

Chairman's Note

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Trust Board paper C

Dear Board Member,

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Earlier this year in one of my notes to the Board, I highlighted the challenges that we were having in our performance in terms of the emergency pathway. As you know we are effectively midway between the previous and forthcoming winter periods and it is clear that the traditional bell shaped patterns of activity in this area during the year no longer appear to apply. We continue to have a challenging experience along all aspects of the emergency pathway during this period of hot weather. It is clear that this is an issue which has implications for the entire Trust in terms of the quality of the patient experience, staffing issues and financial implications and not just our Emergency Department. A related performance theme is the national and local focus on various RTT waiting times and I acknowledge the efforts that are being made to know that staff are trying their best to ensure that this group of patients is not disadvantaged because of other service pressures within the Trust. Our recently arrived Chief Operating Officer has a busy in tray (!) and I have no doubt Board members will want to interact with her.

On behalf of the Board I would also like to welcome our new Director of People and Organisational Development who is attending her first Board meeting today. Ensuring we have the right staff in the appropriate roles is a key challenge given that this constitutes nearly two thirds of our expenditure and against a national and local context of critical manpower shortages in areas such as nursing and clinical staffing. How we treat and make best use of our existing people and those wishing to join us will be critical.

In a system wide context we know that our health economy has not received the capital investment commensurate with its needs during the past two decades, and the new Emergency Department project was the first significant capital investment received during this period. Our reconfiguration plans, which have the support of our local health and social partners, are therefore ambitious and we need to focus on garnering support from opinion formers and local communities. The Board will also be aware that notwithstanding the national announcements which have been made about future

investment in the NHS in future financial years, we face a number of challenges in the immediate future to ensure continued efficiency, effectiveness and probity in the use of resources.

Earlier this year we received the final report published by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) following its comprehensive inspection which resulted in an overall rating of 'Requires Improvement'. As a Board we are setting ourselves the ambition of achieving a 'Good' rating in future CQC inspections and we look forward to our new Chief Nurse arriving on 1 October 2018 and contributing to this work. As part of this process I have invited Dr Jennifer Dixon, Chief Executive of the Health Foundation and past Board member of the CQC, to a future Thinking Day session. I also met with Professor Ted Hughes, who is also the new CQC Chief Inspector for hospitals and he has accepted an invitation to visit the Trust in the next few months.

With two new Executive Directors, a Non-Executive Director and a Senior Director all appointed since the beginning of this year, the Board has seen considerable change and it is appropriate to use this opportunity (once all these persons are in post) to undertake some externally facilitated development sessions. The Board operates in an environment of increasing complexity, ambiguity and volatility and it is no accident that our national regulators are focusing on the ability of Boards to operate effectively. We also have a responsibility as a Board to set out our expectations about the culture and actions by leaders at various levels that we wish to see throughout the organisation, as well as ensuring in governance terms that we are assured about how the issues outlined above are being addressed.

We have a busy agenda in the months ahead. Whilst this note has focused on institutional issues the key question as always (in my view is) – what difference does it make to the patient experience?

I look forward to seeing you at our forthcoming Board meeting on 2 August 2018.

Regards

Karamjit Singh

Chairman, University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust