

**WRIGHTINGTON, WIGAN AND LEIGH TEACHING HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST**  
**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS ("the Board")**  
**HELD ON 25 NOVEMBER 2020, 2PM**  
**BY VIDEOCONFERENCE**

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<b>Present:</b>	Mr R Armstrong	Chair (in the Chair)
	Dr S Arya	Medical Director
	Prof C Austin	Non-Executive Director
	Mrs A Balson	Director of Workforce
	Mr I Boyle	Chief Finance Officer
	Lady R Bradley DL	Non-Executive Director
	Dr S Elliot	Non-Executive Director
	Ms M Fleming	Chief Operating Officer
	Mr M Guymer	Non-Executive Director
	Mr I Haythornthwaite	Non-Executive Director
	Mrs L Lobley	Non-Executive Director
	Mr R Mundon	Director of Strategy and Planning
	Mr S Nicholls	Chief Executive
	Mrs M Olsen	Interim Chief Nurse
	Prof T Warne	Non-Executive Director
<b>In attendance:</b>	Miss H Holding	Deputy Company Secretary (Minutes)
	Mr P Howard	Director of Corporate Affairs
	Prof S Ranote	Med Director for Mental Health & Clinical Integration
	Mrs L Sykes	Public Governor (Observer)

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**155/20 Chair and quorum**

Mr Armstrong took the chair and noted that due notice had been given to all directors and that a quorum was present. He therefore declared the meeting duly convened and constituted.

**156/20 Apologies for absence**

No apologies for absence were received.

**157/20 Declarations of interest**

No directors declared an interest in any of the items of business to be transacted.

**158/20 Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 30 September 2020 were **APPROVED** as a true and accurate record. Confirmation was provided that all actions on the action log had been completed.

## **159/20 Staff Story**

The Board of Directors received a short video in which two staff members, Sue and Brendan, detailed their experience at the foundation trust throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sue detailed her experience as a redeployed member of the pharmacy administration team. She outlined that despite being tired as a result of the impact that the pandemic has had, staff remain caring, compassionate and committed to providing patient care. Sue relayed her personal experience with COVID-19, in that she had tested positive for the virus and was admitted to the trust as a patient.

Brendan detailed his experience as a porter on the wards. He outlined his experience on a ward with regard to challenges he faced with regard to wearing personal protection equipment (PPE). Brendan outlined that he now feels safe on the wards after he raised the difficulties that he had experienced with the Director of Workforce as part of a Wellbeing Walkabout, at which time the issue was resolved.

The Director of Workforce outlined how the two stories brought together the fears, anxieties and worries that staff have had throughout the pandemic. She detailed that a shared commitment to do the right thing and provide high quality compassionate care for patients is consistent throughout all staff. Using Brendan's story as an example, she emphasised the impact that can be had from what could be considered to be a small action. The Medical Director agreed, and noted the impact that the goodwill of staff had on the NHS throughout difficult times.

The Chief Operating Officer agreed that the staff stories presented were representative of the fears and anxieties of staff throughout the foundation trust. She reflected on concerns that staff had at the start of the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic around the availability of PPE and recommended that reassurance is provided that a shortage of PPE will not be an issue.

Prof Austin was pleased to note how the presentation highlighted the focus that staff have for caring for patients. In the instance of Brendan's story, she questioned whether the correct lines of open communication are in place for staff to feel safe raising their concerns. The Director of Workforce felt that those channels are in place. Staff can raise concerns through line managers, and members of the executive team and senior manager team are visible and undertake regular Wellbeing Walkabouts. Further, there are over 100 wellbeing champions in place that staff can talk to at any time. The Director of Workforce confirmed for Prof Austin that the uptake of staff utilising psychological wellbeing services is high.

On behalf of the Board, the Chair thanked Sue, Brendan and all the staff at the foundation trust for their commitment and hard work since the start of the pandemic.

## **160/20 Chair and Chief Executive's update**

The Chief Executive provided a verbal update on the current situation at the foundation trust with regard to second wave of the pandemic. Positive cases have exceeded worst case scenario modelling from the start. Nationally, the NHS has reverted back to Level 4. Gold and Silver Command and Control structures are in place across Greater Manchester. The Chief Executive emphasised that despite the challenges faced, the ability to ensure continuation of care at the foundation trust for every patient is a testament to all staff, and that the success has come at the cost of immense strain on all both professional and personally.

The Chief Executive welcomed the Chief Finance Officer, Mr Ian Boyle, the Director of Mental Health and Clinical Integration, Dr Sandeep Ranote and Mrs Morag Olsen, Interim Chief Nurse to their first formal Board of Directors meeting.

The Board of Directors heard that verbal feedback following a recent visit from NHS England and Improvement (NHSE/&I) had been positive. NHSE\*<sup>1</sup> have recognised the high standard of cleanliness, the use of PPE and clear communications across WWL. The Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Team are working to introduce measures of recommended improvement, such as the provision of isolation pods.

The first virtual Annual Members Meeting took place in October 2020, which had been a success. The meeting is accessible to watch on the WWL Website. The Annual Report and Annual Accounts have also now been published and can also be accessed on the website.

The Chief Executive thanked Mr Howard Gilmore and Mrs Karen Taylor-Smith for their contribution on the Council of Governors, and welcomed Mr Phil Woods, Mr Andrew Savage and Ms Shelly Sephton.

A drive has been made across the foundation trust to increase the uptake of flu vaccinations. The Director of Strategy and Planning confirmed that 100% of the Board of Directors and 48% of frontline staff have had their flu jabs to date. The Chief Executive anticipated that the first tranche of a COVID-19 vaccination will be available in December 2020.

The bi-annual staffing review has been delayed to January 2021, as further guidance is expected to be released which will support the process.

The Chair provided an update following the attendance of several governors at a Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) hosted event. The event looked at feedback around the initial implementation of the GP triage pilot for walk-in patients. 70% of those surveyed stated that they had waited less than 60 minutes for an appointment, and overall experience had been good or very good.

The Board of Directors received and noted the verbal update.

## **161/20      Situation Report**

The Chief Operating Officer presented a verbal summary of the COVID-19 pandemic situation report. The Board of Directors heard that the transmission rates across the Wigan Borough escalated from containment to red throughout October and November 2020, with Wigan having one of the highest rates of transmission in Greater Manchester and the UK. Despite the news across the Wigan Borough that the transmission rate is stabilising, the foundation trust continues to see high occupancy rates and expects to operate at this high level for some time.

The Chief Operating Officer detailed that the second wave of the pandemic has felt worse than the first wave in many ways. The impact on capacity has been significant, and demand has remained steady on critical care and on the CPAP ward. There has been an increase in COVID-19 positive patients admitted to general and acute beds, who occupy up to 30% of occupied beds. The foundation trust has consistently had a bed occupancy rate of 97% throughout the pandemic.

Staff have been redeployed throughout the foundation trust in response to needs identified in response to the pandemic. Unfortunately, there have been a higher number of staff absences relating to COVID-19 on this occasion.

In August 2020, the foundation trust achieved 80% of activity against the Elective Recovery Plan which was submitted to NHSE&I. Unfortunately, the impact of the second wave has resulted in the centralisation of elective surgery to one site. The Chief Operating Officer confirmed that elective patients continue to be treated in priority order, and clinically urgent patients are seen first.

The Director of Workforce provided a verbal update around the asymptomatic testing of staff that had commenced the previous day. Staff in patient facing roles have been issued with asymptomatic test kits, and an additional 600 kits are expected to be provided to all students and agency staff. To date, 2000 kits have been issued, and out of 386 tests only 7 staff have been identified as positive.

Lady Bradley noted the update that the second wave had been challenging. In response to a question around plans for long COVID-19 conditions, the Medical Director detailed plans for a COVID-19 clinic that would oversee patients experiencing symptoms beyond three months. In addition, virtual COVID-19 clinics have been established to allow regular monitoring of patients where admissions can be avoided. The Medical Director for Mental Health and Clinical Integration confirmed that three long COVID-19 clinics will be established across the North West. She added that the mental health approach to COVID-19 is crucial, ensuring that the systematic impact it has is encompassed with a holistic approach.

The Board of Directors received the report and noted the content.

## **162/20 Committee Chairs' Report and Board Assurance Framework**

Prof Warne opened this item and provided an update following the Quality and Safety Committee meeting in October 2020, at which time the committee discussed the impact of redeployment both on staff and on services. Quality accounts and the national patient safety action plan were approved at the meeting. Prof Warne informed the Board of Directors that the board assurance framework rating remains at 'amber', and will be reviewed at the meeting in December 2020.

My Haythornthwaite provided an update following the Audit Committee meeting in November 2020. The committee considered the internal audit progress report, and discussions focused around the potential impact on the internal audit opinion at the end of the financial year. The committee received assurance that good progress is being made against the identified actions. Mr Haythornthwaite detailed the committee's review and approval of the charity's annual report and accounts, and the updates received from counter fraud. The legal service annual report was also presented to the committee.

The Finance and Performance Committee is due to meet at the start of December 2020, at which time it will review its board assurance framework. Mr Guymer informed the Board of Directors that the committee will also review the risks which score 20 or higher, and the progress made against the action plans which are in place to mitigate the same. He reminded the Board of Directors that finance controls across the NHS have been managed nationally during the first six months of the year as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mrs Lobley provided an update with regard to the People Committee. The committee is due to meet at the start of December 2020. Mrs Lobley detailed the emphasis on the committee agenda around staff health and wellbeing, psychological support, redeployment and recruitment challenges. A workforce dashboard has been developed to manage staff risk assessments with regard to COVID-19. The board assurance framework remains 'red' as a result of the recruitment challenges.

The Board of Directors received the report and noted the verbal updates provided.

## **163/20 Performance report**

The Interim Chief Nurse opened this item by noting that the foundation trust had reported 11 serious incidents in the previous period. Of these, two incidents related to COVID-19 outbreaks, one related to an unsafe discharge, three had been escalated as a result of hospital acquired pressure ulcers.

The Interim Chief Nurse was pleased to report to the Board of Directors that there have been no cases of MRSA for 626 days.

Throughout September, 19 complaints have been received. To date, 13 of those complaints have been replied to, and replies are being actioned for the remaining.

The Chief Operating Officer noted the positive progress made against the elective recovery plan throughout August 2020, and the foundation trust remained on track for cancer performance. As updated earlier in the meeting, the elective recovery programme is being maintained as a restrictive programme at present as a result of the redeployment of staff.

The Medical Director drew attention to the positive update that hospital standardised mortality ratio remain below 100.

The Chair recognised the impact had by the staffing issues and the pressure of general and acute beds at 97% occupancy.

The Board of Directors received the report and noted the content.

#### **164/20 Staff Health and Wellbeing Report**

The Director of Workforce presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda and provided an update on staff health and wellbeing. She alluded to the staff story which had highlighted the need for sustained and prolonged psychological wellbeing support for staff.

The foundation trust has an established staff health and wellbeing programme (Steps 4 Wellness) which includes both physical and mental health. Steps of Support (SOS) is the branding for the foundation trust's psychological support programmes. SOS is a stepped programme of support designed by clinical psychologist to meet the needs of staff during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. Following the approval of investment for a psychological support team, positions have been recruited to.

Recent enhancements to the programme include the implementation of the Schwartz Rounds and the development of Leadership Support Circles to build on reflective supportive approaches.

The Director of Mental Health and Clinical Integration detailed her involvement in staff health and wellbeing by ensuring that psychological services are more accessible for staff.

The Chief Executive emphasised the need to ensure that the basics are in place where staff feel pressured and tired, which is reflective in the number of unplanned absences.

The Chair expressed thanks to all those involved in supporting the staff health and wellbeing programme.

The Board of Directors received the report and noted the content.

**165/20 Infection Prevention and Control Board Assurance Framework**

The Interim Chief Nurse presented the Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Board Assurance Framework which had been circulated with the agenda. She informed the Board of Directors that a review of the IPC Board Assurance Framework has been undertaken with the IPC team, with a view to incorporating recently published guidance. A gap analysis has been undertaken as part of the review, and an executive director assigned to each area of development.

