

Meeting title:	University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust Public Board Meeting
Date of the meeting:	7 th April 2022
Title:	Chair's Report
Report presented by:	John MacDonald, Chair
Report written by:	John MacDonald, Chair

Action – this paper is for:	Decision/Approval		Assurance		Update	X
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Thank You

In the past, Spring has signalled some relief from the pressure that winter brings with more people requiring urgent or emergency care. Sadly this has not been the case for the last couple of years and we are not seeing any reduction in the number of people requiring care. Covid plays a part in this but with Covid only being diagnosed after attendance at A and E, other underlying causes are driving this demand.

Over the last month I have visited and met with staff across the Trust including those in theatres, intensive care, children's services and A and E (where I was joined by David Sissling, Chair Designate of the LLR Integrated Care Board and Cathy Ellis, Chair of Leicester Partnership Trust). I have also had the opportunity to visit the Evington Centre at LGH; the Bradgate and Beacon Centres at Glenfield and St Lukes Hospital and met with a number of LPT staff which has given me a better understanding across the system.

Your commitment, resilience and compassion was clear. We had some honest conversations about the challenges you face. I was also really impressed and encouraged by the number of ideas and suggestions to improve the care we provide and the quality of working life. We need to enable you to make these changes.

Finally, I would like to thank all staff who have been working under this pressure for over two years with no let up. I know it has been tough both professionally and personally for many of you and as a Trust we need to do all we can to support you.

Appointment of System Non-Executive Director

I am delighted to announce that Dr Gopal Sharma has been appointed as a Non-Executive Director at UHL. Gopal is a very experienced GP with considerable knowledge and experience of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland system. He also has wide managerial, clinical governance and regulatory experience having worked for the GMC, Health Professions Council (HPC), Care Quality Commission (CQC) and NHSE/I.

Staff Survey

The annual staff survey was published last week and shows how challenging the last couple of years have been with responses across a wide range of indicators reflecting the pressure on all during Covid, increased mental health concerns and metrics relating to recognition. The responses at UHL show a similar pattern as other Trusts however across most indicators UHL is below average. The Chief Executive has written to all staff setting out a number of actions that the Trust has committed to aimed at improving the quality of life and the health and wellbeing of all staff. This will be a focus for the Board over the coming year and beyond.

Equality and Diversity

Across the NHS, the 2021 results have shown a disappointing lack of progress in key measures of working experience for ethnic minority staff. This is seen both in data reflecting experiences of bullying, harassment and discrimination, and in findings which continue to show differential access to promotions and career progression. I, the Chief Executive and Ballu Patel have been meeting with people from our communities and with staff including staff networks such as the BAME Voice.

Covid and a number of recent publications have also highlighted differential access to, and outcomes of care for people from different backgrounds. Most recently this has been highlighted in maternity care but is the case across a number of services.

I, the Chief Executive and Ballu Patel have been meeting with people from our communities and with staff including staff networks such as the BAME Voice. The Chief Executive has made some commitments to addressing these concerns. Our aim is to become an exemplar organisation within the next two to three years in ensuring that people from different backgrounds or with different characteristics have the same opportunities as anyone else, whether in accessing care or working at UHL.

Annual Accounts 2019/20

Board members and the public will be aware of the financial and financial governance challenges that the Trust has been resolving over the last three years. At an extraordinary Board meeting on 31st March 2022, the audited accounts for 2019/20 were approved and the accounts together with the Auditors letter and opinion have been published on our website. This is an important milestone in moving forward and I was really pleased to get the Auditors assurance that over the last couple of years foundations have been put in place for the trust to become a well led organisation.

We are hoping to bring the audited 2020/21 accounts to the Board in May, subject to the final work being completed which with the 2021/22 accounts on track to come to the Board on time will be an important achievement.

On behalf of the Trust Board, I would like to apologise for the mistakes that were made and for the concerns that members of the public and our partners have had. We have and continue to take action to ensure this never happens again. I would also like to assure the public that the financial events have not had an adverse impact on the care we provide. At the Board meeting on 31st March, the Medical Director and the Acting Director of Nursing outlined the processes we have in place to assure safe services and the work that we have done to ensure that harm was not caused by the financial events.

Finally, I would like to thank the finance staff, NHSE/I for their support and the external Auditor for enabling us to get to this point. In particular I would like to thank Mike Williams, who as chair of the Audit Committee has overseen much of the work and helped to steer the Trust through some difficult times.

Ockenden Report

The second report on the maternity services in Shropshire was published on 30th March and raised significant concerns about the services provided. At the Board meeting on 31st March, the UHL Board received a report summarising progress on the recommendations from the first Ockenden Report which showed that many of the recommendations had been actioned at UHL and work was well underway on the others. We will be implementing the recommendations for all Trusts and also looking at any specific recommendations for the Shrewsbury and Telford NHS Trust and making sure we learn the lessons from the report.