

Chairman's Note

Trust Board paper D

Dear Board Member,

Last week Board colleagues will appreciate that as a country we passed the grim milestone of over 100,000 Covid related deaths and it grieves me to note that as a Trust we have also seen over 1,000 Covid related deaths amongst our patients, including from within our own hospital community. We have a diverse community served by staff that are reflective of it and with individuals and their families belonging to many faiths and to none. As a Sikh I feel it is appropriate to quote our tenth Guru who said *"All human beings are the reflection of one and the same Lord. Recognise the whole human race as one."*

I would like us to collectively observe a minute's silence in order to remember them.

I would again, on behalf of the Board, like to highlight the critical role that all our staff have played and will continue to play in serving our patients and communities and to express our heartfelt thanks for their commitment and motivation during what has (and will continue to be) a difficult period in the weeks ahead. Our staff have been serving their fellow citizens throughout the pandemic as well as dealing with pressures within their own families and communities. All of us will be mindful of the staff members who have found themselves comforting and holding the hands of patients at the closing stage of their lives without the opportunity for their families to visit them physically.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the contributions made by our own staff, colleagues from other health partner organisations, the Armed Forces and volunteers in establishing the vaccination hubs within the three hospital sites and their continuing success in maintaining high numbers of vaccinations on a daily basis. It is gratifying to learn that by the end of last week over 75% of UHL staff (nearly 13,000) had already been vaccinated. This is a very positive message against the backdrop of concerns about the Covid 19 pandemic and its continuing impact on all parts of our lives both as individual citizens and as communities.

In considering the agenda for this Board meeting I would want to draw your attention to one item in particular. This is the draft minutes for the Audit Committee which took place last week on 27th January 2021 and the statutory recommendations being made by our External Auditor. He has highlighted a number of financial performance, controls and governance issues which we should consider carefully and I anticipate this agenda item will have more time devoted to it relative to others.

I am also pleased to report that the formal recruitment process for Kathryn Gillatt has been finalised and she is now an Associate Non-Executive Director on the UHL Board. She is a chartered accountant and has extensive executive experience in the NHS, local government and Driving Standards Authority. Her current non executive experience includes Board membership of a social enterprise operating in social care, TGH which is the UHL pharmacy subsidiary, and NHS Business Services.

Our second appointment as an Associate Non-Executive Director now has only one step outstanding before the formal recruitment process is complete. I anticipate this will happen shortly. It would not be appropriate to provide any personal details at this point except to note he is a CIPFA qualified accountant with senior financial and governance experience.

Both of these appointments were made following nationally recognised guidelines for transparency and robustness in the conduct of recruitment processes. They will augment the appointment of Mike Williams as a Non-Executive Director five months ago with his background as a chartered accountant and wide ranging senior governance and finance experience.

I look forward to seeing you at our next Trust Board meeting on Thursday 4th February 2021.

Regards

Karamjit Singh
Chairman, UHL