

Chairman's Note

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Trust Board paper D

Dear Board Member,

Our immediate service focus

As we move into the sixth month since the Covid 19 pandemic has impacted on our national and local communities, the Board has also had a clear steer nationally from our regulator NHSI/E about the expectations for timescales and outcomes in restoring services. Undertaking this and ensuring ongoing Covid 19 protection has to be a priority together with planning for the winter scenarios. We have to promote public confidence by being transparent about this and I look forward to the Board demonstrating how we respond to these challenges.

Our organisational priorities

I want to take this opportunity of reminding our Board of the five priorities that we will have as an organisation in the short to medium term and our focus at Board, committee and executive level has to be on achieving these outcomes. They are:

- (1) Maintaining the quality of our services at their current CQC rating of Good and ultimately to achieving an Outstanding rating;
- (2) Ensuring the restoration and transformation of our services to meet the current and emerging needs of our local communities , whilst ensuring adequate ongoing provision in relation to the Covid 19 pandemic;
- (3) Delivering a reconfiguration programme that is on budget and on time, and is aligned to the system wide transformation of health services that is necessary to meet the future needs of our local communities;
- (4) Achieving financial sustainability through the delivery of focused efficiency and performance programmes within the resources available to us;
- (5) Addressing health inequalities within our diverse local communities as part of a sustained system wide approach to these themes.

I would like to see the Board take stock of progress at regular intervals and I look forward to seeing how the respective committees and executive forums (corporate, CMGs, estates and facilities) ensure that reporting is outcome based with the appropriate accountability identified for delivery. I also expect to see appropriate assurance processes underpinning this.

Working with our partners

Elsewhere on the agenda we will be considering our responsibility to work in collaboration with our partner organisations and to ensure that we all work together to deliver a joined up health system to meet the current and emerging needs of our local communities. Until there is a change in primary legislation which may entail changes in structures and responsibilities, we (and our partners) should continue to operate as Boards with distinct legal and fiduciary responsibilities. The overarching governance principle should be subsidiarity – namely that decision making should be taken at the lowest level – and that only issues which require a defined common purpose should be the focus of any committees in common or system wide structures. Creating structures ostensibly with responsibilities that are not supported by a statutory remit

will only cause confusion and lack of clarity. An obvious area of collaboration together is to focus on the population health of our local communities and how health inequalities should be addressed. These are not new issues and again there is (rightly in my view) a national steer that health systems should demonstrate positive change in this area.

Health inequalities

At our recent informal Trust Board meeting we had an informative session on how Covid 19 has impacted on BAME and other communities with contributions provided by researchers linked to the University of Leicester. I am grateful to our colleague Professor Philip Baker for organising this session. One of the themes arising from this session was the role of an acute hospital such as ours in addressing health inequalities. Given that this is one of our five organisational priorities and that the Board needs to ensure there is an ongoing focus, there will be at least one item at each Board meeting on the theme of health inequalities. This month I am pleased to announce we will be receiving a presentation from Dr Prashanth Patel, our Clinical Director for CSI, who will be discussing the research undertaken into testing our staff for antibodies. We should remember that actions taken to identify risks and protect our staff also have implications in the community setting for them, their families and their local communities given our size and that we are an anchor institution.

Reconfiguration governance

We now have the opportunity of a once in a generation capital investment in our estate with its profound implications for our services and about which our staff, patients and local communities will also have opinions. From today onwards we will have a separate Trust Board meeting in the afternoon on the same day as our monthly cycle of Board meetings. These meetings will begin at 2pm with a public session followed by a private session for matters that are appropriately designated. This Board focus is important to ensure appropriate time is given to governance and also that our local public audiences understand what is happening in relation to the reconfiguration process and investment.

Volunteering and the NHS

Earlier this month I spoke at a national webinar and subsequently a virtual round table discussion considering the theme of volunteering in the NHS during the Covid 19 pandemic and in the future. As you would expect I highlighted the active participation and enthusiasm of our several hundred volunteers before the pandemic and how this had been scaled back dramatically in order to ensure their personal safety, infection prevention and risk assessments were taken account of. As we move into a new phase of restoring our services the importance of volunteering will again come into greater focus. Our diverse volunteers represent a human bridge to our local communities and we need to provide opportunities for them as well as acknowledging the contribution they make to our culture and functioning.

Recruitment of Chief Executive

As previously notified, John Adler's service with the Trust formally ends on 18th September. I am sure you will join me in wishing him and his family well for the future. Arrangements are in hand to launch a recruitment exercise this month for his successor and I will keep the Board updated about developments.

I look forward to seeing you at the forthcoming Board meeting on 3 September 2020.

Regards

Karamjit Singh
Chairman, University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust