

# Chairman's Note

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Trust Board paper C

Dear Colleagues,

This is our first Board meeting since the last week in March and I am grateful to all Non-Executive and Executive Board members, as well as other senior staff, in working together collaboratively in order to ensure that the functioning of the Trust has been monitored in an appropriate and proportionate governance framework given the challenges posed by Covid 19. As part of these changes I am grateful to Ballu Patel for taking on the Non-Executive responsibility for Freedom to Speak Up issues and Health and Well Being issues. In addition I appreciate Vicky Bailey is joining the Audit Committee in her capacity chairing the Quality and Outcomes Committee, and would want to thank Martin Traynor for his previous role as a member of the Audit Committee.

I would also want to comment on behalf of myself and all Board colleagues that we are deeply grateful for the motivation, commitment and compassion that all staff have shown during the past few weeks in caring for patients and attendees at our hospitals. In addition we are appreciative of the continued flow of donation in monetary terms or in kind from individuals, organisations and corporate entities based in all parts of our local communities.

We are beginning to see a national decline in transmission rates of Covid 19 and which will hopefully lead to diminishing rates of patients being admitted and increasing rates of discharges. Regrettably there have been high levels of patient deaths and all of us will be aware of the stress this has caused for families of the deceased as well as the dedicated staff in working in the appropriate clinical areas.

One issue that needs an urgent response within both our Trust and the health system as a whole is the experience of black and minority ethnic (BAME) staff and patients and their disproportionate presence amongst the fatalities stemming from Covid 19. Last week I was invited to listen into a wider virtual discussion between over 240 BAME staff and Purna Issar the national People Director for NHSE/I and at which Baroness Dido Harding (the Chair of NHSE/I) gave her reflections. Given our local demography this is an issue that we cannot ignore. There is concern and anxiety within some staff and our local communities and we have to respond appropriately.

The focus on Covid 19 with an emphasis on Command and Control delivery at central, regional and local levels will also have to take account of an increasing response to other health needs in our communities, and this is exemplified by recent correspondence from the Chief Executive of NHSE/I (which is attached to the Acting Chief Executive's report). As a Board we have to recognise that the post Covid scenario facing our society as well as health services will not be the same as it was before significant levels of infection occurred. As a Board and as a health system we need to have appropriate strategies that recognise this. This raises a number of issues such as:

- how do we embed innovation which may have occurred but also recognise that pragmatism may not necessarily lead to real quality change in the longer term?
- how do we support senior leaders and staff to move into a different mode of delivery?
- how do we ensure that our governance structures respond effectively and appropriately to this emerging scenario?
- what are the new skills and attributes needed throughout the Trust and health and social care system?
- what assumptions will we need to jettison as we plan for the future?

These are only some of the questions we will need to focus on as a Board as we think about the needs of our communities in the future.

I look forward to seeing you at our next Board meeting on May 7th.

Regards,

**Karamjit Singh, Chairman, University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust**