

**Minutes of a meeting of the Western Health & Social Care Trust Board held on Thursday, 7 March 2024 at 10 am in the Lecture Theatre within Medical Education, South West Acute Hospital, Enniskillen**

**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  
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  
Mrs G McKay, Director of Diagnostics, Cancer and Medical Specialties  
Mr M Gillespie, Interim Director Surgery, Paediatrics and Women's Health  
Dr M O'Neill, Interim Director of Community and Older People's Services  
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**

Mr O Kelly, Communications Manager  
Mrs M McGinley, Chair/Chief Executive's Office  
Mr Doran, Service User, Mrs Stephanie Johnston, Service Manager Ophthalmology, and Mr Patrick McCanney, Specialist Optometrist (agenda item 3/24/8 only)

3/24/1

**CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

3/24/2

### **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Dr McPeake, Non-Executive Director.

3/24/3

### **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest expressed.

3/24/4

### **CHAIR'S WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the March Board meeting and noted that a number of the Board were joining the meeting remotely, due to the industrial action which had taken place the day before.

- The Chair began by advising that the Minister had approved a second term of office for Rev Canon McGaffin and Prof McKenna. He said these renewals of member appointments completed the membership of the Board for the foreseeable future and these appointments provided both continuity and specific areas of expertise in health, social care, higher education and importantly professional development and training.
- On 2 February the Chair advised that he and the Chief Executive travelled to Belfast for the Trust's Mid-year Accountability Review with Mr May, Permanent Secretary. He said this meeting provided a positive assessment by the DoH of the Trust's performance during 2023/24. The Chair said across a number of parameters the Trust was advised it was the best performing Trust in Northern Ireland, however, Mr May also emphasised that overall Northern Ireland Health and Social Care systems needed to improve its performance in a number of critical areas. The Chair added that in emphasising the "dire" financial situation facing HSC with a "flat cash" allocation for 24/25, the Permanent Secretary acknowledged the significant progress the Trust has made in respect of reducing its financial deficit.
- The Chair advised that during the month the shortlisting panel had concluded its work in relation to the nominations for the Staff Recognition Awards Ceremony which will take place on Thursday, 18 April in the Killyhelvin Hotel, Enniskillen.

He said he was pleased that the Minister for Health had confirmed his attendance and said on the evening all present would hear many outstanding citations in

relation to the work undertaken day and daily by staff across the extensive range of services for which the Trust has responsibility.

- During February the Chair said he continued with his programme of familiarisation visits across the Trust. He advised that in early February he spent an informative and interesting morning at the North West Cancer Centre in Altnagelvin. He said he was impressed both by the building and more importantly the outstanding individuals and teams that work there and said staff conveyed a competence and positivity that was both encouraging and reassuring.

At the end of February the Chair said he spent an interesting morning visiting the Laboratory and Pharmacy departments within Altnagelvin Hospital. He said during these visits he had the opportunity to visit many areas within the departments and said he now appreciated the complexity and multi-faceted nature of these specialties and increasingly the sub specialities. Again, the Chair said he was impressed by the highly qualified professionals who have a clear commitment to achieving accurate, safe and high quality care for patients.

The Chair said he wished to record his thanks and appreciation to all staff for what they do every day.

- The Chair advised that on 27 February ICU supported a seminar on behalf of the Trust's Organ Donation Committee on the challenging issue of improving performance in the donation of eyes. He said this was a very sensitive and challenging issue but vitally important when 1 pair of eyes has the potential to restore the sight of 10 people. He said the seminar was led by Dr Laird, Consultant Anaesthetist, who in a very powerful presentation presented his personal experience of having his sight saved through receiving a corneal graft at the age of 11. The Chair said Dr Laird's presentation confirmed that for him it was so important that the Trust finds ways of disseminating this information on the donation of eyes more widely.
- The Chair said he was pleased that many of the Board had agreed to join a mentoring circle, comprising a small group of staff who come together to learn and grow through the sharing of collective expertise, experiences and insights. He advised that he undertook his first mentoring session on 5 March and it was already clear to him how he can learn from others in his circle.

The Chair also thanked all Executive and Non-Executives Directors for the positive way in which they had responded to his suggestion that each Non-Executive should be "paired" around an area of potential shared interest. He said this initiative was based around his belief that there was so much experience, expertise and insight in both the Corporate and Non-Executive Directors that comprise the Trust Board.

3/24/5

## **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – 1 FEBRUARY 2024**

The Chair referred to the minutes of the Board meeting held on 1 February 2024. Following consideration the minutes were proposed by Prof McKenna, seconded by Mrs Laird and approved by the Board as a true and accurate record of discussion at the meeting.

3/24/6

## **MATTERS ARISING**

The Chair referred to a number of matters arising from the last meeting.

- The Chair advised that a visit has been arranged for members to visit the Macmillan Health and Wellbeing Campus on 2 May following the Trust Board meeting.
- A Glossary of Terms was shared with members.
- Mr Guckian advised that he emailed Mrs Cross, Head of Infection Prevention and Control, to thank her for the quality and content of the Infection Prevention and Control report brought to Board. Mr Guckian said he also emailed Mrs Gormley, Support Services, to ask her to pass on his thanks to the cleaning staff for the important contribution they make in maintaining cleanliness across the Trust.
- Assurance is being provided to the Chief Executive by Directors in respect of mandatory training.
- Members were advised that Mrs Cross, Head of Infection Prevention and Control, will come to the next available Trust Board to undertake hand hygiene training with members.
- The Chair advised that Mrs Keenan is taking forward the issue of presenting both self-reported results and IPC results together as a comparator in future IPC update reports.
- The Chair referred to capacity in the South West Acute Hospital and said Mr Guckian had advised that the strategic outline case is the priority for the hospital at this time and that the Trust requires the agreement of the DoH to prepare and submit development business cases.
- The Chair advised that the Findings report from the consultation on the temporary suspension of Emergency General Surgery had been emailed to Dr McGinley and Mr Telford.

- The Chair said that Dr McGinley and Mr Gillespie had agreed to meet to discuss the statistics associated with the temporary suspension of EGS and the addition of statistics to the informatics.
- The Chair referred to the development of a Personal Development Plan for Non-Executive Directors, and clarified that this is included in the current DoH appraisal form under the section “Leadership and Self Development.
- The Chair referred to the visibility of Non-Executive Directors, and said such engagement will be supported by Board Executive Directors.
- The Chair confirmed Mr Guckian had conveyed the Board’s appreciation to staff on the Trust’s financial outturn.
- The Chairman confirmed that personal details had been returned to enable the Trust to sign its new bank mandate.

3/24/7

### **CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S REPORT**

Mr Guckian shared with members a report on critical issues since the previous Board meeting.

#### **Junior Doctor Industrial Action – 6 March 2024**

Mr Guckian referred to the industrial action by junior doctors across Northern Ireland on 6 March. In preparation for this he said the Trust had stood up its Business Continuity Planning arrangements from 14 February.

Mr Guckian advised that as a result of the industrial action over 400 patient interventions had been postponed and engagement had taken place with senior doctors who covered the work of their junior colleagues. It was noted that additional payments for this commitment were agreed on a Northern Ireland wide basis.

Mr Guckian said many of the Trust’s Corporate Management Team were joining the Board today remotely today as there was a need for members of the Management Team to be available to support the return of services across Trust sites.

#### **General Pressures**

Mr Guckian advised members that Emergency Departments have continued to be under pressure. He said it would be interesting to assess the impact of having more senior decision makers on site will have on patient flow. Mr Guckian said that given

a key constraint had been on capacity in community settings, there may not be a significant change in patient delays. Mr Guckian added that the mental health inpatient hospitals continued to exceed capacity with 15-17 extra patients above commissioned levels.

### **Legislation to Support Staff Against Attacks/Stalking**

Mr Guckian referred to previous agreement at Trust Board that he would write to the DoH to highlight the anomaly within Northern Ireland whereby Trusts cannot take legal action on behalf of staff if they are attacked or threatened as a result of their work. Mr Guckian shared with members correspondence from the DoH advising that it has referred the issue to the Department of Justice and have asked that the Western Trust is logged as an interested party to any proposed new legislation.

### **New Northern Ireland Assembly**

Mr Guckian referred to the reformed Northern Ireland Assembly. He said on 9 February the Health Minister, Mr Swann MLA, wrote to all HSC staff, highlighting the challenges facing the service and committing to working together to focus on services.

Mr Guckian said on 22 February all Trust Chief Executives were invited to address the Health Committee on key issues facing the service. He said a single narrative was agreed by all Trusts on each issue facing HSCNI and a lengthy question time followed from members of the Committee. Mr Guckian added that Chief Executives gave a full and open assessment of the challenges facing health and social care.

