

Minutes of a meeting of the Western Health & Social Care Trust Board held on Thursday, 4 January 2024 at 10 am in the Lecture Theatre, Trust Headquarters, Altnagelvin Hospital

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 A McGinley, Non-Executive Director
Dr J McPeake, Non-Executive Director
Professor H McKenna, Non-Executive Director
Mr B Telford, Non-Executive Director

Dr B Lavery, Medical Director
Mrs D Keenan, Interim Executive Director of Nursing, Midwifery and AHPs
Mr T Cassidy, Executive Director of Social Work/Director of Women and Children's Services
Dr M O'Neill, Interim Director of Community and Older People's Services
Mr M Gillespie, Interim Director Surgery, Paediatrics and Women's Health
Ms K O'Brien, Director of Adult Mental Health and Disability
Mrs K Hargan, Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development
Ms E McCauley, Director of Finance, Contracting and ICT
Mrs T Molloy, Director of Performance and Service Improvement

IN ATTENDANCE

Dr A Friel, Assistant Director Pharmacy & HDU
Ms D McElhone, Communications Manager
Mrs M McGinley, Chair/Chief Executive's Office
Ms C O'Reilly, Interim A/Director of PSD, Ms R Pearson, Social Worker Sensory Support Team, Ms E McGuinness, Drumcoo Centre Manager, and Ms J Chapman, Day Worker GlenOaks – for agenda item 1/24/8 only.

1/24/1

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

1/24/2

APOLOGIES

The Chair advised that apologies had been received from Mrs McKay, Director of Diagnostics, Cancer and Medical Specialties. He added that she was being represented by Dr Friel, Assistant Director.

1/24/3

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest expressed.

1/24/4

CHAIR'S WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

The Chair began by welcoming everyone to the Board meeting, in particular he welcomed Dr Aideen McGinley and Mr Brian Telford, 2 new Non-Executive Directors, who took up their appointments on 1 January 2024. The Chair said he was delighted they were making this commitment to the Western Trust

The Chair said it was also important to note that Rev Canon McGaffin was joining the meeting from Australia and Mrs Molloy and Mrs Keenan were also joining online.

- The Chair advised that over the weekend he was delighted to extend his warmest congratulations to Mr Guckian on his much deserved recognition in the King's New Year Honours List 2024. He said Mr Guckian had been awarded the Honour of an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for his services to Health and Social Care and to the community in Northern Ireland.

On behalf of the Trust Board the Chair congratulated Mr Guckian on his Award and said the Trust was very fortunate to have him as its Chief Executive at what is an extremely challenging time for Health and Social Care. He said he believed Mr Guckian and every member of the senior leadership team demonstrate a commitment to the public they serve. He added that Mr Guckian's Award was not about his current role, but a career long commitment to public service.

Continuing the Chair said he also wanted to congratulate Dr Manav Bhavsar and Mrs Bronagh Hegarty on their much deserved recognition in the King's New Year's Honours list. He said Dr Bhavsar, Consultant Anaesthetist based at Altnagelvin Hospital and was the Clinical Lead of Critical Care throughout the

Covid-19 pandemic received the Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) for his services to Healthcare, particularly during Covid-19. He said Dr Bhavsar's superb clinical contribution, moral courage and thorough dedication was widely seen by his peers and by those across the clinical family within Northern Ireland as both exceptional and exemplary.

Referring to Mrs Hegarty, the Chair said Mrs Hegarty was the Trust's Principal Pharmacist for Patient Services and Procurement based at Altnagelvin Hospital and had been awarded the citation of Member of the Order of the British Empire (BEM) for services to healthcare and Pharmacy. The Chair said during Covid, Mrs Hegarty had used her experience and breadth of clinical knowledge to encourage and support pharmacy and other clinical staff at a time when staff were anxious, uncertain and needed support and direction. He added that she led on accessing Covid medicines through clinical trials, ensuring that safe systems were in place and also played a significant role in the COVID Vaccination programme.

The Chair concluded by hoping that Mr Guckian, Dr Bhavsar and Mrs Hegarty would all enjoy the occasion of their investiture in due course and by also acknowledging what an outstanding reflection on the standing and achievements of our workforce in the Western Trust at a time of unprecedented challenge and uncertainty.

