

Minutes of a meeting of the Western Health & Social Care Trust Board held on Thursday, 2 May 2024 at 10 am in the Lecture Theatre, Trust Headquarters, MDEC Building, Altnagelvin Hospital Site, Londonderry

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
Dr J McPeake, 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 Children and Families Services
Mrs G McKay, Director of Unscheduled Care, Medicine, Cancer and Clinical Specialties
Mr M Gillespie, Interim Director of Surgery, Paediatrics and Women's Health
Dr M O'Neill, Interim Director of Community and Older People
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 Capital Development
Mrs T Molloy, Director of Performance, Planning and Corporate Services

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr O Kelly, Communications Manager
Mrs O Nicholl, HR Corporate Office (Minutes)
Mr L Hanlon, Mrs L Hanlon and Master S Hanlon,
Dr Mary McDaid and Ms C McLaughlin (agenda item 5/24/8 only)

3/24/1

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

5/24/2

APOLOGIES

The Chair noted that all members were “present” at the meeting with Mrs Laird and Prof McKenna joining the meeting virtually.

5/24/3

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest expressed.

5/24/4

CHAIR’S WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

The Chair welcomed everyone to the May Board meeting at Trust Headquarters.

The Chair noted some of the Board members would visit the Macmillan Health and Wellbeing Campus later that afternoon following the Trust Board meeting however, unfortunately, he explained he was unable to join for the visit as he had another meeting to attend. He said he looked forward to visiting the Campus in the near future as MacMillan was such a valued partner of the Trust and its support is integral to the Trust’s patient centred care for our patients who are dealing with a cancer diagnosis.

The Chair thanked Mrs Nicholl for her support in attending today’s meeting to take the minutes in the absence of Mrs McGinley.

The Chair said he wished to take the opportunity to record how impressed he was with the quality of the Board papers and the analysis being presented today for the Board’s consideration. He said high quality administration was essential for the underpinning of high quality public services and he asked that his thanks be passed on to everyone who supported the production of the meeting agenda and related papers.

- The Chair advised that the previous week the Northern Ireland Executive agreed a budget for 2024/25 providing an overview of the funds available for each Department in the Executive. He added with a shortfall of £2bn on what Ministers said is required, there was clearly going to be very difficult decisions ahead for the Executive who will be required to prioritise services and spend against what they might have wished to deliver over the next 12 months. This very challenging financial circumstance the Chair said will result in challenges for the Western Trust, its patients, clients and the public it serves.

The Chair noted in addition to the decisions on the budget, the Executive will continue to work on agreement on a Programme for Government and the publication of a legislative programme to give life to the Programme for

Government.

The Chair said against the current financial context it had never been more important that as a Board we ensure the people we serve receives a “fair share” of the total resource that is made available for health and social care in Northern Ireland.

He said a critical strand of this “equity” is ensuring that as a Trust we are not disadvantaged in the number of consultant medical posts that we are allocated to meet the needs of the Trust’s population and geography. He indicated that the allocation of Junior Doctors was an equally important issue because in the absence of a fair and proportionate share of posts the Trust is forced to apply resources which it does not have to employ locums. He added this unfunded expenditure further destabilises our already precarious financial position.

The Chair stated this was something he knew the Chief Executive and Senior Management Team are day and daily pursuing but said it was important as a Board that it stays informed about this very challenging issue and that the Trust highlights its concerns whenever and wherever possible to the Department and the relevant Committees of the Assembly.

- The Chair said members would be aware that during the past month the Western Trust, and particularly unscheduled care, had been under sustained pressures which had resulted in severe overcrowding in the Trust’s Emergency Departments. He added that this had presented both clinical and environmental challenges experienced most intensely by our patients waiting significantly longer than what is acceptable before being transferred to beds in wards.

The Chair stated every day it is the hope and intention of our staff to deliver the highest possible quality of care to our patients despite these ongoing challenges.

He advised in line with the Trust’s Full Capacity Protocol all wards have “escalation beds” in place to deal with the exceptional and relentless nature of the pressures staff are dealing with in areas which are often outside the ward environment. He added that this meant that we are using spaces and areas in and around wards which were never intended for this purpose, however, he asked ‘what is the alternative’ – patients remaining in ambulances outside ED for even longer, further overcrowding, etc.

The Chair said he wished to assure the public that when a patient is in these “supernumerary beds” they receive the same treatment, care and attention as all other patients albeit without the facilities and level of privacy that is available in a functionally designed nursing area. He added, as the Trust’s Medical Director said in a television interview, “these arrangements are the least worst option available to us”.

The Chair said it also needs to be acknowledged that caring for patients in these areas also involves significant additional work for our already hard pressed staff.

- The Chair advised on 13 March 2024 he had continued his programme of “familiarisation visits” across the Trust. He said on the morning of 13 March he visited the South West Acute Hospital again where he spent time with the PFI Team and also visited the Support Services Food Production Unit and Key Worker Accommodation. He said the PFI Team showed a detailed commitment to the hospital infrastructure and he was both impressed and reassured by the knowledge and familiarity they demonstrated in response to his questions around the administration of the PFI. In relation to the Food Production Unit, he said the facilities and equipment were very modern and complex. In referring to the key worker accommodation he said it was extremely comfortable and fulfilling its role in providing accommodation for staff we had recruited from overseas.

The Chair said in the afternoon he had travelled to Omagh and met with Terms and Conditions, Medical HR and Finance Teams who provide services to staff across the geography of the Trust. He said he wished to acknowledge the physical environment in which these staff are working requires to be improved when resources allow. Despite these difficulties he said he was impressed by the staff and their knowledge, expertise and commitment giving of their best to the staff and the public that require their support.

- The Chair said on 14 March 2024 he had visited the Family Justice Centre in Derry following an invitation from the CEO of Derry Well Woman. He said he was hugely impressed by the innovation and leading edge initiatives being supported by the Centre. He added that issues of violence against women and domestic violence were two of the most intractable issues that we face as a society and a community.

The Chair reflected that the Family Justice Centre is breaking new ground by leading and removing barriers, by offering a one stop shop and the wrap around care and support for women and their children who are affected by violence. He commended everything he saw during his visit particularly the functionally designed facilities and the unconditional commitment of the staff who work in the Centre to the critical service they are providing.

- The Chair advised on 21 March 2024 the Health Improvement, Equality and Involvement Department had invited both Mr Guckian and himself to an event on PPI shared learning. He said it was clear from the event the commitment of our staff to this critical area of encouraging and mobilising community activists to engage and support some of the most vulnerable groups and individuals in our community. He added that the aim of the event was to share models of good practice and highlight how PPI can essentially be incorporated into the work of departments/teams.

The Chair advised later that day Mr Guckian and he were also pleased to attend the Official Opening of the refurbished and expanded wheelchair resource at Waterside Hospital. He noted the project had been led by Mrs Helena Doherty, Head of Occupational Therapy service, and he acknowledged her unstinting service particularly for those patients/clients who have physical disabilities. He said they had also met with service users whose opportunity for independent living and accessing sporting activities had been transformed by this refurbished facility and the outstanding staff that work there.

- The Chair advised on 26 March 2024 HSC Leaders had attended a second workshop with Mr Peter May, Permanent Secretary to discuss a Commissioning Approach for Northern Ireland and the Chair went on to outline the aims of the workshop.
 - secure, across HSC leadership a shared sense of why change to our current approach is needed and what that change should be;
 - to begin to develop a shared understanding of the specific changes that needed to improve in our current processes;
 - to begin to consider and set out how implementation of any changes would be implemented;
 - to arrive at an agreement on next steps that would be taken following the workshop.
- The Chair advised on 27 March 2024 he had attended the Boardroom Leadership Programme with the Permanent Secretary. He stated this event was part of his continuing induction noting he is now in post one year.
- The Chair thanked Dr McPeake for chairing the Trust Board workshop on 4 April 2024 as he had been unable to attend. He added from the briefing he received following the workshop there was a robust discussion on the Trust's Corporate Risk Register as well as presentations on patient flow within the hospital with a specific focus on the very concerning "failure" around our 62 day cancer target.
- The Chair advised on 9 April 2024 he attended a seminar organised by Trust scientific staff as part of the Western Trust's support of National Healthcare Science Week. He said he was delighted that Minister Swann had been able to attend the event also.

The Chair said there is a potential risk that Healthcare Scientists feel overlooked as a small specific group and as a result their critical roles are not as visible as they should be. This event gave staff the opportunity to showcase ongoing projects within the Trust as well as highlighting a number of common challenges faced by scientific staff. He said there were also a number of motivational talks around career progression and related opportunities in the scientific professions across health and social care which were being

highlighted to students in our geography. He added the Trust needs to consider how it can ensure our health scientists feel heard and valued.

- The Chair advised on 11 April 2024 he had been invited to join the celebrations to mark the 10th Anniversary of the opening of the Centre of Medical and Dental Education and Training known as MedEdWest at Altnagelvin. He said this “state of the art” centre boasts extensive facilities noting how important these are and will continue to be if we are to achieve our aspiration to secure university recognition for Altnagelvin Hospital.
- The Chair said on 18 April 2024 it had been his privilege and honour to attend his first Trust Staff Recognition Awards Ceremony. He said he was grateful to be part of an organisation that through its staff’s dedication and commitment strives every day to care for and improve the health and wellbeing of all the people who live in the Trust’s areas and indeed in many instances people who live beyond the Trust’s boundaries.

He advised the event was also attended by a number of public representatives as well as invited guests. He said the event gave him the opportunity to simply say ‘thank you’ to each and every one of our staff who go above and beyond what any of us has a right to expect each and every day.

The Chair stated all those nominated for awards represented all that is good about health and social care - from inspirational leaders, outstanding professionals and those who go the extra mile often while working quietly behind the scenes. He added we all know someone who warrants our special thanks and acknowledgement. He noted that this year the judging panel for the Awards had received a record number of nominations with hundreds of staff and individual teams being nominated by their colleagues.

- The Chair said on 19 April 2024 a number of Trust staff had attended an event organised by Causeway Coast and Glens Council. The event was for health and social care workers where they were granted the Freedom of the Borough, honouring selfless and high-quality lifesaving care that they have provided to patients and families living in the Causeway Council area. He added the event was attended by staff of the Northern and Western Trusts as well as representatives from the NI Ambulance Service who had gathered at Coleraine Town Hall for the formal conferring ceremony.

He said on behalf of the Trust he wanted to thank Causeway Coast and Glens Council for this unique acknowledgement and recognition for health and social care staff.

- The Chair advised on 23 April 2024 he had received a letter from the Permanent Secretary regarding the financial planning for 2024/25 and noted that Mr Guckian will speak to this in greater detail in his report.

- The Chair advised on the 29 April 2024 he and Mr Guckian had visited the Breast Care Team who are the current holders of the Mission Cup to recognise this important achievement. He said what was unique about this achievement was the Trust's Domiciliary Care staff had been the first holders of the cup and had decided that the cup should be awarded to the Breast Care Team because a number of Domiciliary Care staff had been supported and cared for by the team. He added this is an example of real time experience of a service being acknowledged by colleagues who were recipients of the care provided by the Team.
- The Chair said on 1 May 2024 he had attended an event organised by RQIA with Dr Henrietta Hughes, Patient Safety Commissioner (England). He added that at the event 'A Framework for Sharing Intelligence among Regulators of Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland' was launched. He said he hopes to share this with Trust leaders in the near future and noted the importance for all relevant agencies to be involved.

5/24/5

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – 7 MARCH 2024

The Chair referred members to the minutes of the Board meeting held on 7 March 2024. Following consideration the minutes were proposed by Mr Hegarty, seconded by Prof McKenna and approved by the Board as a true and accurate record of discussions at the Board meeting on 7 March 2024.

5/24/6

MATTERS ARISING

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

6.1 Leadership Festival from 3 – 7 June 2024

The Chair said members would be aware the Trust is organising a Leadership Festival from 3-7 June and he had agreed to keep members updated on the planned session for Trust Board members. He advised the session is entitled "Lessons in Leadership" and will run from 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm on the afternoon of 6 June 2024, immediately after the Trust Board meeting.

The Chair agreed to share more details about the event in due course and asked that members note that he was unable to attend the session as he had a prior commitment relating to his membership of the Professional Standards Agency.

6.2 Trust's Corporate Plan for 2024/25 to 2026/27

The Chair noted Mrs Molloy had spoken to Dr McGinley and Mr Telford in relation to the development of the Trust's Corporate Plan for the period 2024/25 to 2026/27, therefore, this action was now closed.

6.3 **Partnership Agreement**

The Chair said Mrs Laird had raised the issue of governance arrangements related to the Partnership Agreement in terms of the requirement for the Trust to comply with good practice and legislation. He advised this will be listed for the agenda of the Board's workshop in October 2024 where governance and Board effectiveness will be discussed.

6.4 **Report by the Older People's Commission**

The Chair advised that Dr O'Neill is reviewing the recent report from the Older People's Commission in relation to any actions that may be required of the Trust. Dr O'Neill advised she will bring an update to Trust Board once she had completed her consideration of the report.

5/24/7

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Mr Guckian shared with members his report on critical issues which had arisen since the previous Board meeting.

General Pressures

Mr Guckian reported that on Tuesday evening (30 April 2024) there were 38 patients waiting for a bed in Altnagelvin and 26 in South West Acute Hospital.

Mr Guckian advised a Trust-wide reset week had been commenced on Monday, 29 April 2024 and will run to Tuesday, 7 May 2024. He explained the aims of the reset process was two-fold:-

- To reset our hospital flow across our services to ensure that patients are placed in the correct specialty enabling timely assessment and care plan delivery while reducing the length of stay.
- To engage and empower our teams within the hospital focusing on hospital discharge processes that would ensure the optimum outcome for our patients while also demonstrating the effective and efficient use of our resources.

Mr Guckian stated that multi-disciplinary teams are attending all areas to scope and evaluate existing processes and practices. He added learning from these visits will be shared with models of good practice highlighted and disseminated with the objective of standardising processes across all specialties.

Finances

Mr Guckian advised that members will be aware the previous week a new budget had been agreed by the NI Executive and noted this represents a reduction from the spend profile of the previous year and will present significant challenges for health

and social care services in Northern Ireland.

Mr Guckian said the Trust has recently received its indicative allocation letter and it is working its way through the implications for our existing services of managing within what realistically was a reduced budget. He stated the Trust's opening position was a deficit of £46m and the Trust has been asked to develop a one year Contingency Plan and Recovery Plans for 2 – 4 years to cover this gap.

Fostering Awards Ceremony

Mr Guckian said he was delighted to have attended a Fostering Awards Ceremony on 9 March 2024 in Omagh. He advised the purpose of the event was to celebrate the achievements of our children in foster care across the Western Trust. He added those attending the event were children ranging in age from young babies to teenagers along with foster parents and staff.

Mr Guckian said the Trust currently has 715 looked after children and almost 600 of these children are in foster care. He commented the Trust is very fortunate to have an amazing group of foster families with 371 providing "kinship" care and 177 foster carers providing "non kinship" care. He noted there were also foster carers at the event from the Trust's independent fostering agencies.

Mr Guckian said he got the opportunity to thank all those in attendance and acknowledge how great it was to see so many at the event to celebrate the children and young people and to hear about the amazing achievements of the children. He said he also acknowledged foster parents and their family members who are an integral part of a child's journey in foster care. He noted the difference that foster parents make to each and every child or young person who comes into their home which was in his words "fantastic".

Mr Guckian said he wished to publicly thank each and every one of the Trust's foster parents for the work they do.

Staff Recognition Awards

Mr Guckian said the Chair has already referenced this event in his report. He said in his view the Annual Staff Recognition Awards Ceremony held on 18 April 2024 had been a particularly successful event.

Mr Guckian said as part of his role at the event he had got the opportunity to welcome staff to the event. He noted that Minister Swann had been due to attend but unfortunately Assembly business intervened and he had to apologise. Mr Guckian said in the Minister's absence he had thanked Minister Swann as a few years ago Minister Swann had allocated some Covid funding to Endowment and Gifts to support staff and this innovative approach had provided the funding for the staff recognition initiatives including the Staff Recognition Awards event.

Mr Guckian said he was pleased so many special guests and stakeholders were also

able to attend. He added he values the Trust's partnership working with elected representatives, Councils, Universities, Primary Care and so many voluntary, community and public agencies.

Mr Guckian reflected the Awards Ceremony was about our staff noting that so many were nominated and shortlisted this year which shows not only staff's commitment to our population but also the regard which colleagues have for each other.

Mr Guckian said the Western Trust's geography is one of the most challenging areas for any health and social care organization in these islands to provide services because of the challenges presented by access and deprivation, combined with social deprivation and poverty. These challenges presents significant pressure for our services and teams. He added the closeness to the border and transient populations together with the inherent health inequalities, increase the complexity of the health and social care need we are responding to.

Mr Guckian indicated that the Awards ceremony provided him with an opportunity to thank staff for everything they do every day.

Mr Guckian referring to his speech that evening said he had referenced the priorities in 2024/25 and the importance for focus on using our funding more effectively. He said there are significant gaps in our capacity and our workforce, however, our staff will continue to be our priority in 2024/25 and this will include many initiatives from supporting health and wellbeing to making our substantive teams more resilient. He said he will continue to highlight and address workforce inequalities across Northern Ireland and the significant variances in health outcomes for our community, particularly in areas of high deprivation of which there are a number in the Western Area.

He advised in closing his speech he had said the Awards Ceremony was all about the Trust's fantastic staff and teams and that they live our values and deliver our mission every day in very challenging circumstances.

5/24/8

PATIENT STORY – CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

The Chair welcomed Mr Hanlon, Mrs Hanlon and Master Sam Hanlon along with Dr McDaid, Clinical Director of Psychology & Head of C/YP Autism Service, Women and Children's Services and Ms McLaughlin, Social, Emotional, Behaviour Practitioner, Women and Children's Services to provide today's Patient Story.