### **World Cancer Day**

On 6 February Mr Guckian said he participated in World Cancer Day with the full team in the North West Cancer Centre. He said the Cancer Centre continues to make a significant improvement to people's lives in the North West and the Republic of Ireland.

### **Mission Cup**

Mr Guckian advised that on Thursday, 8 February the Mission Cup was passed from the Trust's Domiciliary Care Team to the Breast Care Nurse Specialist Team.

Mr Guckian reminded members that The Mission Cup will transfer to a different team every 2 months and the winners are nominated by the current holders, with the only stipulation being that it should pass to a different Directorate.

Mr Guckian said the decision to give the cup to the Breast Care Nurse Specialist Team was a very personal and emotional one by the Domiciliary Care Team and

acknowledged the support given to a number of the domiciliary care team by the Breast Care Team in the recent past.

### **All Party Group for South West Acute Hospital and Strategic Development Group**

Mr Guckian advised that on 9 February the latest meeting of the All Party Group for SWAH took place. He said this meeting included a tour of MedEdWest facilities where the Group met students and tutors and discussed the challenges of attracting and retaining medical students and future doctors to the West.

Mr Guckian said that following the Board meeting today, Thursday, 7 March there would be the latest meeting of the SWAH Strategic Development Group with a range of updates being provided on the hospital.

### **Official Opening of Aspace**

On 15 February Mr Guckian said he attended and spoke at the official opening of the social enterprise café created by Aspace in the Alley Theatre in Strabane.

Members were advised that Aspace2 is a registered charity and a social enterprise which reinvests profits generated into services supporting children, young adults and adults with a learning, physical or sensory disability, including Autism Spectrum Disorder. Mr Guckian said its vision is to create an environment which supports adults with additional needs to learn the skills necessary to live an independent, purposeful life and to grow to make informed, fulfilling life choices in an age appropriate, respectful, and inclusive manner. Mr Guckian said that by choosing Aspace2 at the Alley Theatre for breakfast, lunch, or a coffee, you are also choosing to support trainees' future training and development and said he would recommend members visiting the café any time they are in the area of Strabane.

### **Macmillan "Through our Eyes" Exhibition**

Mr Guckian said members would recall during the Patient Story at last months' Board meeting, reference as made to the Macmillan Cancer Support regional creative arts exhibition at the MAC Theatre in Belfast to mark World Cancer Day on 4<sup>th</sup> February. He said this exhibition had included 3 projects produced by service users at the Macmillan Health and Wellbeing Campus at Altnagelvin and the North West Cancer Centre.

Members were advised that Macmillan was able to secure funding to host a local exhibition of this artwork on 19 February in the Playhouse Theatre, Derry, and said Macmillan had also invited Cancer Focus NI, SWELL (Enniskillen) and Care for Cancer (Omagh) to also showcase their projects to make the exhibition a Trust wide event.

Mr Guckian said he was pleased to be able to attend the exhibition.

### **Royal College of Surgeons Visit to South West Acute Hospital**

Mr Guckian advised that on 21 February the Northern Ireland Director of the Royal College of Surgeons, Mr McGonigle, visited South West Acute Hospital. He said this had been a very positive visit with Mr McGonigle, alongside RCS colleagues, taking the opportunity to view the first-class theatres and facilities at the South West Acute Hospital, engaging with senior clinical leaders, nursing and support staff working in theatres and elective and ambulatory wards. Mr Guckian said the visitors also got to hear about the Trust's theatre utilisation programme which has seen SWAH theatres reaching its full commissioned sessions each week, alongside the Overnight Elective Stay Centre which is helping to reduce Northern Ireland waiting lists.

Mr Guckian said the Trust had been incrementally building the capacity for elective operating lists in the South West Acute Hospital and Omagh Hospital theatres to help reduce waiting lists and advised that from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023 SWAH has seen a total of 1,334 patients operated on.

### **Launch of Western Trust Perinatal Mental Health Service**

Mr Guckian advised that on Friday, 1 March the Health Minister visited the Trust to launch the Trust's new Perinatal Mental Health Service which has been operational since October 2023.