- The Chair said the he had been able to advise members previously that the winners of the Trust's new 'Mission Cup' Award was the Trust's Homecare Team. He said the Homecare Team provide a domiciliary care service across the entire Western Trust area, and currently employs over 500 staff. The Chair commended the service as it provides domiciliary care services across 365 days of the year and supports some of the most vulnerable people in our local communities. He added that during December the Chief Executive and he had the opportunity of meeting members of a number of local teams across the Trust's geography.
- On 12 December the Chair advised he had joined his colleague Chairs in a meeting with the Permanent Secretary. He said they received an update from the Permanent Secretary on forward planning and his reflections in relation to the current financial and political context Health and Social care is required to operate. He said the Permanent Secretary also provided an update on the potential financial impact of the Autumn statement, the approach to current and upcoming revenue-raising consultations, a review of existing breakeven contingency plans and updated breakeven financial circular, hospital reconfiguration blueprint and ICSNI next steps.

The Chair said discussion at the meeting also focussed on delivering the Value Programme and examined the opportunities for Boards to proactively sponsor and support productivity and efficiency initiatives while maintaining commitment

to sustaining the momentum of the regional approach to productivity and efficiency agenda.

- On 13 December the Chair said he was pleased to attend a graduation ceremony at the South West Regional College in Omagh. He said it was a very impactful event and he was delighted to be present to see young people from our community who are embarking on their careers.
- On 18 December the Chair advised that he attended the opening of the Bereavement Suite at the South West Acute Hospital, to acknowledge the opening of this Suite which had been jointly funded by the Trust and Sands, the UK's leading baby loss charity. He said the Trust worked in partnership with Sands and local bereaved parents to make the 'Forget Me Not' suite project at South West Acute Hospital a reality. The Chair said he wished to give a special thanks to the bereaved families who had tirelessly fundraised for this Suite and whose commitment and attention to detail in the planning and designing of the room had been exemplary. He said it was a very moving place to visit and a very important facility in the hospital.
- Later that day the Chair said he joined Mrs Hargan and her HR Team for a team development day. He said the objective for the day was to identify how HR could give life to the Trust's Mission Statement - We Are West HR.

The Chair said he took the opportunity to acknowledge the contribution that HR makes to the organisation; acknowledging that HR is supporting the organisation through the most challenging times which includes industrial action, dealing with a wide range of workforce challenges including recruitment, absence management, dealing with difficult grievance and disciplinary matters and supporting line managers in addressing the challenge of retention through staff training and well-being initiatives. The Chair said he also acknowledged that a key role of HR is supporting culture change in the organisation giving life to commitment to achieving a just and learning culture, through compassionate leadership and embedding of HSC values in every aspect of what we do each day.

On 19 December the Chair said he participated in a further meeting of HSC Trust Chairs. He said the discussion included an update on the financial and political context in which the HSC system is operating, a "whole systems" approach to some of the challenges the Service faces and other matters including Board member induction and development, partnership working with other sectors and the composition of consultant appointment panels.

1/24/5

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – 2 NOVEMBER 2023

The Chair referred to the minutes of the Board meeting held on 2 November 2023. Following consideration the minutes were proposed by Mrs Laird, seconded by Prof McKenna and approved by the Board as a true and accurate record of the relevant discussions.

1/24/6

MATTERS ARISING

6.1 Ortho Surgical SSI Rates Update

Mr Gillespie advised that at the September Board meeting during discussion on a Covid19 Nosocomial Infection Report, discussion took place on the Trust's Orthopaedic Surgical Site Infection rate.

Mr Gillespie advised members that all cases had now been reviewed at a Mortality and Morbidity meeting and learning and risk factors had been identified. He assured members that following this work there was no learning or additional risk factors and Surgical Site Infection care bundles had been reviewed and were found to be satisfactory. Mr Gillespie said all the cases were associated with trauma cases and none were elective cases.

Mr Gillespie advised there will be ongoing surveillance including staff training, patient education and KPI monitoring. He said the Surgical Site Infection Multi-disciplinary Team have met with the regional team at the Public Health Agency to discuss a number of matters regarding risk adjustment regarding patient factors, reporting information and validation of data. Mr Gillespie also referred to detailed actions with Infection Prevention and Control and said that consideration had been given to the patient journey from ED through to theatre and no issues had been identified.