Prof Tony Warne confirmed for the Chair that the board assurance framework and gap analysis will be reported to the Quality and Safety Committee at its next meeting.

The Board of Directors received the report and noted the content.

**166/20 Review of risk appetite statement**

The Director of Corporate Affairs presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to summarise a number of changes to the risk appetite statement which had been recommended by the executive team.

The Board of Directors received risk appetite statement as presented, and noted the content.

**167/20 Safe Staffing Report**

The Interim Chief Nurse presented a report which has been circulated with the agenda and provided the Board of Directors assurance of the ongoing monitoring of nurse staffing levels across inpatient areas.

Attention was drawn to the number of registered nurse vacancies which remained high, in particular, vacancies for Band 5 nurses within the division of medicine. The Interim Chief Nurse explained that exit interviews are being commenced with Band 5/6 leavers to establish what opportunities the foundation trust can create in instances where staff outline this as a reason for leaving.

A sustained reduction of district nurse vacancies remained at 14%.

The Interim Chief Nurse detailed that the recent restrictions on international recruitment continue to delay plans to minimise vacancies. As a result, the trajectory for recruitment is being revised, however remains dependent on the lifting of constraints to a national level.

The Board of Directors heard how many staff have been redeployed from services that have been redeployed from services that have been stood down to critical areas. The Interim Chief Nurse outlined that the combination of vacancies and sickness absence levels has proved challenging across the foundation trust throughout the second wave.

The Board of Directors received the report and noted the content.

## **168/20 Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Employment Profile in WWL**

The Director of Workforce presented a report which was circulated with the agenda with regard to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Employment Profile in the foundation trust. She detailed that it is nationally recognised that BAME employees are often underrepresented in decision making roles within the NHS. Furthermore, the national and Trust submitted Workforce Race Equality Standard demonstrates that BAME employees experience inequalities in their employment, whether that be access to development and career progression opportunities, their likelihood of being recruited to a position from being shortlisted and their likelihood to be subject to formal disciplinary processes. NHSE&I have set an improvement trajectory for each Trust in relation to BAME representation across the pay bands.

The Director of Workforce stated that the foundation trust should have an ambition to increase diversity at all levels, including senior leaders and at Board level.

The Board of Directors heard that the a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy is being developed and will focus on ensure the foundation trust's workforce is diverse, representing the needs of the local population, improving the experience of work for people in protected groups and eliminating inequality in employment.

Prof Austin was pleased to note the holistic approach to equality and diversity. The Director of Workforce confirmed for Prof Austin that the foundation trust is working with its partners across the borough to implement a long term programme of change.

The Medical Director welcomed the update presented. He detailed his attendance on the foundation trust's BAME Group, and outlined how the lack of career progression for BAME employees is a regular theme of discussion. He emphasised the need to ensure that the non-medical workforce is also considered. The Medical Director detailed how the group do not wish to be referred to as BAME, and in place intend to rename the group FAME; Focus on All Minority Ethnic Groups.

The Director of Workforce defined the differences of positive action and positive discrimination for Dr Elliot. She detailed the positives in identifying change in recruitment processes and selection to be more inclusive, such as advertising vacancies in different parts of the community that are not widely represented at present. The Medical Director for Mental Health and Clinical Integration agreed that it is important to widen the equality of those applying for jobs at every level. She added that the workforce at the foundation trust has a higher representation of BAME employees than other organisations.

## **169/20 Consent agenda**

The papers having been circulated in advance and the Board having consented to them appearing on the consent agenda, the Board RESOLVED as follows:

1. THAT the Quality Account 2019/20 be **APPROVED**.



2. THAT the Infection Prevention and Control Annual Report 2019/20 be received and noted.
3. THAT the register of Clinical Ethics Group referrals be received and noted.
4. THAT the monthly trust financial report for Month 7 (October 2020) be received and noted.

**170/20 Date time and venue of the next meeting**

The next meeting of the Board of Directors held in public will be held on 27 January 2021, 2.00pm by videoconference.

## Action log

Date of meeting	Minute ref.	Item	Action required	Assigned to	Target date	Update
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