Mr Guckian said the Trust's Perinatal Service supports women who are experiencing serious mental illness during their pregnancy and for up to 12 months following the birth of their baby. He said it is a one of 5 Multi-disciplinary Perinatal Mental Health Teams in Northern Ireland that have been established in each of the 5 Trusts and the Teams are supported both by the Public Health Agency and Department of Health. He advised that the central objective of this trans-regional approach is to ensure that the same standard of care is available across the complete geography of Northern Ireland.

Mr Guckian said during the launch the audience heard very deeply felt and positive feedback from service users on the significant impact the team and service have made to their lives.

### **Hold the Date – Leadership Festival**

Mr Guckian reminded members that the Trust's Leadership Festival will take place during week of 3-7 June. He said there will be a wide range of events both in person and virtually. He said the Festival proposes to include a session "Meet the Trust Board" following the Board meeting on 6 June and said more information was being



developed on this along with a detailed programme which will be shared with members nearer the time.

### **Vaccinations**

Mr Guckian advised members that in recent weeks the Trust had begun organising additional vaccination clinics over the weekends for staff and the public. He said the staff flu campaign would continue until end of March although attendances had reduced greatly. He advised that the MMR catch up clinics will continue on Saturdays along with other scheduled Flu Clinics and that to date 63 MMR vaccines had been administered. Members were advised that the vaccination programme will run until Saturday, 6 April to compensate for no clinics over the Easter Holiday period. Mr Guckian advised that the Trust's Measles Planning Group continues to meet weekly.

### **Corporate Plan – Consultation**

Mr Guckian referred to previous discussion at the Board workshop in December when members were given the opportunity to review the Trust's current strategic priorities and objectives for the 3 year period 2024/25 – 2026/27. Mr Guckian said that since this work had taken place the Board had had 2 new Non-Executive Director appointments and said in light of this he would ask Mrs Molloy to speak to Dr McGinley and Mr Telford on this work.

Mr Guckian said the next step in the process in developing the Trust's Corporate Plan is to agree the Trust's strategic priorities and corporate objectives for the next 3 years and said the Trust had embarked on a period of consultation with staff and external bodies welcoming feedback and comments. He said there were a number of roadshows arranged along with an online proforma available for comments. Mr Guckian said this was the opportunity to be involved in shaping the new Corporate Plan for the Trust and said he would encourage all stakeholders, including all staff, to consider the consultation responses and provide comments before the deadline of 22 March 2024.

3/24/8

### **IMPROVEMENT STORY – SURGERY, PAEDIATRICS & WOMEN'S HEALTH**

The Chair thanked Mr Doran, Service User, Mrs Stephanie Johnston, Service Manager Ophthalmology, and Mr Patrick McCanney, Macular Specialist Optometrist and Assistant Service Manager of Optometry, for joining today's meeting. He said their attendance was part of the Board's wish to better understand services and to secure a patient's perspective. It was noted that Mr Doran had kindly agreed to come to Trust Board at short notice as Ms Shiels, service user, had unexpectedly taken ill.

Mr Gillespie thanked members for this opportunity. He said unfortunately Mr Mulholland, Consultant Ophthalmologist, was also unable to attend but said he wanted to acknowledge Mr Mulholland's leadership in making changes to the Trust's Macular service which had been transformational in preserving sight. Mr Gillespie also thanked Mrs Quinn and Mrs Hasson, Facilities Management, who had been instrumental in identifying accommodation for the service.

Mrs Johnston thanked members for the opportunity to attend to share their journey. She advised that the demand for macular services within the Western Trust increased exponentially between 2009 and 2019 and said this increase in demand challenged the Trust to maintain demand/capacity and manage waiting times for patients despite further innovation being introduced in patient pathways. Members were advised that treatments for macular conditions are time critical. It was noted that Ministerial targets set for these conditions and additional pressure on the service resulted in new patients beginning to breach targets and there were also delays in reviewing patients. Members were advised that this resulted in 9 SAIs within the macular service over a period of 18 months in 2017 which had all resulted in patients losing sight or becoming permanently visually impaired.

Mrs Johnston advised that at this time the macular service met weekly to discuss each of the SAIs and to agree how the service would address these issues. She said the service reviewed both new and review patient pathways to ascertain how it could improve the pathway for assessment even within a few weeks of their clinical timeframes so as to reduce risk. She said they used process mapping to examine each stage of the patient's journey and to determine if there were changes that could be made.

Mrs Johnston said the Service introduced a fast access referral form for community Optometrists to reduce delays in triaging. She said all newly referred patients were being triaged to the consultant so the service changed the pathway to enable certain new patients to be seen within an Optometry/nurse led clinic rather than a consultant clinic.