6.2 Property Asset Management Plan 2023/24-2027/28

Dr McPeake referred to discussion on the scale of the Trust's backlog maintenance programme and how this was being managed by the Trust. Mrs Molloy advised that the Trust has a rolling programme to assess areas of highest risk and priority as agreed by the Corporate Management Team. She said that it is recognised by the DoH that the scale of backlog maintenance is very significant and unfortunately the DoH has not an investment plan to deal with this fully at this time. Dr McPeake asked if the position was worsening and if any trends had been identified. Mrs Molloy said she would seek to provide this information and assured members that the issue is on the Trust's Corporate Risk Register.

1/24/7

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Mr Guckian referred members to a report on critical issues since the previous Board meeting.

Hospital Flow

Mr Guckian advised that over Christmas, pressure on the hospital system had been building. He said by Monday, 1 January, all Northern Ireland hospitals were extremely pressured. He said this morning (4 January) there were 63 patients waiting for a bed in Altnagelvin and 27 in South West Acute Hospital. Mr Guckian assured members that the Trust is doing all it can to expedite discharge and maintain flow in Altnagelvin Hospital and South West Acute Hospital.

Mr Guckian said he would like to apologise to all patients who had their admission delayed. He said the Trust would continue to do all it can to ensure patients receive the care they need and asked everyone to be patient with Trust staff as they work their way through this difficult period.

Finance

Mr Guckian advised the Trust continues to experience a challenging financial position. He said the Trust was reporting an overspend against its budget of £7.6m at 30 November 2023, with a projected deficit for the year of £11.4m.

Mr Guckian said whilst this deficit was much lower than earlier in the year, and compared favourably regionally, the Trust must ensure its deficit is minimised. He said he had written to all staff to highlight a range of measures to minimise costs ranging from scrutiny of vacancies to travel expenses and other areas.

Graduation South West Regional College

Mr Guckian advised that on 13 December 2023 he had also attended a Graduation Ceremony for the South West Regional College in Omagh. He said he used the event to discuss how the Trust can work closer with the College and the Trust had identified a number of areas with the objective of improving the retention of students who might come into our organisation on completion of their studies.

Homecare Visits – 14 and 15 December

Mr Guckian advised that on 14 and 15 December he met with Homecare staff to congratulate them on winning the Mission Cup. He reminded members that the Homecare Team were the first winners of this trophy, which is awarded to a Trust team who demonstrate commitment to the Trust's mission and values.

New Year's Honours

Mr Guckian added his congratulations to Dr Bhavsar and Mrs Hegarty on their recent Awards. He thanked members for their personal congratulations and said he was

delighted for the recognition for HSC in the Western Trust. Mr Guckian said it was an incredible honour and he was delighted to accept it.

1/24/8

IMPROVEMENT STORY – ADULT MENTAL HEALTH AND DISABILITY

The Chair welcomed Ms O'Reilly, Ms Pearson, Ms McGuinness and Ms Chapman to the meeting and invited them to make a presentation on their improvement story.

Ms O'Reilly thanked members for the opportunity to share their improvement story in relation to the promotion of Day Care Services for adults with a physical, sensory and/or acquired brain injury in the Trust.

Members were advised that post Covid the number of clients attending day care fell by 14%. It was noted that the pandemic highlighted the importance of social inclusion and the negative effects of social isolation on a person's physical and mental health well-being. It was also noted that data presented to the DoH showed an under-utilisation of day care and a significant decline in new referrals in that in the years 2017 – 2019 a total of 5 new service users had commenced day care.

The Team explained that the aim of the service improvement project was by May 2023, to increase the number of service users attending Drumcoo and GlenOaks Day Centres by 10% by improving communication and standardising processes.

The Team outlined the initiatives adopted to meet the project's aim. It was noted that the primary and secondary drivers identified the "change ideas". Members were advised from September 2022 data was collected and correlated weekly from each day centre. It became a regular and routine task for day centre staff which helped to formulate a baseline and enabled staff to be comfortable with the collection of data on a consistent basis.

Moving on members were advised that the project exceeded its 10% goal in that from January 2023 to August 2023 there was an increase of 22% in respect of attendances, and an overall increase from September 2022 – August 2023 of 45.8%.

The Improvement Team advised that the project had challenged day care to question and change existing processes which had led to simplified pathways, improved communication between social work teams and day centre staff, service improvement involvement, maximising use of technology and media and improved wellbeing for new members.