Dr McDaid thanked the Board for the opportunity to attend to highlight the work of the Children and Young People's Autism Early Intervention Service and she introduced the Hanlon Family and her colleague Ms McLaughlin to members.

Dr McDaid said they had undertook a "rethink" of the Early Intervention Service as

they wanted to have interventions for families which could be accessed at point of referral while they awaited a diagnostic assessment. She stated they had held a number of workshops, which the Hanlon family had attended, to develop information and advice aids which would support parents and children with autism. She added that Sam had also participated in a promotional video to share his experience of this service which is available on the Trust's website.

Mrs Hanlon advised that Sam had been born at 36 weeks and as he developed it was apparent he had a speech impediment with some of the words he was saying sounding like "bad" words. She added there was another child the same age who could understand Sam clearly who they called his "personal translator".

Mrs Hanlon said it wasn't until Sam went into P2, his teacher had explained her concerns to them. She said as parents they did not know what to do so they had gone to their GP who had referred them to a Paediatrician

Mr Hanlon said Sam was now in his second year of secondary education and it had taken since he was in P2 until 2 years ago for Sam to receive his autism diagnosis.

Mrs Hanlon said they had become aware of the Early Intervention service and without the support and insights it had offered they would not have known what to do. She added the service had given them ideas and materials that they have been able to use to support Sam.

Mrs Hanlon said Covid had been a particularly difficult time for Sam as he would rather stay in his room but they were still able to access the service via Zoom. She added that Sam had received Speech Therapy from the age of 2 until the age of 11 and Speech Therapy had advised if he needs further support the family can access the service again.

Dr Frawley asked about Ms McLaughlin's role as a therapist. Ms McLaughlin said she is one of 3 intervention therapists who work as a multidisciplinary team as they have different backgrounds ie psychology, speech therapy and occupational therapy. She advised they work together to develop early interventions which empower families. She added the service is "needs led" and they take concepts and areas and break these into information guides, materials, etc. which can be shared with families.

Dr McGinley asked about the 'Have Hope' session and what Sam liked about these. Sam said he liked "colouring-in the sunflowers".

Dr McGinley referred to a RESILO programme launched the previous week 'Making Hope Happen' in Derry City and Strabane which she feels should be available to all schools.

Mrs Hanlon said 'Have Hope' was an interactive programme and Sam really enjoyed the sessions particularly those where they had to clear the room, move

chairs back for the activities.

Dr Frawley asked how many families have been supported through this approach. Ms McLaughlin explained the programme is delivered over 3 tiers (i) universal and can be accessed by anyone (ii) support is targeted (iii) intensive support. She added Tier 1 had been accessed by 800 families and Tiers 2&3 had been accessed by 1200 families.

Mr Hanlon said the service is accessible and they receive regular communications about other sessions coming up and invited to join if they are available. He added following the session they receive a copy of the slides and the information presented during the session.

Dr Frawley asked about the future development of the service. Ms McLaughlin said they are constantly reviewing and refining the information already produced as well as linking with parents about other programmes Early Intervention could develop which they would consider might help them going forward.

Mr Hegarty referring to the reference to Sam having a delay in his speech and what support had been provided to him. Mr Hanlon said Sam had received 11 years of speech therapy. Mrs Hanlon said this support was varied and also included “fun and games” to build Sam’s confidence which they were also able to use to support Sam outside sessions. She said in P7 Sam was also able to get the support of a classroom assistant and in his secondary school class there are 2 classroom assistants who provide support to 13 pupils.

Both Mr Hanlon and Mrs Hanlon commented on the massive improvement in Sam’s confidence in social settings.

Rev Canon McGaffin said that central to Sam’s story has been education and she asked if the Trust’s service has good links with schools.

Dr McDaid said schools can contact them directly and there is an advisory service to facilitate contact. She said ‘cascade meetings’ can be organised with representatives from health, the school and parents to talk about interventions which could make life easier for the young person at home and at school. She added schools also have a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENco) who assists with the teaching and supporting the learning of children who have special educational needs.

Dr Frawley thanked Sam and his family for attending the Board meeting to share their experience of accessing a Trust service. Ms Hanlon added her appreciation for being able to access the programme which has made a significant difference for Sam and the family.

Rev Canon McGaffin asked about the referral pathway to access this service. Dr McDaid explained that a referral can be made by any health professional or

educational psychology service.

Dr McGinley referred to the RESILO programme and recommended it is a potential subject for inclusion in a leadership event in the future.

The Hanlon Family, Dr McDaid and Ms McLaughlin left the meeting.

5/24/9

INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL REPORT

Mrs Keenan referred members to an update in relation to Infection Prevention and Control.

Mrs Keenan advised that DoH had issued healthcare-associated infection (HCAI) reduction targets for 2023/24 following a 3 year hiatus due to the Covid-19 pandemic. She said for Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) bacteraemia, the Trust's target is 6 cases which is a reduction of 1 case compared to the 2022/23 baseline (7 cases). She added the Trust's reduction target for Clostridium difficile (C. difficile) associated disease is 71; a reduction of 10 cases compared to last year's baseline (81 cases).

Mrs Keenan said given the challenges associated with reducing healthcare-associated gram-negative bacteraemias (GNBs) to date, specifically Escherichia coli, Klebsiella species and Pseudomonas aeruginosa, the DoH had decided not to set a target for 2023/24, rather Trusts are being encouraged to minimise risk factors for GNB infections where possible. In relation to gram-negative bacteraemias (GNBs), Mrs Keenan advised that 46 healthcare associated cases were reported during 2023/24 which was an increase of 4 from the previous year.

Mrs Keenan said members will be aware there has been a sharp increase of confirmed cases of Measles reported in England. She referred to communication issued by Public Health Authority on actions required to reduce the risk of a resurgence of Measles in NI as there is now significant risk of imported cases. She added the Trust has been liaising closely with regional colleagues and has also set up a Trust Measles Planning Group as well as a number of workstreams to progress identified actions.

Mrs Keenan said in relation to Covid-19 the Trust has had 14 outbreaks from January 2024 to mid-April 2024 and the Infection Prevention and Control Team are leading on the management of these incidents as appropriate.