Mrs Johnston said the service also established a "macular tracker role" with enhanced focus on the service and which liaised with the team regarding additional capacity or any concerns. She said the service established nurse-led injection clinics across both sites which enabled review patients to come back at regular intervals for treatment to nurse injectors rather than using slots within consultant clinics. She added that consultants were asked to change general clinics to macular clinics on an ad hoc basis when demand necessitated it.

Mrs Johnston said as a result of these changes, and with greater focus placed on the service, the service began to reduce waiting times and reduce the number of patients breaching their clinical indicated timeframes. Mrs Johnston said this led to a decrease in the number of patients developing visual impairment or blindness and in many cases led to improvements in patients' vision.

Mrs Johnston said currently within the Trust there are no new or review patients waiting outside the Ministerial target. She said this was as a result of a team effort within the macular service by looking at new and innovative ways to ensure patients are seen in a shorter timescale. She added that the macular service has pathways for patients compared to only one when the improvement journey commenced. She said enhancement of accommodation for the service had also meant that the service is now able to offer 2 injection rooms, 2 face to face clinics and a virtual clinic in Altnagelvin Hospital as well as clinics in Omagh Hospital and Primary Care Complex.

Mrs Johnston said the main focus within the macular service is patients and ensuring that the service is meeting their needs whether it is for treatment, diagnostic test or support from the Eye Care Liaison Officer. She said macular patients are at the centre of all the service does and this is shown through the compliments and donations the service receives to the Trust Ophthalmology Fund.

Mr McCanney advised that he is based in Omagh and he shared his history of working in the macular service. He said the transformation of the service had led to improved outcomes for patients and a more efficient use of resources and said for example during Covid patient pathways become bespoke care plans which positively changed outcomes for patients.

Following a request for clarity in respect of staff training to take on enhanced roles, members were advised that the service change commenced incrementally and that while initially Mr Mulholland took all images himself, with staff training this had been expanded to other staff.

Mr Doran was invited to share his personal story with members. Mr Doran advised that he is from Omagh and said he was able to receive his treatment in Omagh Hospital. He said he was very fortunate to have a daughter who is an Optometrist and was able to detect a change in his sight. He said he was referred to the Macular Clinic at Altnagelvin Hospital. Mr Doran advised that he had received 4 injections in his left eye but after the fourth injection, it was deemed that the disease had gone too far. He said he now relied on his right eye for sight and that to date he had received 34 injections. Mr Doran said he was very fortunate to receive the service and said he receives his injection every 5/6 weeks. Mr Doran commended the service and the Ophthalmology nurses in particular.

Mrs Johnston was asked if there was a service in Fermanagh and she advised that training had recently commenced to facilitate this. She said that Omagh and Fermanagh patients are accommodated at the Omagh Clinics and said the Service also holds a significant number of Saturday clinics in Altnagelvin which patients are happy to travel to.

Mr Doran also advised members that he is a member of the Macular Society which meets every week. He said it consisted initially of 10/15 people and then with Covid its numbers reduced but numbers have started increasing again. He said at a

meeting last Wednesday they celebrated the birthday of a lady who had turned 100. He said that while she had been very anxious about having an injection into her eye she had since had 3 injections and was doing well.

The Chair asked if there was one thing that would make a difference to the service, what that would be. Mrs Johnston said she would like a bus to take the service out and about similar to breast screening. She said that this would also facilitate people living in remote areas of the Western Trust and Northern Trust.

Mr Telford thanked all those for attending. He said he was very impressed by the patient focussed demonstrated by the service and said he found the transformation achieved very impressive. He said he would like to see a post review evaluation of the service.

The Chair commended Mr Mulholland who had been the catalyst for change in sharing his skill and for recognising that nurses and optometrists could do more to support patients and free his specialist skills to focus on the more complex conditions. He added that by redesigning the service it had maximised the skill and competence of the workforce. Mrs Hargan said the transformation work was a real example of giving life to the Trust's mission statement

In concluding the discussion Mrs Johnston shared a video of Ms Shiels sharing her patient journey.

The Chair thanked Mrs Johnson, Mr McCanney and Mr Doran for attending today's meeting.

3/24/9

### **CORPORATE RISK REGISTER**

Dr Lavery referred members to the Trust's Corporate Risk Register. He said there were currently 22 risks on the register as approved at Trust Board on 1 February 2024.