Continuing with their presentation the Improvement Team described the potential for scale and spread of the project to other day centres. Members were advised of a number of actions that will be taken forward including that day care staff will have a

presence at social work team meetings with social workers continuing to explore day care at annual reviews with clients.

Concluding their presentation the Team advised that a promotional video had been developed which to date had received 4.7k views. The promotional video was played for members' information.

Mr Guckian commended the Improvement Team on their project. He said the DoH has been very interested in numbers attending day care as part of the Trust's rebuild.

The Chair thanked the Improvement Team for their informative presentation. He asked in a world where there are limited resources, if you had a development you would like to see supported, what would that be. The Improvement Team suggested investment in transport particularly in Enniskillen. The Team also suggested reaching out to GP practices as GPs historically would have made referrals to day centres but it appeared to have stopped. The Team said that GPs should be able to identify those people who feel isolated. The Team said they would also like to eliminate the stigma sometimes associated with day care and perhaps rebrand day care centres to "Health and Well-being Centres". It was suggested that a hub concept with sessional activities would benefit some clients.

The Chair concluded the discussion by commending the Team on their project. He welcomed the very clear evaluation of what had been achieved. He said he would like to visit both Day Centres over the next number of months and that he would ask his office to arrange this.

1/24/9

CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

Dr Lavery referred members to the Trust's risk register. He said there were 22 corporate risks as approved at Trust Board on 2 November 2023.

Dr Lavery advised that there were no material changes to the risk register, no proposed new risks and no action required. He confirmed all risks had been reviewed in the last quarter and the review had not identified any necessary action.

Dr Lavery advised that realignment of risks in relation to the new structure was now underway and would be completed in the next number of months.

Dr McPeake referred to risk ID955 and sought an update. Dr O'Neill advised that the tender documentation in respect of domiciliary care had been delayed due to discussions with SPPG on what funding was available and also information on tariffs however the tender will now be issued in January 2024. Dr McPeake asked for an update in respect of the Family Support Time Out Service tender and Mr Cassidy

advised that it was anticipated that this tender would be issued shortly as discussions are ongoing with regard to specifying services issues.

Dr McPeake asked if the corporate risk register is reviewed before each Trust Board and Dr Lavery advised that he is assured that it is. Dr McPeake voiced some concern with the timeliness of the register and Mr Telford suggested that a date be added when actions would be completed.

The Chair thanked Dr McPeake for his scrutiny of the risk register and said this suggestion would be considered.

Mrs Laird referred to risk ID1469 and noted that in less than 3 months there had been 387 incidents of aggression towards staff. She said she would like to see the controls in relation to this risk and also the Trust bringing cases against those who are aggressive or violent towards staff. She said the Trust has a moral duty as well as a duty of care to protect staff.

Dr Lavery explained that for the Trust to take such cases a legislative change will be required because as the current law states that it must be the individual member of staff that brings the litigation. Mr Guckian said the anomaly is that Northern Ireland is the only UK jurisdiction in which HSC employers cannot take legal action on behalf of an individual member of staff.

Mrs Hargan offered members a level of assurance that the Trust supports staff who pursue litigation and provides training to staff to protect them from aggressive and violent patients/service users. She said it was important to remember that the types of services the Trust delivers and some of the patients and the clients who receive them can on occasions be unwell and present unpredictable and challenging behaviour. Following discussion the Chair agreed that the Trust will raise the legal issue with the DoH.

Dr McGinley referred to risk ID1236 and said the Trust's projected deficit position needed to be updated also.

1/24/10

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR MONTH NOVEMBER 2023

Ms McCauley referred members to the Trust's financial performance report for the 8 month ended November 2023.

Ms McCauley referred to ongoing correspondence between the Trust and the Permanent Secretary in relation to the current year deficit. She advised that the Trust has moved to implement a Scrutiny Framework for control of non-essential areas of expenditure including travel, overtime, enhanced payments, training and recruitment of posts. She said members of the Finance and Performance

Committee have been fully briefed on the content of the letters. Ms McCauley said the projected financial position for the Trust is a deficit of £11.4m, which is a reduction from the position reported in month 7 of £800k, relating to additional funding to address the South West Acute Hospital PFI inflationary funding gap in-year.

Moving to the content of the report, Ms McCauley reported that the Trust is on target to achieve break-even in relation to its Capital Resource Limit of £31m as well as being at 95% in relation to the Prompt Payment Duty standard.