Mrs Keenan noted the Trust has received updated Covid-19 Testing guidance from the Chief Medical Officer which also advises that previous circulars are now "stood down".

Mrs Keenan advised that Infection Prevention & Control (IPC) induction and

mandatory training continues to be delivered online via an e-learning programme. She advised the attendance target each year is 50% of the total number of staff who require training, therefore, the Trust has 14,222 staff who are required to undertake the training and during 2023/24, 3,867 staff attended which represents 27.19% which is 22.81% less than required.

Mrs Keenan said they are working with Directorates to develop specific plans for their areas and are also including this issue on Directorate SMT meetings.

Mrs Keenan noted attendance at IPC training is required on a biennial basis and looking at attendance over a 24 month period at the end of March 2024 the figure is 57.73%.

Mrs Keenan said a new table had been included in the report which provides detail on attendances at IPC training by staff group and noted that IPC has delivered specific in person training sessions for Support Services staff over the last few months.

Referring to the Trust's C. difficile performance, Mrs Keenan advised that 36 cases had been reported in 2023/24, 45 fewer than in 2022/23. She noted therefore the reduction target was achieved and the Trust had the lowest case numbers compared to other Trusts. She added the frequency of audits and the role of HCAI maintains a focus on this issue.

Mrs Keenan reported consistent compliance with the C. difficile care bundle but it remains a challenge although there have been improvements over the last three months. She said if at any time Board members have any questions, to forward these to her.

Mrs Keenan noted the Trust had a total of 3 MRSA bacteraemia cases in 2023/24 which was 4 fewer than the previous year and that all 3 were categorized as community-associated as they occurred less than 48 hours after admission to hospital, therefore, the cases which can be attributed to the Trust is zero.

In relation to Hand Hygiene, Mrs Keenan advised that a new table had been included, as per the Board's request at a previous meeting, which details ward self-reporting audit figures which can be examined alongside IPC audit results for comparison purposes.

Mrs Keenan advised in relation to Caesarean Section Surgical Site Infection during quarter three the Trust had achieved 79.7% compliance compared to the NI compliance rated average of 76.9%. She noted there had been an increase in the SSI rate for Altnagelvin over the last few quarters, however, overall there is the beginning of a downward trend. She added work is ongoing with regard to validation and assurance of the surveillance information and they continue to drive forward improvements.

Mrs Keenan noted the Orthopaedic Surgical Site Infection Surveillance rate in quarter three of 2023 was 0.42% of all surgery which is slightly below the NI average rate of 0.44%.

Mrs Keenan reported that water testing continues throughout Trust owned facilities in line with the Trust's Water Safety Plans and a planned Legionella and Pseudomonas testing programme is in place for PFI buildings including South West Acute Hospital and the Labs and Pharmacy building at Altnagelvin.

Mrs Keenan advised there has been a decrease in the number of outlets testing positive for Legionella on the Altnagelvin site during December 2023 to February 2024. She added the Tower Block and Nucleus have the highest percentage of positive outlets on the Altnagelvin site, however, further improvement work is planned.

Rev Canon McGaffin noted that although there have been improvements in some areas in relation to IPC training the figures are still concerningly low. Mrs Keenan said members will see the figures are now been broken down by staff group and this will be further broken down to specific areas so we can start to work with teams.

Prof McKenna commended the team for the excellent report. He noted 50 areas out of 193 had failed to submit scores for March 2024 in relation to hand hygiene compliance but he is content that Mrs Keenan is dealing with this issue proactively.

Prof McKenna referred to the figures for Waterside Hospital which shows they do not have any infections.

Mrs Keenan thanked Prof McKenna for the recognition of the good work being undertaken by the IPC Team. Mrs Keenan said normally patients going to Waterside Hospital are being admitted from an Acute Hospital and they know that hospital acquired infections are normally lower and community infections are normally when they come into hospital.

Dr McPeake said he wished to echo Prof McKenna's points regarding this report and in particular highlighted the reduction in MRSA and C. difficile infections and he noted the challenges which Mrs Keenan had briefed on.

Dr McPeake said the report is showing areas which have not been set specific reduction targets and these are increasing and he asked about the responsibility for surveillance. Mrs Keenan said her view would be this sits with Trust Directorates to manage, however, the IP&C team have oversight of all areas and work closely with them when cases are identified. Mrs Keenan advised she would speak to the IPC team to raise with the PHA regionally regarding their rationale for not setting targets for some categories of infections.

5/24/10

CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

Dr Lavery referred members to the Trust's Corporate Risk Register which has 17 risks as approved at the Trust Board workshop on 4 April 2024.

Dr Lavery highlighted the material changes that had emerged from the workshop:-

- ID1133 – now closed
- ID1472 – now de-escalated to PSI Directorate Risk Register
- ID1487 – risk rating decreased from Extreme 20 to High 12
- ID284 – risk grading has been reviewed and amended from 16 to 12
- ID955 – risk has been de-escalated to the Directorate Risk Register of Finance, Contracts and Capital Development
- ID1409 – risk category has been amended to Quality of Care.

Dr Lavery advised there were no new risks for consideration and in relation to summary report for actions there were no new actions since the workshop.

Following consideration members approved the summary of actions from Trust Board workshop on 4 April 2024.

5/24/11

TRUST BI-ANNUAL LITIGATION REPORT

Dr Lavery advised that as part of the Claims Management process and policy a report is submitted to Trust Board on a bi-annual basis to inform them of any cases that have settled with a damages award in excess of £100k. He added the report also provides a summary of cases and confirmation of any learning has been taken forward.

Dr Lavery noted that previously Trust Board had a role and responsibility in approving a damages payment up to the value of £1m, however, following DOH instruction from 1 April 2024 the HSC delegation for individual clinical negligence settlement cases will increase from £1m to £5m. Therefore for any Clinical Negligence cases up to £5m all approvals are sought from the Chief Executive (under legal advice or Court Award). Members noted this change.