Dr Lavery shared with members 3 material changes for consideration to the register:-

- Proposal to close risk ID1338;
- Proposal to increase risk rating of risk ID1183;
- Proposal to de-escalate risk ID1306.

Following consideration all proposals were fully supported by members.

It was noted that there were no new risks for consideration and in relation to summary report for actions, there were no actions required.

3/24/10

**ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANLINESS REPORT – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2023**

Mrs Keenan provided members with an update on the Environmental Cleanliness Report for the period October – December 2023.

Mrs Keenan advised that the overall audit compliance for this quarter had increased to 99.6% with the Managerial Audit compliance being 73%. She said the Managerial Audits in December 2023 were cancelled due to the Trust being focussed on business continuity and work was ongoing to reschedule deferred areas before the end of March 2024. Mrs Keenan said this had mostly affected areas within the Cancer & Clinical Services and Women’s Health Divisions on the Altnagelvin Hospital site.

Mrs Keenan advised that Environmental Cleanliness audits score for each area individually on cleaning, estates and professional issues. She said the 3 scores are then entered into a computerised system which gives an overall average for environmental cleanliness in that area. She said the traffic light system is used to demonstrate the scores/standard achieved for each section and the overall average score is detailed in the dashboard report within members’ papers. Mrs Keenan said exception reports are required if the audit results are amber or red.

Moving to Managerial audit results, Mrs Keenan said these showed that 59% of areas are at the required standard (green) at the time of audit with 41% amber highlighting ongoing estates and cleaning issues within the Care & Accommodation/Professional Social Care Division and in shared spaces within Community Nursing Services. She said work was ongoing to address these issues.

Rev Canon McGaffin referred to outcomes in respect of health centres and Mrs Keenan said the challenge is that many of the Health Centres do not belong to the Trust. She said however the Trust is working to increase the standards within health centres.

Rev Canon McGaffin referred to the issue of sharps boxes and said in her opinion she felt “professional” issues should be addressed first.

Mr Telford asked what made an audit score move from amber to red. Mrs Keenan said there are over 114 measures which are used in every managerial audit. She said it is a balance of 3 and some can be higher or lower than others. She said some of the areas are working under a management plan and if necessary Infection Prevention and Control staff work with teams if support is required.

3/24/11

**BOARD GOVERNANCE SELF-ASSESSMENT FOR 2023/24**

Mr Guckian referred members to the draft self-assessment for 2023-24 for consideration and approval. He said any highlighted concerns remaining from the 22/23 draft assessment along with the concerns relating to the 2023/24 draft assessment were being presented within a paper and would be included in the development of an associated action plan.

Following consideration the Board Governance Self-Assessment for 2023/24 was unanimously approved by members.

3/24/12

**PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN WHSCT AND THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

Mr Guckian referred members to the Trust's Partnership Agreement with the Department of Health and said this Agreement replaced the current Management Statement/Financial Memorandum. He said the Partnership Agreement sets out the partnership arrangements between the Trust and the DoH and explains the overall governance framework within which the Trust must operate, including the framework through which the necessary assurances are provided to stakeholders. Mr Guckian said the Partnership Agreement also sets out the role and responsibilities of partners within the overall governance framework.

Mr Guckian said he and the Chair had a number of meetings with the DoH on the development of the Agreement. He said the Trust had been keen for narrative to be included in relation to the Trust's autonomy and said while the Agreement was very prescriptive Annex 2 – Annual Engagement Plan was in response to the Trust's request.

Mrs Laird referred to Governance Arrangements and said there was a clear requirement for the Trust to comply with good practice and legislation. Mrs Laird said she would like this noted and she would like to have a proper fuller discussion on this when the opportunity presents itself.

Rev Canon McGaffin said reference to the Agreement had been made at a Board Leadership event earlier in the week and said the DoH was encouraging all Arms' Length Bodies to sign their Agreement. She said having reflected on the Agreement she felt it could benefit from greater clarity on the relationship between the DoH and Trust.

The Chair said in his experience different government bodies have adopted a different approach to developing their Partnership Agreements. He said in the past his experience has been organisations taking time together to create a process to

determine values and principles that both organisations could commit to and felt this was a very good process for setting the background. Unfortunately he said this had not been the case in the development of the Trust's Agreement. However, the Chair said while the Trust clearly accepts that it is accountable to the DoH and that it makes the final decisions, the Trust needs to identify areas that are creating ambiguity that would inform further work on the Partnership Agreement going forward.