Moving to Table 2, Ms McCauley said the Trust was reporting a deficit of £7.6m for the period to 30 November 2023 and the Trust remained focused on delivering against the key assumptions of the financial plan in relation to savings, expenditure trajectory in line with forecast and actions to reduce COVID expenditure.

Ms McCauley said members would note from Table 5 that at Directorate sub-total level, expenditure had risen from a variance of 3.1% to 3.4% during this month with increases to be noted against most of the Service Directorates. She said increases were noted largely in relation to nursing budgets but offset by a reduction in medical expenditure for the period. Ms McCauley added that in relation to non-pay budgets these continued to be very challenging and members would be aware that there were 3 contributory factors this year which included an unfunded inflationary element but also a significant volume issue relating to unfunded demand for areas including pharmacy drugs, medical and surgical consumables and labs testing and these areas had experienced a growth in demand during this period.

Ms McCauley continued by referring to COVID expenditure which is running in excess of the funding provided reflecting the limited budget allocated and the time required in year for the Trust to stand down related services. She also asked members to note that this variance percentage was reducing, indicating that actions being taken by Directorates to reduce expenditure had been consistently taking effect. Ms McCauley assured members that the Trust will continue to monitor these figures and said the trend may change as a consequence of the level of Covid now emerging back into the hospital system.

Ms McCauley said the current deficit position of £7.6m at 1.2% represented a reduction from the previous month variance of 1.3%. She said while Directorate sub-total level variance had increased by 0.3%, along with the reduction of expenditure in Covid reported, the Trust is also seeing the benefit of savings now materialising at a higher profile than in earlier months which was off-setting the reported bottom-line increase in month. However, Ms McCauley said she was concerned that the growth in the trajectory of expenditure experienced during November needed to be tested against the Trust's mid-year financial forecast to ensure that growth is in line with forecast and so during January she would be undertaking another review of the Trust's financial plan for 23/24 to ensure that the Trust's forecast deficit remained at £11.4m. Ms McCauley also advised that Directors have also been asked to review

their financial performance to ensure that increases in expenditure are entirely unavoidable with assurance that control is being exercised where it can be.

Moving on to Table 3, Ms McCauley said members would note that the Trust has spent £57m year to date on flexible payroll costs including £41m on agency and over £13m on nurse bank costs. She said while on a more reassuring level there was no further growth noted from the previous month, the Trust could expect this position to change over the next reporting period as a consequence of the additional costs relating to providing services over the holiday period.

Ms McCauley referred to the medical agency graph, and said that in spite of the rising trajectory in year there had been a reduction in cost during this period. She said however this was also an area where it is anticipated that there will be rise in the next reporting period as a consequence of the cover required over the Christmas period.

With reference to Table 5, Ms McCauley said members would be pleased to note that Nursing Agency savings continued to materialise, albeit she noted a plateau in the graph, an indication that we have optimised the potential for savings from the implementation of the new nursing agency framework and until we move to the next phase of the framework implementation, our focus has now turned to controls and assurance in relation to the level of utilisation and actions to reduce that volume. Table 7 indicates no growth against independent homes expenditure for the period, however, this is also an area that we will be monitoring closely over the next reporting period.

With regard to savings targets, Ms McCauley said she was pleased at month 8 to be reporting total savings of £12.8m which included cash savings delivered by Directorates of £7.7m.

Concluding her report Ms McCauley reported to members a financial deficit of £7.6m for the period. She said she would now test the reported increased expenditure trajectory against mid-year forecasts to ensure that forecast end of year deficit remained at £11.4m.

The Chair thanked Ms McCauley for her informative report.

Mr Telford advised that he will be arranging to meet Ms McCauley separately to discuss in detail the Trust's financial position. He was however advised that the financial accounting opportunities are one off.

The Chair sought clarity in relation to table 7, expenditure in respect of independent homes. Ms McCauley advised that there is a regional exercise ongoing as part of the regional Delivering Value programme to understand provision and price, recognising that the existing bed stock and tariff are not currently aligned with

demand and price being paid. Ms McCauley said she would provide more clarification on this in her next financial report.

Prof McKenna referred to the decrease in nurse agency expenditure of 13.7% and asked if this decrease was likely to continue. He referred to the pending industrial action on 18 January and asked what would be the likely cost implications.

Mr Guckian referred to agency reduction work and said the Trust had achieved savings in driving out non-contract nurse agency and social work agency. He said the next stage is to reduce the Trust's reliance on agency and support the workforce. Mr Guckian said this work is being undertaken on a phased approach and said there were tremendous benefits in having a stable workforce. He reiterated that the Trust is a good place to work and a good employer, offering employees a pension and support and development in their careers.

1/24/11

SCHEME OF DELEGATION 23/24

Ms McCauley advised that the Trust had received 2 recent communications in relation to its delegated limits – an updated Circular HSC(F)33-2023 and a letter dated 30 October 2023 increasing compensation payments following Legal Advice on Delegated Limits. She said as a consequence the Trust's Scheme of Delegation 2023/24 had been revised.

Ms McCauley provided members with the detail of the impact of these communications. She said the Trust's Scheme of Delegation for 2023/24 had now been amended in respect of compensation payments for clinical negligence (to include interim payments if overall settlement is expected to exceed delegated limits) including agreement of Periodic Payment Orders, and compensation payments following legal advice (this would include all personal injury and public liability claims).

Following consideration members supported these updates to the Trust's Scheme of Delegation 2023/24.

1/24/12

UPDATE ON BANKING TENDER

Ms McCauley advised members that banking services are currently provided to HSC and Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service regionally by Bank of Ireland and that the current contract expires on 31 January 2024.

Members were advised a re-tender exercise commenced in September 2022 to establish a new contract for the provision of HSC and NIFRS regional banking

services. Ms McCauley said tender submissions had now been evaluated by the Contract Adjudication Group and the tender had been re-awarded to Bank of Ireland, who has now accepted the contract.

Ms McCauley said the contract duration is 5 years with the potential for 3 x 12 month extensions. She said the Procurement and Logistics Service is working with HSC organisations, NIFRS and the bank to ensure transition to the new contract is completed within the required timelines and within the contract terms.

1/24/13

ENDOWMENT AND GIFTS COMMITTEE

13.1 Minutes of meeting held on 5 September 2023

Rev Canon McGaffin referred to the minutes of the Endowment and Gifts Committee meeting held on 5 September. She said a verbal update on this meeting had been previously provided to members.

13.2 Verbal update from meeting held on 5 December 2023

Rev Canon McGaffin referred to a Committee meeting held on 5 December. She confirmed that the meeting had been quorate and said discussion took place on a range of issues including Trust Fund annual accounts. She said discussion also included concerns on a recorded loss in relation to investments and she advised the Board that a report was being developed and said an annual review of investment holding is scheduled to come to the E&G Committee meeting in June.

Rev Canon McGaffin said the Committee had reviewed a number of policies and considered 2 proposals for approval. She said the Committee also considered Post Project Evaluations and has developed a new template for approved proposals.

She said consideration was also given to spending proposals and said more detailed monitoring will be presented to the next meeting on low value funds.

Rev Canon McGaffin said there were no other issues at this time that require to be brought to the Board's attention in advance of the minutes of the meeting coming to Trust Board.

1/24/14

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

Mrs Molloy advised that her presentation today was an update by exception and that the full quarter 3 report for the period October – December 2023 would come to Trust Board in February. She said the performance reports for October and

November had been formally considered by the Corporate Management Team, confirming that the Trust's position for November 23 showed an improving picture of increased activity across a number of service areas including outpatients, endoscopy and AHPs, where each of these areas delivered the highest level of activity this year to date. Mrs Molloy said this was noteworthy and she commended these services.

Mrs Molloy said in overall terms the number of service areas where the Trust is meeting the Service Delivery Plan targets as set by DoH had increased with 57% of areas now being assessed to have a Green RAG rating in November, compared to 45% in October. She said the areas where the Trust met or exceeded its targets included the 14 and 31 day cancer pathways, imaging services, outpatients, endoscopy, scheduled theatre minutes, domiciliary care, all children's targets, AHPs overall, and all mental health targets with the exception of new outpatients adult mental health.

Mrs Molloy said there were 2 areas where the Trust continued to fall well below target, and that these areas would be familiar to the Board. She referred in particular to performance against the 62 day cancer access standard and said the current outturn was at 40% against a 95% target. She said the Finance and Performance Committee had received a detailed briefing on this issue at a Workshop held earlier in the week. Mrs Molloy added that the Board would be aware that despite this performance, the Trust remained a top performer in the Region in cancer access times. Moving to the second area, Mrs Molloy advised that the Trust had not met any of its unscheduled care targets in November, covering weekend discharge, length of stay or reduction in the number of patients who spend 12 hours in our ED.

Mrs Molloy advised that the regional position for November is not available as yet and therefore she was unable to give Board any sense of our comparative performance with other Trusts, but given this position she would expect that the Trust will continue to be viewed as delivering a high performance overall, with a small number of areas which continue to present complex challenges for our teams which include long standing escalating demand requiring investment, and issues around patient flow in our hospitals and discharge into our community services particularly over the highly pressurised winter period.

The Chair thanked Mrs Molloy for her helpful and insightful update. He remarked it would be helpful to understand the Trust's performance as at November against the performance of other Trusts. He noted the challenge with meeting the 62 day cancer target and commented that he understood that this is a challenge across the whole of the UK.

The Chair asked Mr Hegarty, as Chair of the Finance and Performance Committee, if he would like to add any comment. Mr Hegarty referred to the presentation the Committee had received on the 62 day cancer target and said it had been particularly impactful in highlighting the number of barriers there are to achieving this target. He said the way commissioning is undertaken added to the challenge and he

felt this presentation should be shared with the whole Trust Board. Mr Hegarty said he had asked Mrs Cardin and Mrs Tourish who made the presentation to highlight their top 2/3 issues which they would like to bring to the attention of the Trust Board.

Following discussion it was felt that this presentation should be brought to a Trust Board Workshop.

1/24/15

PEOPLE COMMITTEE

15.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 12 September

Mrs Laird referred members to the minutes of a People Committee meeting held on 12 September. She said a verbal update on this meeting had been provided to the November Trust Board meeting.

The Chair referred to item 7 of the minutes regarding NIMDTA allocations and said he was concerned about the high rate of vacancy gaps within FY1 in the South West Acute Hospital. He referred to how the allocation process works and its implication for equity and asked if Dr Lavery or Mr Guckian could advise if there is any prospect of addressing this issue. Dr Lavery assured members that there is ongoing discussion on this. Mrs Hargan said the Trust had raised this issue at its last “ground clearing” meeting with the DoH and discussion had taken place in relation to the medical workforce particularly around junior doctor allocation. Mrs Hargan said that an action had been agreed that the DoH would convene a meeting to discuss this.

Prof McKenna referred to 6.2 and 6.3 of the minute regarding recruiting the necessary workforce and in particular a professional nursing workforce however he asked what efforts were being made to retain staff, given retention is as important as recruitment. He also referred to the Trust’s efforts to attract staff from overseas and said last year the Nursing and Midwifery Council had reported that 92% of all new registrants were from overseas and 40% of this number were from World Health Organisation “red list” countries. Mrs Hargan said the Trust did not recruit from “red list” countries and said the Trust attracted the majority of its new registrants from Queen’s University and Ulster University. In respect of retention Mrs Hargan advised that a local action plan had been put in place in relation to the retention of the nursing and midwifery workforce and that the issue of flexible working was receiving significant attention although she acknowledged this was a challenge for the Trust. Mrs Hargan also added that “culture” and “engagement” within the Trust is very important and she reiterated Mr Guckian’s comments that the Trust is a great place to work and that the Trust wants to create a culture and environment where staff want to come and work and importantly remain in the Trust’s employment.

Mrs Laird assured members that the People Committee has a very clear focus on this issue and the “psychological” contract staff have with the Trust.

The Chair thanked Mrs Laird for her comments and said he felt she was clearly a strong advocate for staff at Trust Board.

15.2 Verbal update from meeting on 12 December

Mrs Laird advised that the most recent meeting of the People Committee took place on 12 December.

She said there were a number of issues which she felt should be expedited to Trust Board in advance of the minutes coming to Trust Board. Mrs Laird said medical workforce challenges are being experienced in the Trust and the delay in receipt of the regional Medical workforce baseline report was compounding this challenge. She said the medical workforce baseline report would highlight some of the areas where the Trust is not adequately resourced in comparison with other Trusts across the region and will also detail specific regional actions that are required in priority areas.

Mrs Laird reminded members that through the Endowment and Gifts Committee funding had been provided to support the establishment of an Occupational Health psychological service. She said this funding had made a huge impact in reducing Occupational Health waiting lists from 9 months to 4/6 weeks in 2023 and an added bonus was the resultant reduction in long term absence. Mrs Laird said the focus on psychological safety was very important. Mrs Laird said a business case will be developed in 2024 to support the continuation of this service and she asked Trust Board to support it. Mrs Laird added that during a recent leadership walk round Theatres staff were able to express the view that “psychological support” had proved to be invaluable.

Discussion then took place on the number of job plans that remain to be completed and Mrs Laird said if there was not an improvement in the current position she would be asking the Board to consider what action could be taken. She said in the interim this situation would be discussed at the Chief Executive Assurance meetings with Directorates.

Mrs Laird referred to appraisal rates and said a briefing had been shared with the Corporate Management Team. She said consideration should also be given to the potential introduction of team appraisals.

Mrs Laird said discussion took place in relation to a number of fraud cases. She said 17 cases had been reported relating to potential fraud. She said Committee had sought further assurance in relation to incidence and assurance on trends for further consideration.

Mrs Laird advised that the Staff story to the December meeting related to a member of staff who had raised the issue of a lack of fostering leave provisions for staff who are foster carers. She said the staff member worked with HR and Social Services to develop arrangements which were implemented in November 2022. Mrs Laird said this work has also been referred to the Improvement through Involvement Committee for noting as an example of outstanding staff engagement. Mrs Laird said the Trust was also leading this work across the Region.

The Chair said he would be happy to write to the member of staff who led the work in developing the fostering leave provisions.

The Chair said he was disappointed with the Trust's compliance in respect of job plans. Dr Lavery assured members that for 90% of the medical workforce their job plans do not change year on year but agreed that it was important that they are done year on year. Mrs Hargan said job planning is a contractual commitment and must be completed on a yearly basis. She added that there have been circumstances when it had not been done and it had led to both over and under payments. She said the Trust has established a job planning oversight group to ensure arrangements in the Trust are compliant. Mrs Hargan also said the responsibility to ensure doctors complete job plans sits with Service Directors as they have the responsibility for ensuring job plans are completed.

1/24/16

IMPROVEMENT THROUGH INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

16.1 Minutes of meeting held on 6 September 2023

Mrs Laird referred to minutes of a meeting of the Improvement through Involvement Committee held on 6 September 2023. She said members had received a verbal update on the meeting at November Trust Board.

16.2 Verbal update from meeting held on 8 December 2023

Mrs Laird advised that the Trust's Policy & Guidelines Group has established a Sub-Group to engage with Service Users to give scrutiny to their work. She said the Terms of Reference had been developed and work will now progress to recruit Service Users.

Mrs Laird advised that members of a newly established Patient and Client Council were invited to make a presentation to the Committee with a view to forging stronger links between the Trust and the reconvened Council. She said the Trust has persuaded the Council's Policy lead to join all its Committee meetings going forward. Mrs Laird said the Council had shared its strategic plans and she commended their presentation to the Trust Board so as to strengthen these important relationships.

Mrs Laird said the Committee noted the Trust Board Workshop on the development of Trust's new Corporate Plan 2024-2027, which will include a targeted engagement and involvement approach. She said a briefing paper was provided to the Committee outlining the early thinking in terms of engagement and involvement with stakeholders internally and externally; and Committee agreed further discussion was necessary and agreed to have a separate session to consider what was required, what was doable and within what timelines, and what good practice in this area looks like.

Mrs Laird said the ItI Committee needs to be well sighted on engagement and involvement in respect of the temporary transfer of emergency general surgery in the South West Acute Hospital and said this will be a standing item on the Committee's agenda moving forward.

Mrs Laird advised the Committee received a presentation from the PHA on its Involvement and Consultation scheme following the DoH's request for HSC organisations to revisit and update their Consultation Schemes. Mrs Laird said the Committee is happy to approve the Trust's Consultation Scheme and will bring it back to Trust Board in due course. The Chair supported this proposal.

1/24/17

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no further items of business.

1/24/18

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chair thanked every for their contributions at today's meeting. He said the next meeting would take place on Thursday, 1 February at 11 am in Omagh Hospital and Primary Care Complex, Omagh.

Dr Tom Frawley, CBE
Chair
1 February 2024