuring the restoration and transformation of our services; ensuring the physical reconfiguration of our estate is on budget and on time; achieving financial sustainability in the short and longer term, and making a positive contribution towards addressing health inequalities in our local communities. I would like to see our ongoing discussions continue in the short and medium term and with each Committee contributing to ensuring there is appropriate assurance to and focus on the part of the Board as a whole.

Our short term focus

At the time of writing this report the national lockdown regime is due to end on December 2nd and the city of Leicester and counties of Leicestershire and Rutland are all currently listed as being in Tier 3 from December 3rd onwards. There will be a Parliamentary vote on the scale and duration of local Tier systems and we may see changes to these proposals. Responding to suggestions that there might be substantial changes to Tier designations, the CEO of NHS Providers (and here I declare an interest as a member of its national Board of Trustees) has publicly commented that this may increase the risks facing the NHS during the winter period.

In our own context as an acute provider this could have implications for attendances, admissions, internal flow and discharges of patients in responding to the needs of Covid 19 patients as well as the challenges of seeking to maintain elective activity at appropriate levels. Our Acting Chief Executive Officer and acting Chief Operating Officer will doubtless pick these themes up amongst their comments to the Board. In addition I would look to the Chair of the People, Process and Performance Committee and his (non executive and executive) colleagues to provide assurance to the Board that these issues are being monitored, discussed in detail and that appropriate actions are being undertaken.

In an inspection report last week covering another Trust the Care Quality Commission (CQC) commented that there were “few examples of leaders making a demonstrable impact on the quality and sustainability of services”. These comments speak directly to the other two legs of the stool in addition to performance (that is quality and resources) which all NHS Boards are required to focus on and are held accountable for to our regulators. In addition to commentary from the Medical Director and Chief Nurse, I would look to the Chair of the Quality and Outcomes Committee and her colleagues to provide appropriate assurance to the Board that quality and safety issues are integral to the monitoring of clinical services as well as focusing on how we retain a CQC rating of Good for our services. Similarly I would look to the Chair of the Finance and

Investment Committee and his colleagues to provide assurance to the Board that our approach towards financial capability and governance is robust and there is a systematic approach towards planning and delivering a financially sustainable future.

The Audit Committee is a mandatory requirement for all NHS Boards and it has in governance terms an independent status which sets it apart from other committees. I am certain the Committee Chair and his colleagues will be carefully considering the risks facing the organisation and what actions are necessary to provide assurance to the Board. Finally the role of our Charitable Funds Committee is to ensure how best to utilise the donations made by members of the public and other institutions as well as supporting the Children's Hospital Appeal.

Our medium term focus

In addition to the Board, its committees and executives maintaining the short term focus (outlined above) into the medium term, the decision last week by our regulator NHSE/I to issue a consultation paper on the future composition and role of integrated care systems has implications during this period. The attached briefing by NHS Providers [NHS Providers briefing note on integrating care](#) highlights the fact that there is a clear direction and timetable for legislation during 2021 ushering in changes to the nature of commissioning, how providers are involved in developing this new landscape, and drawing in other stakeholders such as local authorities and patient groups. This focus on system transformation will have major implications for our organisation even though we will retain legal and fiduciary responsibilities for our services. We will need to look inwards and outwards during this period and engage with all our stakeholders.

Condolences

Board members will be aware that we have lost two valued and respected members of staff since we last met and I have written to both families on behalf of the Trust Board.

Health Inequalities

Some Board members met with our opposite numbers at the University of Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust (UHCW) for an initial meeting to discuss the role of acute trusts such as ours (which are also teaching and research institutions) in addressing health inequalities within our local communities. We agreed that further discussions will take place early in 2021 in order to identify partnership opportunities and where we might learn from each other's experiences.

Board related matters

The recruitment process for the Chief Executive Officer has been paused until an appropriate time in 2021. A number of factors including the immediate pressures facing our executive team as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic, winter pressures and trying to maintain elective services; noting that candidates were focusing on similar issues in their own settings ; and with other emerging challenges were all taken into account. This decision was made easier because of the ongoing and steadfast leadership provided by the Acting Chief Executive, Rebecca Brown since she has been in this role.

Recognising the financial challenges facing the trust, a recruitment process is currently being undertaken for an Associate Non Executive Director with appropriate senior financial and governance experience in order to augment the existing skills and experience round the Board table. The role was advertised on the national Public Appointments website as well as a targeted search being undertaken by our regulator NHSI/E.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Simon Lazarus for his appointment to the substantive role of Chief Financial Officer which further strengthens the Board following his role as interim Chief Financial Officer for the past eleven months.

I would also like to thank Vipal Karavadra for his contribution to our discussions as an Associate Non Executive Director and to Andrew Johnson, non executive director, for mentoring him. Vipal came to us through the NEXT scheme organised by NHSI/E which selects individuals aspiring to become Non Executive Directors and buddies them with Trusts before they then apply for NED roles with provider trusts. His term ends this month and I am sure we all wish him well for the future.

I look forward to seeing you at our next Board meeting on 3rd December 2020.

Regards

Karamjit Singh
Chairman, UHL

A message from Karamjit Singh CBE Chairman



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of

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30 November 2020

November Trust Board and Chief Executive recruitment update

Dear Colleagues,

I know so many of you are working under great pressure responding to the upsurge in COVID-19 cases whilst doing all you can to maintain existing services against a backdrop of winter pressures. On behalf of the Board, thank you for everything you are doing.

I do not underestimate the challenges you face and also the emotional toll of working in the NHS at the moment. This was made all the more evident recently in the sad loss of one of our own to COVID-19. Professor Tony Gershlick contributed so much to the Trust and University in his roles as a clinician and academic as well as to countless patients and colleagues across the international cardiology community. We have also had the tragic news recently, of the sudden passing of Richard Cole, a greatly respected member of our pathology team who has made huge contributions to our Trust and patients over his 34 years with us. My thoughts and condolences, and those of the Trust Board, are with Tony and Richard's families and all those who knew them.

CEO recruitment process

In these difficult times, strong and consistent leadership continues to be vital both in our Trust and elsewhere. With this in mind, I have decided to pause the recruitment process that was underway for our permanent Chief Executive post to enable focus to remain on tackling the challenges we and the wider NHS are facing now and over the coming months. The recruitment process will restart at an appropriate time next year.

I am delighted to say that Rebecca Brown, our Acting Chief Executive, will continue to lead the organisation during the challenging times ahead. I'd like to take the opportunity to thank her for her steadfast and compassionate leadership over the course of the year so far, during the toughest few months the NHS and the Trust has ever faced.

November Trust Board update

At our last Trust Board meeting we were pleased to hear about the Trust's ongoing success in supporting apprenticeships and specifically in developing new apprentice roles. The Trust has enrolled over 700 staff on apprenticeships covering 35 programmes with over 20 providers. There have been over 200 successful apprenticeships completed since their launch in 2017 and excitingly, our own Apprenticeship Centre developed a bespoke education programme to support a new role of Trainee Assistant Practitioner in Theatres. The power of apprenticeships was highlighted through the personal story of Twinkle Armechin, one of our apprentices and we congratulated her on being a national BAME Apprentice Finalist for 2020.

The Board also discussed the Ward Assessment and Accreditation process which was launched by our Chief Nurse, Carolyn Fox and her colleagues in August 2019 and is being rolled out across adult inpatient wards in the Trust. We heard from staff at the Brain Injury Unit, our first ward to have gained three consecutive green assessments and to meet the criteria for achieving Caring At Its Best Blue Ward Status. This assessment is undertaken by a panel consisting of the Chief Nurse and other colleagues (including externally from our regulator NHSI and a Non-Executive director) so it is a rigorous process. Reaching Blue Ward status is a fantastic achievement and I know the learning from the Brain Injury Unit is being shared. Thank you to everyone for their hard work on this important programme of work to help us achieve improvements in care for our patients.

In my own note to the Board I mentioned our focus over the next few months, including the importance of addressing health inequalities and environmental sustainability. We currently face the challenges of responding to COVID-19, annual winter pressures, sustaining the quality and safety of our services, and understanding the key drivers for our current financial position and taking corrective actions as necessary. COVID-19 has also highlighted existing health inequalities that are experienced by communities and for us locally, understanding what this means for everyone within our diverse communities is so important so we can make positive changes for the future. I am also keen, just as we have with our work on the apprenticeship programme, that we ensure social values related to the physical reconfiguration of the Trust estate and the transformation of our services are at the forefront. For example, how we deliver employment and training opportunities for individuals living in our most deprived communities. This was discussed by the Board and a strategy is being produced that covers employment issues but also more wide ranging including the role of public art and environmental sustainability. This last point has also been raised with me by a number of you including issues such as the impact of air pollution, transport arrangements, our built environment now and in the future, recycling, and personal behaviours.

In other reports at the Trust Board, we heard from Rebecca Brown, our Acting Chief Executive, who shared quality and performance dashboards which we consider each month as a Board and in greater detail at the appropriate Committees. We also received a report from Simon Lazarus, our Chief Financial Officer, which sets out our financial performance and what we are trying to do

in achieving greater efficiencies. Our Medical Director, Andrew Furlong, introduced a discussion about our integrated risk and assurance framework. It is worth noting that the key risks considered by the Board cover clinical safety and quality; operational performance; workforce; finance; IT; estates maintenance and reconfiguration; responding to COVID-19 and restoration. These reports and others are all accessible on our Trust website should you wish to read the detail. The Board also received a report from Hazel Wyton, our Chief People Officer, about the new NHS National People Plan. This was a welcome report, recognising that people are the most valuable resource within the NHS. It demonstrates commitment to you, as our staff, in how we ensure that you are supported and developed. that we make full use of your valuable skills and experiences, that discrimination in any form is tackled, and sets out how we recruit and keep staff. The People Plan is very much in keeping with our Trust values and I look forward to seeing more development and implementation of the plan locally, as it is so important for each and every one of you.

This is a short summary of the themes which we discussed at the last Board meeting. These topics and more besides are also considered in detail by my Non-Executive Director colleagues in our Board committees covering audit, finance, people, process and performance, and quality outcomes. We are a large complex organisation and there is much to consider and do, but ultimately the NHS is about people – the people we serve and the people who provide that service which is all of you. Please be assured of our continued commitment to you all and thank you again, from me and my Trust Board colleagues for your continued hard work and for the contribution you make.

Best regards,

Karamjit Singh

Chairman, Leicester's Hospitals