Dr McGinley asked if all Trusts have the same Partnership Agreement. It was noted that the Western Trust's Agreement was slightly different as the Trust asked that additional narrative on "values" be included.

3/24/13

### **FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR MONTH ENDING JANUARY 2024**

Ms McCauley referred to the Trust's financial performance report for the month ending January 2024. She said the Trust was reporting an overspend against its budgets of £9.1m at 31 January. She said the Trust's projected deficit for the year had reduced to £10.9m following confirmation of funding of £0.5m towards pressures. Ms McCauley assured members that the Trust's financial forecast was robust and there were no surprises emerging at this point.

Moving through the detail of her report Ms McCauley referred to table 2, a summary of financial performance by each Directorate. She said the Trust was reporting a Directorate sub-total level deficit of 3.3% for the period ended 31 December 2023, and referring to the comparative for the current period she said the position was 3.4% thus there had been a marginal financial decline in this period. She said that 2 service Directorates - Diagnostics, Cancer and Medical Specialities and Surgery, Paediatrics and Women's Services must focus on control measures to contain growth in expenditure incurred during this period. She said the need to reduce expenditure trajectories as the Trust advances towards a new financial year was crucial particularly given the financial landscape expected for 2024/25.

Ms McCauley referred to table 3, total flexible payroll expenditure, and said this demonstrated grip and control in expenditure with a modest reduction in the flexible staffing spend during January 2024. However, she said the Directorates which were increasing in growth in the period must take action urgently as this growth is neither funded nor sustainable.

Moving to the Trust's savings targets for 23/24, Ms McCauley reported that against the Trust's savings target of £25.1m, the Trust had developed a plan for £19.1m which included proposals that had a low or medium adverse risk service impact and in year financial accounting opportunities. She said the planning gap of £6.1m was included in the Trust's forecast deficit position. In respect of delivering against this savings target, Ms McCauley advised that the Trust was reporting savings of £16.5m

at January 2024, with £9.9m delivered by Directorates and £6.6m from financial accounting opportunities. Ms McCauley said Directors had performed extremely well against savings plans in a very challenging environment.

Ms McCauley referred to the Trust's capital expenditure and said the Trust had received a total capital allocation of £31.59m from the DoH. She said the Trust has plans in place to deliver a break even position against this budget.

Concluding her report Ms McCauley said the Trust awaited confirmation from the DoH about the impact of funding to balance HSC spending in Northern Ireland and what that would mean for the Trust in respect of the end of year financial reporting.

Ms McCauley clarified table 6 "Other Nursing" and said this demonstrated a positive picture of how the Trust is trying to stabilise its workforce. She said that the graphs in table 5 and table 6 demonstrated a more stable workforce than was in place last year.

The Chair referred to the Trust's projected financial outturn and paid tribute to all staff in achieving this outcome.

3/24/14

### **BANK MANDATE**

Ms McCauley advised that following a comprehensive review of the bank mandate as part of the Trust's transition to the new Bank of Ireland contract, a number of amendments were requested for approval by the Trust Board.

She said the mandate requires the removal of Mrs Hazel Brown, Assistant Director of Financial Accounting and Mr Emmet McGrady, Band 7 Accountant in order for them to become the designated administrators of banking online. Ms McCauley said following approval by members the Bank will be advised of these amendments.

Following consideration members unanimously approved this amendment to the Trust's bank mandate.

3/24/15

### **AUDIT AND RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE – REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Mr Hegarty advised members that the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee undertook an annual review of its Terms of Reference and following minor amendments, the revised Terms of Reference were approved at a meeting of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee on 12 February. He said the revised Terms of



Reference were being submitted to Trust Board today for approval in line with the Trust's Standing Financial Instructions.

Following consideration the revised Terms of Reference were unanimously approved.

3/24/16

#### **REGISTER OF INTERESTS 2023/24**

The Chair advised that an important part of the Trust's governance framework is the completion of an annual Register of Interests file. He said the Register had been updated for 2023/24 and was coming to Board for noting.

The Chair reminded members that if there are any changes in their circumstances during the year it is important that staff update their return. He also added that while the DoH has no firm definition of "connection", however, it states that staff should declare any relationship which could be deemed to influence views on any matter which may interface with the HSC.

The Chair said the Register is available for review via the Chief Executive's Office.

3/24/17

#### **USE OF TRUST SEAL 2022/23**

Mr Guckian asked members to note the occasions when the Trust's Seal was formally used in 2022/23.

3/24/18

#### **CYCLEWAY ENNISKILLEN – DISPOSAL OF LANDS**

Ms McCauley advised members that the DFI has approached the Trust to acquire 2 plots of land on the Irvinestown Road at the entrance to the South West Acute Hospital for the first stage of a Cycleway. She said the Trust understood this formed part of the outworkings of the roads realignment and bypass just announced by DFI Minister for Enniskillen and that this would be a step forward for traffic flows in Enniskillen and therefore would enable improved emergency response times for ambulances.

Ms McCauley said the land identified has no potential future use by health and social care and Land and Property Services are requesting approval to proceed with the disposal of the land to DFI.

Following consideration the Trust Board unanimously supported the sale of the land to DFI.

3/24/19

### **PERFORMANCE REPORT – BY EXCEPTION**

Mrs Molloy advised that she was sharing escalated issues only this month with members. She said there were no new and significant areas of concerns in performance that had arisen which she needed to bring to the attention of the Board.

Mrs Molloy said however there were 2 points about the January position which were important to record. First, she said the industrial action across multiple staff groups had resulted in a large impact across services. She said 8,000 care interventions had been postponed or cancelled with very significant volumes affected in some services. She said this would affect the Trust's quarter 4 performance and members would see this detail when this information is shared at a future Trust Board meeting.

Secondly, Mrs Molloy advised that following on from the industrial action, there had been severe weather with 2 storms declared, and there were risks and impacts which staff dealt with as a result of these. She said the Trust also experienced unprecedented pressures at end January with more patients waiting over 12 hours than in any other month in the year. Mrs Molloy said the Trust had activated all of its escalation processes in respect of responding to these circumstances.

Mrs Molloy concluded by advising that a number of Directors will attend a reflective and learning session across all Trusts with SPPG next week on the operation of the Trust during the winter period.

Mr Guckian reassured Trust Board that he would be representing the Trust's challenges at the next meeting of the Performance and Transformation Executive Board with the Permanent Secretary on 8 March

3/24/20

### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **Older People's Commission Report**

The Chair referred to a report in the media today by the Older People's Commission and asked that the Trust review the report so that members can get a sense of how far this is an issue in the Western Trust and is this the experience of the people we have placed in nursing homes.

Dr O'Neill advised that she had sight of the report and she would review it and bring it back to Trust Board.

### **Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Meeting – 12 February 2024**

Mr Hegarty briefed members on a Committee meeting held on 12 February and apologised for the oversight in this not being included in today's agenda.

Mr Hegarty provided members with an update on the discussion at Committee which included:-

- Update on risk register;
- Revised Terms of Reference;
- Board Self-Assessment;
- Internal audit plan for 24/25

In addition Mr Hegarty said the Committee received updates from internal audit and said one assessment had a limited finding.

Mr Hegarty said this meeting had been his last as Chair of the Audit Committee and said he wished Mr Telford every success and good luck going forward in taking over the role as Chair.

The Chair thanked Mr Hegarty for chairing the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee when the previous NED stepped down and said he appreciated Mr Hegarty in doing this at a time when the Trust did not have its full complement of NEDs.

### **Derry Well Woman**

Dr McGinley welcomed the statement on a regional strategy for woman's health and the key role to be played in partnership by the Derry Well Woman centre.

### **Endowment and Gifts Committee**

Rev Canon McGaffin advised that the Endowment and Gifts Committee had met since the last Board meeting. She said there were 2 issues she wished to bring to members' attention. First, she referred to the quality of proposals coming to Committee for consideration and approval. She said at the last meeting 6 proposals had been brought but only 1 was approved due to the lack of detail provided.

Secondly, Rev Canon McGaffin said there had been limited progress in Directorate's meeting their spending targets in relation to Endowments and Gifts and said there remained high volume funds.

3/24/21

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Trust will be a Trust Board workshop on Thursday, 4 April. The Chair advised that he is not available to attend this workshop and said he would ask Dr McPeake to do this on his behalf.

The Chair said the next meeting of the Trust Board will take place on Thursday, 2 May 2024 in Trust Headquarters.

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**Dr T Frawley CBE**  
**Chair**  
**2 May 2024**