

Chairman's Note

Author: Karamjit Singh

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Trust Board paper C

Dear Board Member,

Key considerations

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

- As a large organisation serving our diverse community of patients, their carers and the public at large, how do we ensure that we are receptive and responsive to learning from their experiences and perceptions about our services?
- As one of the largest NHS organisations in England how does Trust Board ensure it continues to focus on the immediate challenges (in particular those of finance, ensuring safety and quality, and performance) and balancing this against the necessity to look forwards and plan for the future?
- As a large teaching NHS hospital trust how do we ensure there is an appropriate strategic relationship with the University of Leicester (as well as De Montfort and Loughborough) so we can maximise the potential benefits for all parties?

Priority Items & Questions

In preparation for our next board meeting I would like to highlight the following priority items and a few specific questions to consider.

1. Since the last formal Board meeting we had a specific session at our Thinking Day dedicated to learning from the patient experience. In addition to the Trust Board and a number of senior staff who receive patient feedback through various channels including social media, we also had representatives from the three Healthwatch organisations representing the geographical localities of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland who were present. Persons representing the Patient Partners who play an active role within the Trust and from the Leicester Mercury Patients Panel were also present. This was a very useful session with a considerable opportunity for learning on an individual and collective basis. I look forward to seeing how we are able to convert this learning into practical steps that deepen the relationship between ourselves and our partners in this area. The question we should be asking ourselves is – what does success look like in this context?

2. During the past few months I have (in common with all colleagues) become increasingly aware of the national and local context in which health services are experiencing a number of pressures. As part of the agenda today we will be considering reports detailing the financial challenges which the Trust faces in meeting its current and future plans, the performance challenges which occur in areas such as emergency and other services, and how we are seeking to ensure that safety and quality issues are addressed in a proactive and positive manner. However we also conscious that we have an ambitious reconfiguration agenda over the next five years which has major implication not just for us as an organisation but our community and our partner organisations.

3. This has posed questions in my mind such as :
 - 3.1. As a Board how do we support the Executive Team in ensuring an appropriate focus and sense of urgency about these issues throughout the Trust in order to encourage staff to think about this in terms of the potential contribution that they can make? Although there is a sustained level of communication with staff we are also a complex organisation where leadership is distributed. I look forward to attending the Leadership Conference on 29 September where our Chief Executive John Adler and his colleagues will seek to balance the here and now pressures with creating a sense of momentum and commitment for the future.
 - 3.2. How do we ensure that there is a common understanding and ownership of the challenges facing different organisations in the local health and social care economy?
 - 3.3. How do we try and measure success in this area and what does it look like?

4. Last week myself, John Adler and some of our senior colleagues were invited to a working dinner with Paul Boyle the Vice Chancellor of Leicester and his senior team. There was a clear wish to create a deeper and sustained strategic relationship between our respective organisations in the future as against a perceived focus in the past on specific transactions. Recruitment and retention; training and development; a common enterprise approach to identify opportunities ; renewing existing commitments ; recognising clinical excellence ; and developing research portfolios were some of the issues discussed. This has posed questions in my mind such as:
 - 4.1 As a Trust Board how do we ensure that we promote strong relationships with our three local universities with a focus on innovation ; promoting excellence in a health context; and thinking outside traditional boundaries in terms of our involvement ?
 - 4.2 How do we try and measure success in this area and what does it look like?

I look forward to seeing you at our forthcoming board meeting on 3rd September 2015.

Regards,

Karamjit Singh

Chairman, University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust