

Minutes of a meeting of the Western Health & Social Care Trust Board held on Thursday, 2 November 2023 in the Boardroom, Omagh Hospital and Primary Care Complex

PRESENT

Dr T Frawley, Chair
Mr N Guckian, Chief Executive
Mr S Hegarty, Non-Executive Director
Mrs R Laird, Non-Executive Director
Rev Canon J McGaffin, Non-Executive Director
Dr J McPeake, Non-Executive Director
Professor H McKenna, Non-Executive Director

Dr B Lavery, Medical Director
Mrs D Keenan, Interim Executive Director of Nursing, Midwifery and AHPs
Mrs G McKay, Director of Diagnostics, Cancer and Medical Specialties
Dr M O'Neill, Interim Director of Community and Older People's Services
Mr M Gillespie, Interim Director Surgery, Paediatrics and Women's Health

IN ATTENDANCE Ms S Mahon, Assistant Director Women and Children's Services
Mrs R Santiago, Assistant Director of Human Resources
Mrs H Browne, Assistant Director of Finance
Dr E Brady, Assistant Director Adult Mental Health & Disability Services
Mr O Kelly, Head of Communications
Mrs M McGinley, Chair/Chief Executive's Office
Mr Shamil Adam, Mr Shelford, Ms N Loughlin and Ms Moyse (agenda item 9/23/8)

9/23/1

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

9/23/2

APOLOGIES

The Chair advised that apologies had been received from Mr Cassidy, Executive Director of Social Work/Director of Women and Children's Services, Ms O'Brien, Director of Adult Mental Health and Disability Services, Mrs Hargan, Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development, Mrs Molloy, Director of Performance and Service Improvement, and Ms McCauley, Director of Finance, Contracting and Capital Development. He noted that a number of Assistant Directors were in attendance to represent their Director, namely Ms Mahon, Assistant Director Family and Child Care, Dr Brady, Assistant Director Mental Health, Mrs Santiago, Assistant Director of HR and Mrs Brown, Assistant Director of Finance.

9/23/3

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest expressed.

9/23/4

CHAIR'S WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

The Chair welcomed everyone to the November Board meeting.

In particular he welcomed Dr Maura O'Neill who took up the post of Interim Director of Community and Older People's Service on 1 November, and Mrs Annmarie O'Dwyer, newly appointed Interim Assistant Director of Operations for Unscheduled Care and Medicine Division, who was attending the meeting as an observer. On behalf of the Board he wished them well in their new posts.

The Chair referred to a report of business since the previous meeting.

- The Chair advised that during September he continued his participation in the recruitment process for Non-Executive Director posts for all 6 Trusts. He said the process was now complete and the recruitment panels had forwarded their evaluations to the Appointments Unit for finalisation of submission to the Permanent Secretary. The Chair said he was hopeful that in the very near future the Trust would be advised who will be appointed to the Western Trust.
- Since the last Board meeting the Chair said he was honoured to be invited to attend a service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving in recognition of what is being achieved by the organ donation programme across Northern Ireland.

He advised that the service is held every 3 years in memory of those individuals who have donated organs for transplantation or who have made the generous decision to support their family member in this most selfless decision. He added that it was a non-denominational service and had been arranged to coincide with the close of the annual “Organ Donation Week”.

The Chair said he found the service moving and impactful, a credit to all involved both organisers and participants and said the “candle procession” was powerful in evidencing the number of recipients who had benefitted from this critical activity.

The Chair said he would also like to thank the Trust’s Chaplains who promoted Organ Donation week in their weekly parish newsletters and said he also wanted to pay tribute to the Trust’s Organ Donation Committee, to the clinical lead and Specialist Nurses who promote and support organ donation across the Trust’s area.

- On 25 September the Chair said he was asked to open a seminar showcasing quality improvement and service improvement across the full spectrum of Allied Health Professions.

He said this was the inaugural event and he was hopeful it will be the first of an annual celebration of creativity and innovation across professions which are having an increasingly important role in improving health and social care outcomes.

The Chair said the Quality Improvement and Service Improvement team put together a very significant programme of presentations which showcased the diversity of services provided by AHPs on a daily basis. He said the challenge now for the Board is how to translate these outstanding initiatives and pilots into day to day delivery of services.

The Chair said his intention today was to pay tribute to AHP teams across the Trust who daily deliver excellent patient care. He said importantly, this excellent care was acknowledged by the many patient compliments and letters and also by the awards received both regionally and nationally.

- The Chair advised that during the month he continued his familiarisation with Trust services, facilities and Committees. On 6 October he visited Altnagelvin Hospital with Mr Gillespie visiting maternity, neonatal and trauma and orthopaedics services. On 16 October he visited mental health and learning disability services in Omagh, Grangewood and Lakeview. Again the Chair said the outstanding commitment of staff was striking and reassuring despite the continuing pressures that staff are dealing with each day. Since the last Board meeting the Chair said he attended meetings of the People and Audit and Risk Assurance Committees.

- On 10 October the Chair said he was delighted to join staff to acknowledge World Mental Health Day. He said the occasion afforded staff in Grangewood the opportunity to highlight the work they do across the Trust in supporting people with mental health challenges. The Chair said he was particularly impressed by the work being done in the area of horticulture which is an activity that many people with mental health issues find very therapeutic.
- On the evening of 10 October, the Chair advised that the Chief Executive and he travelled to Omagh to a meeting with the GP Federation who highlighted the very real and continuing difficulties they face in maintaining primary care particularly in the Southern Sector. The Chair said the meeting was very constructive and a further meeting will be scheduled in the near future.
- On 11 October the Chair said he had a very helpful briefing from a former member of the Northern Trust Board who had represented Trust interests at the regional forum for organ donation. He said this was very helpful given his role in Chairing the Trust's Organ Donation Committee.
- On 18/19 October the Chair said with a number of Trust officers including the Chief Executive, they represented the Trust at the annual NICON Conference which was a very interesting and thought provoking event. He said there were a number of initiatives that may have relevance for the Trust going forward.
- On 20 October the Chair said he was pleased along with the Chief Executive to attend the launch of the Sensory Room in the Emergency Department in the South West Acute Hospital. He said this was a very important new facility, mirroring a development that is in place in Altnagelvin Hospital. He said importantly it would reduce the stress and anxiety often experienced by people with learning disabilities who were attending ED.
- On 24 October the Chair said he had a very informative meeting with Mrs Santiago, Assistant Director, and Mr Jenkins, Head of Workforce Planning & Analytics, who are leading a series of important initiatives in the area of organisational development and culture change. The Chair said this work is being progressed under the auspices of the People Committee.
- On 26 October the Chair said he attended his first formal meeting with the Trust's Chaplaincy Group. He said the meeting allowed him to develop insights into the issues which Chaplains are dealing with including work plans, chaplaincy commitments and particular concerns around the implementation of Encompass.

In addition, the Chair said during the month some of the Trust's Chaplains had shared with him their changing roles and remit and said he had agreed to discuss engagement with Chaplains as part of a developing focus on the spiritual

wellbeing of patients and staff with the Chief Executive. The Chair said he wants to reflect back to Chaplains that as a Board it will continue to support them into the future and also agree how that support should develop particularly in recognition of the increasingly diverse population the Trust exists to serve.

9/23/5

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – 7 SEPTEMBER 2023

The Chair referred to the minutes of the Trust Board meeting held on 7 September 2023. Following consideration by the Board, the minutes were proposed by Prof McKenna, seconded by Rev Canon McGaffin, and approved by members as a true and accurate record of discussion at the Board meeting.

9/23/6

MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

9/23/7

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Mr Guckian referred to a report of issues since the last meeting. He commenced by also welcoming Dr O'Neill to her first Board meeting as Interim Director of Community and Older People Services.

General Pressures

Mr Guckian advised that over the past 2 weeks the Trust's Emergency Departments were experiencing a significant increase, particularly in Altnagelvin Hospital. He said the Trust would shortly be introducing a more formal control hub within Altnagelvin Hospital which will ensure Senior co-ordination of patient flow. Mr Guckian added that the Trust is also part of a new Regional Collaboration Centre which will support improved management of winter pressures, by maintaining a regional oversight to manage and balance system-level risk to improve hospital flow. Referring to the South West Acute Hospital, Mr Guckian paid tribute to the hospital for its improved patient flow and said the numbers of patients waiting on a bed had reduced significantly.

Phlebotomy Hubs

Mr Guckian referred to the Trust's decision as part of Covid funding retraction to close the Phlebotomy Hubs. He said as a result of a number of factors, the Trust had considered ways to reinstate the service and following discussion at a Corporate

Management Team meeting on 2 October it was agreed that a partial service would be reinstated until 31 March in Altnagelvin and Omagh to meet clinical issues and demands.

Mr Guckian said the Trust will monitor demand, especially from primary care, and will liaise with SPPG between now and March 2024.

Winter Planning

Mr Guckian referred to a Winter Planning summit event organised by the DoH on 3 October. He said the main challenges with Winter Planning are workforce and funding and advised that the Trust had developed a Trust winter plan for 23/24.

Mr Guckian shared with members key developments the Trust will have in place:-

- Control hub for improved flow;
- Minor stream in Altnagelvin ED;
- Some increase in EMI provision in Southern Sector
- Regional Collaboration Centre
- Nurse Staffing Plan for EDs

In addition, Mr Guckian said the Trust will also now urgently develop additional plans which include expanded AHP provision and a transition Ward for expanded capacity. Mr Guckian cautioned however that resources are considerably constrained and therefore capacity in both hospitals and community cannot be increased significantly.

Finance

Mr Guckian advised that the Trust continues to have a challenging financial position. He said the Trust has reduced its projected deficit as a result of a mid-year review and additional funding to £12m.

Elective Care Management Team - Elective Care Recognition Award October 2023

Mr Guckian said he was delighted during the month that the Permanent Secretary awarded the Elective Care Recognition Award to Mr Tony Griffiths and Mr Anthony McCauley within the Trust. He explained that this was regional recognition of the excellent work they have done in developing and implementing the Qlik App - data analytics for theatres.

Mr Guckian said members would be aware of his importance of data analytics to support decision making and said this Award showed that this work is leading edge and will help underpin the Trust's rebuild programme.

Mr Guckian said this was the second time the Trust had received this award with the Elective Overnight Stay Centre receiving the August Award.

“We are West” Mission Cup

Mr Guckian advised that the first winners of the “We are West” Mission Cup will be announced later this afternoon. He said the announcement would be held after today’s Trust Board meeting with the winning team receiving their Award.

Mr Guckian said the first team to be awarded the Mission Cup had been chosen by the Corporate Management Team because they represented what the Trust Mission means and they display the ethos of the Mission on a daily basis. He added that the Mission Cup is a peer recognition programme which allows colleagues across the organisation to recognise teams they believe represent the Mission in the work that they do and the way that they do it. He said the Cup will be passed from 1 team to another every 2 months with the winning teams deciding who they will pass the Cup to each time.

Northern Ireland Review of Children’s Social Services

Mr Guckian reminded members that the consultation on the Northern Ireland Review of Children’s Social Services led by Professor Ray Jones ends on 1 December. He said Mr Cassidy’s team is developing a response which will be shared with members for their consideration and comment in advance of submission.

RNIB & NWRC - Dining in the Dark

On 12 October Mr Guckian said he attended an event to raise awareness of visual impairment. He said the event involved Dining in the Dark and discussing the experience with people who have visual impairment. Mr Guckian said it was an extremely interesting event and highlighted the barriers faced by those with visual impairment.

SWAH All Party Group, Strategic Development Group and Staff Engagement Groups

Mr Guckian advised that during October he convened the latest All Party Group, Strategic Development Group and Staff Engagement Group meetings. He said the All Party Group visited Cardiac MRI and the wider radiology department, and both the All Party Group and Strategic Development Group received a presentation on the Trust’s winter plan and an update on hospital activity. Mr Guckian said the Staff Engagement Group was an opportunity for staff from all levels to be involved in the sustainability and development of the hospital.

Veterans Healthcare

Mr Guckian said Dr Lavery and he met with the Northern Ireland Veterans Commissioner and his team on 27 October. He said they recognised the barriers both perceived and real for veterans in terms of their reluctance to declare veteran status and he advised the Board that in order to overcome this, the Trust will seek to identify a senior manager, within Mental Health Services, to be a contact point who could signpost these patients/clients to the alternative services that had been commissioned by veteran bodies to address these challenges.

Mr Guckian said the Trust will also focus on improving communication so that all veterans can get access to appropriate services.

NW Regional College Graduations

Mr Guckian advised that he attended the North West Regional College annual Graduation Ceremony on 31 October. He said over 600 graduates received their qualifications with many graduates receiving awards in HSC relevant subjects. Mr Guckian said it was reassuring to see so many successful students pursuing careers in health and social care and he wished them every success into the future.

Encompass Go Live - South Eastern Trust

Members were advised that Thursday, 9 November will see the implementation of the Encompass single patient/client record system within the South Eastern Trust. Mr Guckian said the implementation programme will be supported by all Trusts and that a roll out of the implementation across all Trusts in Northern Ireland will take place on a phased programme. He said implementation within the Western Trust is expected to be scheduled for April 2025.

Agency Reduction in Social Work

Mr Guckian referred to a letter from the Permanent Secretary congratulating the Trust on its recent achievements in relation to ceasing the use of recruitment agency social workers across HSC services. He said the PS has acknowledged that this has been a challenging policy to implement and that a range of HSC staff, from a variety of disciplines, have worked closely with Departmental officials to make the many changes that were necessary to achieve this positive outcome.

Mr Guckian said it is anticipated that by stopping the use of agency social workers there will be a significant beneficial effect in stabilising the HSC social work workforce and a consequent improvement in services delivered in future years.

Mr Guckian added that Trusts has been successful in maximizing the number of newly qualified social workers recruited to vacancies in the past few months. The PS

has also commended Trusts for its ongoing efforts to nurture and retain these very valuable, new members of staff.

Mr Guckian said however the DoH is aware that there continues to be a significant number of vacancies in some social work services. He said the Chief Social Worker and her team will continue to work collaboratively with Trusts in making further improvements in recruitment and retention activities during 2024.

9/23/8

PATIENT STORY – WOMEN AND CHILDREN’S DIRECTORATE

The Chair welcomed 2 young people - Mr Abdulhafiz Shamil Adam and Mr Chaise Shelford to the meeting who had agreed to share their personal stories in relation to the Trust’s 16+ Service. Abdu and Chaise were accompanied by Ms Loughlin, Children’s Service Improvement Officer, and Ms Moyse, Personal Advisor.

Ms Mahon thanked members for the opportunity for Abdu and Chaise to share their stories with members. She assured members that they were supported today by a staff member they are familiar with and both had been provided with details of who is in attendance and the role they will have in contributing to discussion. Ms Mahon referred to a briefing on the young people which had been shared with members in advance of the meeting which described their life journey to date, along with challenges that had been faced and overcome.

Chaise addressed the meeting first. He said he was known to social services since he was 10 and that initially he lived in a care home but now lived in supported accommodation. He commended the support from Ms Moyse and said social services helped him to stay grounded and safe. He said within the care home he felt safe and if he had any problems with his education or employment he could speak to anyone. Chaise referred to his work experience in the Trust and said he enjoyed the learning, experience and opportunity it had provided to develop his career pathway in the future.

Abdu advised he arrived in Northern Ireland in March 2023 and that he was happy to live here. He said on arriving in Northern Ireland he got a very positive welcome and everything he needed from social workers. He said he had been given accommodation, medicine and said he was happy with his future plans. Abdu said he wanted to be a professional football player and that he was currently playing for a local team and that he was happy and hoped to “achieve his dreams”.

The Chair asked Chaise if he could change anything about the past 10 years what that would be. Chaise said he would like therapy/support for social work staff for the physical and mental abuse thrown at them by young people. He referred to the children’s home he had been resident in and said it could on occasions be challenging to cope with as some of the other residents had challenges with mental

health, drugs and alcohol. He said on occasions there could be arguments and fights among residents and a few of the residents found it difficult to get along.

The Chair asked Abdu what the Trust might do differently to support him. Abdu said he felt there was nothing too much, that he had no experience of social workers previously but that he thought about his safety and that he had been in Northern Ireland for 7 months and he still did not have a legal guardian. Ms Loughlin explained that the Trust is progressing this through legal services. She added that the Abdu is going to be part of a project established to welcome similar young people like Abdu who are seeking safety and asylum.

Mr Guckian thanked Chaise and Abdu for attending the Board meeting and acknowledged their very reassuring accounts of their experiences in the Trust. He commended Chaise on his suggestion for improved support for social work staff and Abdu's willingness to help young people in a similar situation as himself.

Following further discussion members thanked Chaise and Abdu for joining the Board to share their stories and also Ms Loughlin and Ms Moyses for facilitating the visit.

The Chair said on behalf of the Board he would formally write to the boys to thank them for joining the meeting and said when the full complement of Board members was in place he would seek to identify a Children's Advocate.

9/23/9

INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL UPDATE

Dr Lavery referred members to the update report. He stated that the Department of Health had now issued healthcare-associated infection reduction targets for 2023/24, the first since 2019/20 due to the pandemic.

Members were advised that in relation to MRSA bacteraemia, the Trust's target is 6 cases, a reduction of 1 case compared to the 2022/23 baseline of 7 cases. Dr Lavery said since the beginning of April 2023, 1 MRSA bacteraemia case had been reported and it was categorised as community-associated as it occurred less than 48 hours after admission to hospital.

Dr Lavery advised that the Trust's reduction for *C. difficile* associated disease is 71, a reduction of 10 cases compared to last year's baseline of 81 cases. He stated that so far this year 21 cases of *C. difficile* had been reported, 13 cases being classified as healthcare-acquired or associated as they occurred more than 72 hours after admission to hospital. Dr Lavery said the remaining 8 cases were classified as community-acquired as the patients presented with symptoms within a 72-hour period after admission. Dr Lavery said the Trust was currently on track to achieve the target with a cumulative decrease of 53.36% compared to 2022/23.

Dr Lavery advised that given the challenges associated with reducing healthcare-associated gram-negative bacteraemias (GNBs) to date, the DoH had decided not to set a target for 2023/24. However, he said Trusts are being encouraged to minimise risk factors for GNB infections where possible. He stated that as of 24 October 2023, 30 healthcare-associated GNB cases had been reported.

Dr Lavery advised that COVID-19 outbreaks continue to be declared in Trust wards, departments and facilities and said between August and October 2023, a total of 34 outbreaks had occurred. He added that the Infection Prevention and Control (IP&C) Team were leading on the management of these incidents as applicable and that incident meetings were taking place and all IPC measures had been initiated.

Moving onto training, Dr Lavery advised that IPC Induction and Mandatory Training was being delivered online via an e-learning programme. He said this training was developed regionally for use by all health and social care organisations in Northern Ireland and comprised of 2 tiers with staff only needing to complete 1 of the tiers. He added that clarification on which tier each staff member should complete is provided via a Tier Matrix.

Members were advised that in the period April to September 2023, a total of 1,613 staff completed the training. Dr Lavery said the attendance target for each year is 50% of the total number of staff who require training and that for the 12 months ending September 2023, the percentage of staff trained was 25.82%. Dr Lavery said as attendance at IPC training is required on a biennial basis, the attendance rate over a 24-month period as of the end of September 2023, was 55.48%.

Dr Lavery continued by sharing with members a breakdown of cases by hospital site and acquisition type in relation to *C. difficile* and MRSA. He referred to comparisons with other Trusts and the *C. difficile* care bundle and care pathway audits. In respect of MRSA Dr Lavery advised that as of 24 October the total number of days since the last Trust hospital-associated MRSA bacteraemia was:-

- Altnagelvin Hospital – 282 days
- South West Acute Hospital – 1,226 days
- Tyrone County Hospital/Omagh Hospital PC complex – 3,198 days

Dr Lavery continued by referring members to hand hygiene compliance. He noted that the Trust's overall average self-reported hand hygiene score was 68% when non-submission areas were included. He said that 56 areas out of 194 applicable areas failed to submit scores for September 2023. The Chair expressed concern with this outturn however Dr Lavery assured members that IPC staff are liaising with the areas who failed to submit scores and that he would keep this issue under review.

Concluding his report Dr Lavery referred members to the IPC Nurse Independent Audit outturn.

9/23/10

CORPORATE RISK REGISTER AND BOARD ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK

Dr Lavery referred members to the Trust's Corporate Risk Register and Board Assurance Framework. He said there were 22 risks on the Register as approved at Trust Board on 7 September 2022.

Dr Lavery said there were no material changes to the Register with no new risks requiring approval and no action required. Dr Lavery advised that all risks had been reviewed in last quarter and all action plans updated. Dr Lavery commended Mrs Oonagh O'Doherty, the new Corporate Risk Manager, for the significant work she had undertaken in managing the Corporate Risk Register.

The Chair commended Mrs O'Doherty for her leadership in this area.

9/23/11

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT MONITORING REPORT – NEWS

Mrs Keenan referred members to the quarterly Quality Improvement Monitoring Report in respect of National Early Warning Scores.

Mrs Keenan advised that NEWS 2 had been implemented in the Western Trust in all relevant Wards/Departments and that discussions with regard to District Nursing would begin to assess if NEWS2 will be of benefit to this service.

Members were reminded that NEWS2 is a standardised tool which improves the detection and response to clinical deterioration in adult patients and is a key element of patient safety and improving patient outcomes. Mrs Keenan advised that wards/departments continue to audit the compliance of the NEWS2 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) on a bi-monthly basis. She said any issues, themes or variances with these audits are discussed at the Trust's Safe and Effective Care meeting with exception reports and action plans being submitted through the Professional Nursing SharePoint site and exceptions are included in Directorate Governance meetings.

Mrs Keenan said moving forward the Trust had developed a Nursing and Midwifery Accountability and Assurance framework to provide a clear consistent approach to assure the standards of practice, conduct and professionalism of nursing and midwifery care services. She added that the Nursing and Midwifery Accountability and Assurance Committee will hold operational nursing and midwifery management

to account when NEWS2 audit results demonstrate aspects of care that have not been delivered to the required standard.

Mrs Keenan referred members to the outcome of bi-monthly audits by inpatient ward. She advised that an audit of 10 patient charts is completed bi-monthly by each adult inpatient ward and compliance is recorded in run charts. She said frequency of audits may be increased for individual wards based on results.

The Chair asked if there were any areas that caused concern. Mrs Keenan said there were a few concerns where there has been a consistent low outturn. Mrs McKay said there were some areas that gave her concern and said in the past focus had been on hospital pressures and patient flow. However she said going forward she would be asking her lead nurses to concentrate on KPIs at ward level and to provide oversight to ensure they are satisfied with what is being reported and implemented. Mrs Keenan added that she would be meeting with each lead nurse to determine what support can be offered to them by the professional nursing team.

9/23/12

ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANLINESS REPORTS – JULY - SEPTEMBER 2023

Mrs Keenan referred members to the audit report in respect of Environmental Cleanliness for the period July – September 2023.

Members were advised that the end of the quarter audit compliance was 96%; end of the 6 monthly audit compliance was 82% and managerial audits compliance as of June was 39%. Mrs Keenan said there are a number of facilities that require further work and that an action plan has been developed which is monitored fortnightly.

Discussion took place regarding ED at Altnagelvin Hospital and Mrs McKay advised works had been completed in 6 days. She commended the Estates Team for their efficiency. The Chair supported Mrs McKay's commendation of the Estates staff.

9/23/13

ANNUAL QUALITY REPORT FOR 2022/2023

Dr Lavery referred members to the Western Trust Annual Quality Report 2022/23 which had been included in the agenda for noting by the Board. He said the very comprehensive report was compiled using a regional minimum dataset and format to ensure consistency of information across the region. He said the report reflected some of the quality improvement work undertaken throughout the year, including challenges experienced as well as learning from the Covid19 pandemic.

Dr Lavery referred to the Next Steps section and said this outlined the work plan for 2023/24 whereby the Trust will continue to work to improve services in line with the strategic priorities as set out in the Trust's Corporate Plan for 2023/24.

Dr Lavery advised that the report will be published on the Trust's website to coincide with World Quality Day on 9 November 2023. The Chair asked that the Trust communicate some of the messages within the report to the public through the media. Mr Kelly said his team would work with Dr Lavery to identify the key messages that could be communicated.

9/23/14

TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF EMERGENCY GENERAL SURGERY AT SWAH - UPDATE

Mr Gillespie shared with members informatics detailing activity relating to the temporary change to emergency general surgery at the South West Acute Hospital. He said the Trust monitors this activity data daily and that the information will be published on the Trust's website and will come to Trust Board on a quarterly basis for information.

Mr Gillespie said Altnagelvin Hospital had seen a significant increase in the number of ambulance arrivals and walk in to ED since the change. He advised that ambulatory services had been established in SWAH and staff were continuing to be developed which will also provide an opportunity for review.

Mr Gillespie referred to the number of patients admitted to other hospitals from Fermanagh and Omagh and said this was averaging 5 per month for Craigavon Hospital. In relation to the Royal Hospital Belfast for Sick Children he said that the children's pathway would have been the agreed transfer arrangement to Belfast before the temporary closure.

Mr Gillespie referring to the Elective Overnight Stay Centre activity said the Centre was commissioned for 19.5 sessions and the Centre will be at this capacity later this year. He said for the period 1 January 2023 – 30 September 2023, there had been 941 elective procedures completed. Mr Gillespie said the Permanent Secretary was due to visit the Centre and Omagh Hospital later in November to meet staff to thank them for their hard work in achieving this outturn in respect of performance.

The Chair said he was impressed by the formation of the informatics circulated and the information contained within it. Prof McKenna congratulated Mr Gillespie on the report and said he believed this might begin to restore public confidence in the temporary arrangements.

9/23/15

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

15.1 Minutes of meeting held on 7 June 2023

Dr McPeake referred to the minutes of a meeting of the Governance Committee held on 7 June. He said a verbal update had been previously provided to members by Rev Canon McGaffin on his behalf.

15.2 Verbal Update from meeting held on 27 September 2023

Dr McPeake referred to a meeting of the Governance Committee held on 27 September. He shared with members an update using the template developed by the Chair.

Dr McPeake referred to items for escalation to Board and said there was one issue with regard to the Pharmacy Aseptic Unit at Altnagelvin Hospital. Dr McPeake advised that the Head of Pharmacy along with the Production Manager and colleagues had met and put a plan in place to minimise risk which will be kept under regular review.

Dr McPeake said there were 2 emerging governance issues discussed at Committee, the first regarding Approved Social Workers and the second was in relation to an adult safeguarding issue. Dr McPeake said the Committee would normally complete a deep dive but that this had not been possible at the meeting however he was assured by the Medical Director that there would be a deep dive at the December Committee meeting.

The Chair referred to the number of NIPSO cases received by the Trust and the impact of the introduction by the Ombudsman of a new process regarding reopened complaints and what impact this change is having on workload. Dr McPeake advised that this issue had been discussed at the June Committee meeting and again in September and said there was an acceptance that the change was presenting a challenge for staff including the staff of the Ombudsman's office. Dr Lavery pointed out to the Board that the new arrangement was outside the Trust's control.

9/23/16

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR MONTH ENDING SEPTEMBER 2023

Mrs Browne referred members to the Trust's financial performance report for the month ending 30 September. She confirmed that the Finance and Performance Committee had been taken through the report in detail at its previous meeting.

Mrs Browne advised members that the Trust received a letter from the Director of Finance SPPG on 18 October outlining that the DoH mid-year financial review had yielded a number of financial gains which would assist with managing Trust deficits. She said the Western Trust share of this would be £9.8m giving the Trust a reduced deficit of £12.2m.

Mrs Browne advised members that for the period ending September the Trust was reporting an overspend position of £6.9m.

Mrs Browne referred members to table 2 which summarised the financial performance by Directorate. She said the main drivers for the increase in Directorate overspends were pay pressures in respect of medical and nursing staff; non pay pressures relating to PFI inflation and inflation for catering services, building and engineering supplies; increased expenditure in independent homes and Covid transition pressures.

The Chair referred to expenditure associated with winter pressures and the Trust's ability to recruit to vacant posts. He said given this circumstance he felt it would be a challenge to contain nurse agency expenditure. Mr Guckian said there were new nursing graduates commencing shortly. He said 186 new graduates had been offered posts and said a significant number of these new nurses would be employed within ED. Mr Guckian asked again that the pay award for HSC staff be agreed as it is important for Trusts to recruit and retain staff. He asked all present to use their influence to support the case for a pay award. Mr Guckian said that the Western Trust is also having to compete for staff with the Republic of Ireland and independent homes and agencies.

Prof McKenna endorsed Mr Guckian's comments and said it was also critically important to focus on retention.

The Chair referred to the recruitment of new nurses and the importance of recognising they are transitioning to permanent posts and we must ensure they are not overwhelmed by their initial exposure to pressures in our EDs. Mrs McKay advised that the Trust is putting in place additional support with practice educators and is also putting in place extra support to look after and care for this cadre of new staff. In addition Mrs McKay said a rotation plan has been agreed so that the new nurses can rotate around departments.

9/23/17

PROPERTY ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2023/24-2027/28

Mrs Brown referred members to the Trust's Property Asset Management Plan for the period 2023/24 – 2027/28. She said the Plan had been reviewed by the Corporate Management Team and the assurance statement had been signed by the Director of Finance and submitted to the DoH.

Mrs Browne said the Plan included a review of the Trust's estate management for 23/24 and included a broad direction for managing the estate to ensure the property portfolio enabled the delivery of Trust services by ensuring facilities are safe, secure and capable of supporting current and future service delivery needs.

Mrs Browne drew to members' attention to a number of points from the Plan.

Prof McKenna asked if any of the Trust's facilities contained Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete. Members were advised that the Trust had reviewed all its buildings and there are no buildings with RAAC. However, the Trust has sought assurances from landlords in respect of buildings that it was currently leasing.

Dr McPeake referred to 40% of the Trust's estate being classified to be in a satisfactory condition and asked what where the Trust's plans for the 60% of the Trust's estate which is not satisfactory. Mr Guckian responding said that the Trust continued to undertake work said the Trust mitigate these issues and said when a building becomes unsuitable the Trust will stop using it. He said the Trust's hospital facilities are satisfactory however its community buildings do require capital investment. Mr Guckian said the Trust's Plans for the investment are submitted to the DoH so that it can review the entire state of HSC estates across Northern Ireland. He said it is for the DoH to lobby the Department of Finance for the capital funding to address estate issues. He added that in the last number of years the DoH had started to ring fence finance to address backlog maintenance issues. Dr McPeake said he would be interested to know if backlog maintenance is getting worse and at what pace. Mr Guckian said he would examine this.

The Chair said an added factor is that the DoH is also being pressed to invest in technology and medical equipment and this therefore reduces the available finance available for capital funding building and backlog maintenance. However, he said there was a clear stewardship responsibility for the Trust Board to manage its estate.

9/23/18

AUDIT AND RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

18.1 Minutes of meeting held on 12 June 2023

Mr Hegarty referred members to the minutes of an Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meeting held on 12 June. He said a verbal update had been provided to the July Board meeting.

18.2 Verbal Update from meeting held on 9 October 2023

Mr Hegarty referred to a meeting of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee on 9 October. He said significant discussion took place on a range of issues including a

review of the Trust's Risk report; noted the Internal Audit Progress Report for 23/24; Internal Audit Shared Services Report 23/24 and Internal Audit Mid-year Follow up report. Mr Hegarty advised that the ARAC also received the Mid Year Assurance from the Head of Internal Audit and the Trust's Mid Year Assurance Statement for 2023/24.

Mr Hegarty advised that there were no issues requiring escalation to Trust Board.

9/23/19

ENDOWMENT AND GIFTS COMMITTEE

19.1 Minutes of meeting held on 12 June 2023

Rev Canon McGaffin advised that these minutes had been shared at the September Trust Board meeting.

19.2 Verbal Update from meeting held on 5 September 2023

Rev Canon McGaffin advised members that these minutes were reported to the September Trust Board meeting.

9/23/20

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

Dr O'Neill referred members to the Performance Management report for the period July – September 2023. She said Trust performance was reported against 65 metrics of which 37% were assessed as "red", 22% assessed as "amber" and 38% assessed as "green".

Dr O'Neill took members through the service areas and said the September performance had been impacted by cancellations due to industrial action across a number of service areas. She referred members to a detailed assessment of the 23/24 Quarter 2 activity in Section 2 of the report.

Dr O'Neill led members through the detail of the report. Commencing on hospital services, she said in respect of the 14 and 31 day cancer target, the Trust's performance against the Ministerial cancer access target remained strong. However, she noted that significant focus was being given by the SPPG to the 62 day access target and said considerable work was ongoing to address this.

Continuing on Elective Care, Dr O'Neil provided an update in respect of outpatients, inpatient and day case, theatre and imaging diagnostics. She said focus remained focussed on the 5 most challenged specialities. Dr O'Neil said Endoscopy remained an area of particular concern.

Dr O'Neill said unscheduled care was one of the Trust's most challenging areas of service delivery and said the Trust had in place an unscheduled care board that had a specific responsibility for this area of performance.

Dr O'Neill concluded her report by referring members to the detail in respect of Community Care Services, Children's Services, Mental Health Services, District Nursing Services and Allied Health Professionals Service Delivery Plan. In respect of AHP's Dr O'Neill said there were 2 sub specialty challenges due to workforce and the Trust's ability to recruit to a number of specialist posts.

Dr O'Neill commended the report to members. She said the number of patients on waiting lists was still a major concern for the Trust and focus was on workforce and delivering efficiency and effectiveness. Dr O'Neill said she wanted to recognise all the efforts of Trust teams who continued to demonstrate outstanding commitment despite the relentless pressure they faced every day.

The Chair felt it was very hard to do justice to the performance document at Trust Board and asked members to also review it and email the relevant the Director with any questions or comments they may have.

The Chair sought clarity in relation to the interim target for endoscopy and points based monitoring referred to in the performance report. Mrs McKay explained that this related to the number of patients waiting and Dr O'Neill added that the Trust had established a data definition which provided a further refinement of the process.

Dr O'Neill assured members that the Finance and Performance Committee are taken through the detail of the report in advance of the Board meeting.

9/23/21

FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

Mr Hegarty commended Mrs Molloy on the amount of detail covered within her performance report.

21.1 Minutes of meeting held on 5 September 2023

Mr Hegarty referred to the above Committee minutes and said a verbal update had been given to Trust Board previously.

21.2 Verbal update from meeting held on 31 October 2023

Mr Hegarty referred to the above Committee meeting and said there were no issues requiring escalating to Trust Board. He said he was able to give the Board assurance on the level of detail discussed at Committee.

9/23/22

WINTER PLAN 2023/24

Dr O'Neill referred members to the Trust's Winter Plan for 2023/24.

She advised that the DoH had led on the development of a Regional Winter Plan and associated communication to the wider public. She said the Trust submitted its Winter Plan to the DoH in early September 2023, and participated in a formal review session with DoH SPPG and external experts on 12 September 2023. Based on comments received, a revised Plan was submitted on 15 September 2023.

Dr O'Neill added that the DoH held a Winter Summit on 4 October 2023 which primarily focussed on communicating the system approach to winter to the public across all areas of Health and Social Care.

Dr O'Neill said there were a number of acknowledged risks and issues which the Trust has been transparent on when sharing our plan with SPPG. She said a meeting has been arranged with GP colleagues and that workforce remains a significant challenge for the Trust.

Members were advised that wider stakeholder engagement on the winter plan has begun and briefings will be provided in the coming week to local political representatives, Councils, press and media. She said a suite of communication materials have been developed and a communications plan has been approved by the Corporate Management Team.

The Chair acknowledged the huge amount of work undertaken in developing the Trust's Winter Plan. He accepted that there were a number of assumptions and that these may impact on its execution. He said that as he reflected the Plan he was satisfied at the conscientious and careful approach to its development and he commended staff for the clear effort involved.

He added that the potential of further industrial action made it more difficult to sustain best efforts when staff feel their work is not being recognised in respect of pay and the absence of even a pay offer and that this was whether we were comparable or not a very poor reflection on our collective leadership. The Chair said Northern Ireland was the only jurisdiction in the UK where there had not been a pay offer let alone an award and that it was important for local leaders to continue to call this out as it needs to be recognised and that by not giving staff a pay award we are not acknowledging their contribution while at the same time we constantly reflect our concerns around recruitment and retention.

9/23/23

IMPROVEMENT THROUGH INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

23.1 Minutes of Meeting held on 29 June 2023

Mrs Laird referred to the minutes of an ITI Committee meeting held on 29 June and said a verbal update had been provided to members previously.

23.2 Verbal update from meeting held on 6 September 2023

Mrs Laird referred to a Committee meeting held on 6 September. She advised that the Patient and Client Council has confirmed its acceptance of an invitation to attend ITI Committee meetings. She said she had met with Mr Ward, Head of Health Improvement, Equality and Involvement, to progress this and discussions are going forward with Mrs Molloy.

Mrs Laird said she was happy to provide Board assurance on completed and current involvement projects across the Trust. She referred to a case study on the bereavement suite in the South West Acute Hospital. She said the Committee received a presentation on colorectal cancer prehabilitation and said she would commend this to Trust Board.

9/23/24

PEOPLE COMMITTEE

24.1 Minutes of Meeting held on 13 June 2023

Mrs Laird referred to the minutes of a People Committee meeting held on 13 June and said a verbal update had been given to members previously.

24.2 Verbal Update from meeting held on 12 September 2023

Mrs Laird referred to a meeting of the People Committee held on 12 September. She said discussion had taken place on a wide range of issues.

Mrs Laird said the Committee received an update on job planning requirements and advised that an update would be reported to the Chief Executive Assurance meetings.

Mrs Laird said the key theme discussed at the meeting was in relation to “Growing for the Future”. She said at 30 June the HSC in Northern Ireland had an 8.5% vacancy rate with the vacancy rate for the Western Trust being 9%. She said the vacancy rate, a slightly raised turnover rate along with absence was creating a very challenging situation within the Trust. Mrs Laird said workforce stabilisation was very important and asked for the Board’s commitment that when the Committee looks at recruitment alternatives it secures the support of staff to do this.

Mrs Laird said the Committee considered a report on Workforce Early Alerts and said this would be used at Chief Executive Assurance meetings going forward.

Mrs Laird referred to long term absence and said there was a real challenge in relation to the recruitment of Occupational Health staff across Northern Ireland and this would be something the Trust would like to examine with Ulster University.

Mrs Laird said the Committee considered the recent Internal Audit report which had 5 Priority 2 recommendations.

Mrs Laird commended the HR Directorate plan for 24/25. She said an idea was mooted that Non-Executive Directors could act as mentors to senior leaders within the Trust and she would support this.

The Chair thanked Mrs Laird for her update and supported the mentoring suggestion.

9/23/25

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no further items of business.

The Chair concluded the meeting by wishing everyone a very happy Christmas and peaceful New Year.

9/23/26

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Western Health and Social Care Trust Board will take place on Thursday, 4 January 2024 at 11 am.

Dr T Frawley CBE
Chair