5/24/12

TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF EMERGENCY GENERAL SURGERY – UPDATE – SWAH

Mr Gillespie said some months back they had produced an infographic which provides an update on the temporary change to Emergency General Surgery at South West Acute Hospital and this is also published on the Trust's website.

Mr Gillespie noted the number of attendances at South West Acute Hospital is up and the number of ambulance arrivals is down. He advised that ambulance arrivals to Altnagelvin as well as walk-in patient numbers from the Local Government Districts of Fermanagh and Omagh had increased as anticipated since the temporary change. He noted they are seeing patients going both ways to whichever hospital they have decided best matches their needs.

Mr Gillespie said they are also in discussions with other hospitals where patients present with postcodes from the Western Trust area i.e. Causeway and Craigavon and vice-versa.

Mr Gillespie advised as a result of the temporary change to Emergency General Surgery this equates to 2.3 patients per day being admitted to Altnagelvin who would have previously been admitted to South West Acute Hospital.

Mr Gillespie said as part of Reset Week they are reinstating protected beds in Wards 31 and 32 for patients who are coming down from South West Acute Hospital which due to pressures they had to release. He said this pathway is crucial for the patient experience and quality of patient journey.

Mr Gillespie advised in relation to Elective Overnight Stay at South West Acute Hospital they are back to full capacity. He noted there is significant pressures on paediatric dental services and further sessions are being delivered every two weeks in South West Acute Hospital to address waiting lists.

Dr McPeake thanked Mr Gillespie for his update and suggested going forward that this infographic is shared on screen so that members of the public/media can also have sight of it given it is only a one page document.

Dr McGinley welcomed the reinstatement of the patient pathway for those who transfer from South West Acute Hospital to Altnagelvin Hospital as this was a promise and she was sure it would give reassurance to the community.

Mr Hegarty asked about the reinstatement of the patient pathway and if this gave priority to patients who were transferring from South West Acute Hospital to Altnagelvin. Mr Guckian explained this patient pathway is to ensure that patients do not have a wait in two Emergency Departments as patients will have already waited in South West Acute Hospital Emergency Department. He added this should “even out” the wait times. He noted that patients who are transferring from South West Acute Hospital are transferred under the surgical intake where a decision has been made to admit.

5/24/13

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

13.1 Update from meeting held on 27 March 2024

Dr McPeake referred to the briefing note provided and said he wished to escalate an issue following an inspection of the Trust's Manufacturing License which found that Trust operations fall sort of operational standards. He added the Trust has been given 28 days to put a plan in place to address the concerns that had been identified.

He said there were two other issues he wished to make the Board aware of:-

- (i) A Deep Dive was presented in relation to Risk ID1133 – risk to patient care relating to inappropriate use of medical air. He advised that following extensive discussion the risk analysis was being presented to Trust Board for its agreement to deescalate.
- (ii) Two emerging governance issues were discussed in relation to potential regional industrial action that would impact frontline Children's Services Social Work Teams and an Information Governance issue. It was noted that both were being satisfactorily managed.

Mrs McKay said in relation to the Manufacturing License they are waiting on a funding analysis from SPPG. She added they will bring a paper on this issue to the next meeting of Trust Board as Governance Committee does not meet to later in June.

13.2 Minutes of Meeting held on 6 December 2023

Dr McPeake said he had previously provided a verbal update from Governance Committee on 6 December 2023 to January 2024 Trust Board. Members indicated that they had no questions and were content with the record of the meeting.

5/24/14

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR MONTH ENDING MARCH 2024

Mrs McCauley referred members to the Trust's Financial Performance Report for the 12 months ending 31 March 2024 which is reporting a financial breakeven position against its budget for 2023/24 subject to the completion of the external audit.

Mrs McCauley advised the draft Annual Report and Accounts for 2023/24 will be submitted to the Department of Health (DoH) and Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) on Friday, 3 May 2024. She added they will then be subject to an audit week commencing 6 May 2024 and the Trust's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee will review the draft accounts at its meeting on 13 May 2024 and provide a report to Trust Board on 6 June 2024.

Mrs McCauley explained the NIAO will provide their draft report to those Charged with Governance by 10 June 2024 and the Trust's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee will meet on 12 June 2024 to receive the draft report and for their consideration of recommendations for approval of Accounts to Trust Board. She noted that a Special Trust Board meeting has been agreed for the 18 June 2024 for Board members to consider the recommendations of Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

Mrs McCauley advised the signed accounts must then be submitted to NIAO on or before Wednesday, 26 June 2024 with submission to DoH before Wednesday, 3 July 2024.

Mrs McCauley said she wished to extend her thanks to Directors for all their support in achieving this financial outturn and to acknowledge this outturn is commendable given the challenges which have faced health and social care services this year. She added she also wished to thank members of Trust Board, particularly those members of the Finance and Performance Committee and Audit and Risk Assurance Committee for their engagement, effective challenge and support during the period.

Mrs McCauley referred members to page 4 of the report noting the Trust had commenced the year with the lowest deficit ever in its history. She noted the challenges in terms of the withdrawal of COVID funding, increases in costs of medical locum agency premium costs, limited demographic funding, high costs for complex placements of clients in the independent sector and unfunded non-pay inflation were all critical pressures that had to be managed during 2023/24.

Mrs McCauley said she wished to commend Directors and their staff who delivered on savings targets despite all the challenges faced by services.

Mrs McCauley said some of the highlights during the year have included the securing of £6.5m for No More Silos investment in hospital services and the Trust had also re-secured the commitment from DoH/SPPG for the recurring cost of PFI inflation. She noted the Trust had also eliminated its dependency on social work agency staff and off-contract nurse agency staff both achievements that should not be underestimated.

Dr Frawley said the outturn reflects the commitment of the team who do not waiver in ensuring that they meet the Trust's statutory responsibilities. He said they face hard wins every day in order to maintain this level of performance. He commended the Corporate Management Team as well as their Finance colleagues. He added the Finance Team had experienced significant challenge this week as a crucial member of the Team had been unavailable due to personal circumstances.

Prof McKenna commented this is an excellent report noting the cost of social work agency had reduced to zero and there had also been a nursing agency reduction of

13.4% however other nursing expenditure had increased.

Mrs Keenan said other nursing expenditure takes into account the staffing costs associated with escalation beds. She noted this would also impact the Adult Mental Health Directorate.

Mr Telford commended the Directorates for the work they had undertaken to develop savings plans and crucially being able to deliver these challenging targets in what were very difficult financial circumstances. He noted the Trust had not achieved the target of 95% of undisputed invoices paid within 30 days.

Mrs McCauley said unfortunately during the year there had been staffing challenges within the centralized nurse bank team which is a very small team. She said that due to the financial pressures they had been unable to address the capacity issue within the team.

Mr Hegarty said as the Chair of the Finance and Performance Committee they received reassurance regularly on the Trust's Financial Performance.

Dr Frawley asked Mrs McCauley to convey the Board's thanks to all her staff.

5/24/15

BANK MANDATE

Mrs McCauley advised she is seeking the Board's approval for a member of staff to be added as a cheque signatory on the Trust's bank mandate following her return to the Trust on 1 May 2024 from secondment.

Following consideration members unanimously approved the addition of Gemma Hasson, Band 7 Accountant to the Trust's bank mandate as a Trust cheque signatory.

Mrs McCauley advised that the Bank would now be advised of this revision.

5/24/16

ENDOWMENT & GIFTS COMMITTEE

16.1 Minutes of Meeting held on 6 February 2024

Rev Canon McGaffin advised she had previously provided a verbal update at March 2024 Trust Board. Members indicated that they had no questions and were content with the record of the meeting.

16.2 Verbal Update from Meeting held on 12 April 2024

Rev Canon McGaffin said following discussions at their February 2024 meeting it had been agreed to set up a Scrutiny sub group of the Committee to give focus to

improving the quality of proposals and processes. She said the sub group will only be required for a short term and it will make recommendations to the Endowment and Gifts Committee.

Rev Canon McGaffin said there were 9 proposals, 6 came to the meeting on 12 April 2024 and all were approved. The proposals approved related to mobile sensory equipment, staff recognition awards, purchase of Medpoint Drugs Dispense as well as approval given for additional staff noting that some of these were for specific durations.

The Chair thanked Rev Canon McGaffin for her update, no questions or clarification was sought by members.

5/24/17

SCHEME OF DELEGATED AUTHORITY (SODA) – INTRODUCTION OF A DIRECTOR LEVEL OF APPROVAL IN RELATION TO LEGAL COSTS FOR JUDICIAL REVIEWS AND DECLARATORY ORDERS

Mrs McCauley referred to the briefing paper included with Board members papers which detailed a proposed amendment to the Scheme of Delegated Authority with the introduction of a Director level approval in relation to legal costs for Judicial Reviews and Declaratory Orders.

Mrs McCauley said currently the Assistant Director of Quality and Safety can approve legal costs up to £10k and any costs over this amount and up to £100k are approved by the Chief Executive. She added Directors currently have no oversight or authority to approve costs in relation to legal challenges in their service areas.

Mrs McCauley added this proposed amendment would give authority to Directors for up to £20k specifically relating to Judicial Reviews and Declaratory Orders only in their service area.

Following consideration members unanimously approved the change proposed.

5/24/18

SCHEME OF DELEGATION – UPDATE - UPLIFT ON CLINICAL NEGLIGENCE AND DIRECT AWARD CONTRACTS (DACs) DELEGATED LIMITS

Mrs McCauley advised that DoH has informed the Trust that its delegation for individual clinical negligence settlement cases will increase from £1m to £5m. She said she is seeking the Board's approval to amend the Trust's Scheme of Delegation accordingly.

Following consideration members unanimously approved the amendments to the Scheme of Delegation.

3/24/19

AUDIT AND RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE – MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 9 OCTOBER 2023

Mr Telford advised the minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 9 October 2023 had been approved at its meeting on 12 February 2024. He noted that the Board had previously been provided with a verbal update to the Trust Board in November 2023. Members noted this and approved the record of the Audit and Risk Assurance meeting on 9 October 2023.

5/24/20

PERFORMANCE REPORT – BY EXCEPTION

Mrs Molloy advised that for June 2024 Trust Board a full year report will be presented which they are currently preparing and validating.

Mrs Molloy said the Trust is currently providing mutual aid from within our Breast Service for another Trust as patients in that Trust are experiencing delays. She advised as a result of this support the record will show that in March 2024, 77 patients will breach the waiting times and that they are considering how they will reflect this in their report as the Trust had achieved delivery of 99% of its core services.

Mrs Molloy also advised there is a Ground Clearing and Accountability meeting with DoH scheduled for early June 2024 and they are preparing relevant reports for this meeting.

Mr Hegarty asked how far outside the 14 day target this is for the Trust as a result of providing this mutual aid. Mrs Molloy said she was unsure and clarified that while this support is not a one off, it is short term.

5/24/21

HSC EQUALITY AND DISABILITY ACTION PLANS

Mrs Molloy said the HSC Equality and Disability Action Team had visited the Trust in September 2023. She advised following this visit that the Trust along with other HSC organisations had undertaken an extensive engagement and a 16-week formal consultation.

Mrs Molloy said there is nothing she needs to draw to the Board's attention as the feedback from the regional consultation has been consistent with what all HSC organisations have been raising.

Mrs Molloy said that Ms O'Brien has agreed to chair the Trust's Disability Group and there will be a similar group set up for Equality and this will also be chaired by a Trust Director who has yet to be identified.

Dr McGinley said the Action Plans were excellent and very user friendly and she welcomed these being developed as a product of co-production.

Rev Canon McGaffin asked how the action plans will be monitored and the frequency of updates to Trust Board.

Mrs Molloy said she will discuss the reporting and monitoring of action plans with the Chair. She suggested these could be presented alongside updates to the Equality Scheme.

The final HSC Equality and Disability Action Plans for 2024-2029 were proposed by Rev Canon McGaffin, seconded by Mr Hegarty and approved by the Board.

5/24/22

IMPROVEMENT THROUGH INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

22.1 Minutes of meeting held on 8 December 2023

Mrs Laird said enclosed with meeting papers were the minutes of Improvement through Involvement Committee meeting held on 8 December 2023 which had been approved at its meeting on 14 March 2024.

22.2 Verbal Update from meeting held on 14 March 2024

Mrs Laird advised that the Committee had endorsed the approval of the Trust's Involvement Scheme which sets out how the Western Trust will deliver its statutory duties in relation to Involvement and Engagement.

Mrs Laird advised their current 2 year workplan has expired and the Committee is taking some time to consider their new workplan and this will be given specific focus at their next meeting.

Mrs Laird welcomed the opportunity she and Prof McKenna had from the Improvement through Involvement Committee to have a specific engagement session in relation to the Trust's Corporate Plan. She said she is delighted to note the Leader and Manager Framework Level 3 will have a dedicated module on "involvement" going forward.

Mrs Laird said she was also keen the Board has an awareness of an interesting piece of co-production ongoing through the Policies and Guidelines Sub Group who are rethinking their approach based on the feedback from service users following engagement.

Mrs Laird advised the Committee was also briefed on the progress of the Strategic Engagement Forum noting that following engagement with CMT and service users an updated proposal paper, Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct had been tabled at Strategic Change Board meeting on 19 March 2024.

Dr Frawley asked in terms of the workplan what period of time this would cover. Mrs Laird said there has been significant developments within the areas of Involvement and Engagement and the Committee wants to ensure they are aligning closely with their Terms of Reference and they are still content that a 2 year plan is appropriate.

5/24/23

PEOPLE COMMITTEE

23.1 Minutes of meeting held on 12 December 2023

Mrs Laird said the minutes of People Committee meeting held on 12 December 2023 had been approved at its meeting on 19 March 2024. She added she had provided a verbal update from this meeting at January 2024 Trust Board meeting.

23.2 Verbal Update from meeting held on 19 March 2024

Mrs Laird said members will be aware she has previously raised concerns regarding Job Planning compliance levels within the Trust. She noted an Internal Audit has now been carried out relating to Job Planning and she has asked for an update to be included in the quarterly progress report to People Committee in June 2024 on plans to implement recommendations from the Internal Audit.

Mrs Laird said the latest Job Planning report shared with People Committee in March 2024 dated 5 March 2024 showed that 42% of consultants have a job plan. She said she has challenged the Committee on compliance which she believes is related to cultural as well as some practical issues requiring to be addressed. She welcomed the recent establishment of the Job Planning Oversight Group.

Mrs Laird said she had asked for a benchmarking report with other HSC Trusts which has shown Northern Trust as the leader with compliance levels ranging between 85% and 95%. She said the Northern Trust had put in place a dedicated resource in the Medical Directorate and also had a service led improvement project.

Dr Frawley said he wished to commend the Committee on continually raising awareness of this issue and the report from the benchmarking exercise now gives a new and challenging perspective for the Trust.

Dr Frawley said Job Planning Progress reports will now be presented fortnightly at Corporate Management Team and there is a clear need for demonstrable improvement in compliance levels.

Mr Telford added the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee will also scrutinise the Job Planning Internal Audit Report and monitor the implementation of recommendations.

Mrs Laird referred to NIMDTA allocations and said it is a stark reminder statistically about the impact of the continued inequalities faced by the Western Trust.

Mrs Laird advised that workforce and recruitment challenges is a standing item at each People Committee meeting and she noted a 37% vacancy/absence rate in January 2024 in social work support roles within the Trust which is the highest in the region.

Mrs Laird reported the Trust's turnover rate for the period up to 31 December 2023 was 7.37% noting that leavers with an age profile of 33-44 is a sizeable portion of total leavers. She added the Committee will continue to monitor this going forward.

Dr Frawley asked if the Trust undertakes Exit Interviews. Mrs Hargan said they are carried out but not consistently across the Trust and there is no central collation of information. She said HR is currently finalising a set of guidance on carrying out Exit Interviews and they would hope to start to collate this information centrally.

Mrs Hargan said in relation to turnover figures these are currently presented in terms of age profile of leavers but she feels this requires a deeper dive to consider this along the age profile of the workforce and potentially other comparatives. She added they will bring a further analysis to People Committee to consider in the near futures.

Dr McGinley said further analysis of Job Planning and Exit interviews could show if there are particular areas or cohorts of staff where issues lie.

Mr Telford said there is an issue about whether you make the Exit Interview a guidance or a policy document. He said if it is the latter and the person leaving does not engage then the policy has not been complied with which can present another set of challenges.

Dr Frawley said he wished to commend to Directors that they support the implementation of Exit Interview guidance within their areas when launched.

Mrs Laird said she had undertaken a leadership walkaround with Mr Guckian to Theatres and during the visit had become aware of a Peer Support quality improvement project which the staff had put in place to support staff involved in traumatic events. She asked the Chair to consider this as a presentation at a Board workshop at some point in the future.

23.3 Work Plan for 2024/25

Mrs Laird advised the Committee had reviewed its workplan and have moved some of the standing items reported quarterly to a schedule of every 6 months. She noted that with the implementation of the Trust's Mission and Vision Framework reports on this will be included in the six monthly updates on Organisation Development (OD). She added the Trust has an OD Framework but she would be keen for the Trust to develop an OD Strategy in the future.

Members confirmed that they were content within the Workplan for the People Committee for 2024/25.

23.4 **Revised Terms of Reference**

Mrs Laird said the People Committee had specific roles and responsibilities so they had reworded some of the duties to reflect their role in relation to “safe staffing” and “whistleblowing complaints”.

Mrs Laird said she commended the revised Terms of Reference to the Board for approval. People Committee’s Revised Terms of Reference were proposed by Dr McGinley, seconded by Mr Hegarty and approved by the Board.

5/24/24

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was discussed.

5/24/25

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chair said the next meeting of Trust Board will take place on Thursday, 6 June 2024 in Lecture Theatre 1, Trust Headquarters.

The Chair noted there is also a Special Trust Board meeting scheduled to take place on Tuesday, 18 June 2024.

Dr T Frawley CBE
Chair
6 June 2024