

Minutes of a meeting of the Western Health & Social Care Trust Board held on Thursday, 2 March 2023, in the Boardroom, South West Acute Hospital, Enniskillen

PRESENT

Mr S Pollock, Chair
Mr N Guckian, Chief Executive

Mr S Hegarty, Non-Executive Director
Mrs R Laird, Non-Executive Director
Canon Rev J McGaffin, Non-Executive Director
Prof H McKenna, Non-Executive Director
Dr J McPeake, Non-Executive Director

Dr B Lavery, Medical Director
Mr T Cassidy, Executive Director of Social Work/Director of Women and Children's Services
Mr M Gillespie, Interim Director of Planned Services
Mrs D Keenan, Interim Executive Director of Nursing/Director of Primary Care and Older People's Services
Ms E McCauley, Director of Finance, Contracts & Capital Development
Mrs T Molloy, Director of Performance and Service Improvement
Mrs K Hargan, Director of Human Resources

IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs L Hunter, Assistant Director Physical Disability
Mr O Kelly, Head of Communications
Mrs M McGinley, Executive Officer to Chair/Chief Executive

3/23/1

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

3/23/2

CHAIR'S WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

The Chair welcomed everyone to the March meeting and referred to business since the previous meeting. He said he wanted to congratulate Mr Gillespie on being appointed Interim Director of Planned Services. On behalf of the Board he wished him well in his new role.

- The Chair advised that on 9 February he joined a zoom with Dr Helen Bevan, a well-respected specialist in the health service. He said he found the event excellent and was impressed by the level of detail she was able to share.
- On 21 February the Chair said he was delighted to visit Ulster University's new Belfast campus. He said the amazing, ultra-modern building had 9 operational floors with a different faculty on each floor and said it was heartening to see so many students, who could be potential employees of the Western, working hard.
- The Chair reminded members of the Staff Recognition Awards event taking place on 9 March in Omagh.
- The Chair said he was delighted that the Department of Health had now been able to confirm the date for the introduction of 'Dáithí's Law', following the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation and Organ and Tissue Donation) Bill receiving Royal Assent. He said the Bill included a provision which allows the Department of Health to lay the final regulations on organ donation changes on 1 March 2023, without the need for an Assembly vote.

The Chair advised that the Organ and Tissue Donation (Deemed Consent) legislation, known as 'Dáithí's Law' will change the way consent is granted. Ahead of 1 June, the Public Health Agency will step up its comprehensive public education and awareness campaign to make sure people understand the new system and the choices they have.

The Chair added that specialist nursing staff will continue to speak to families about donation, as well as considerations around faith and beliefs, before any organ or tissue donation goes ahead.

3/23/3

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Dr E Brady, Acting Director of Adult Mental Health and Disability Service. It was noted that Dr Brady was being represented by Mrs L Hunter, Assistant Director

3/23/4

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no conflicts of business.

3/23/5

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – 2 FEBRUARY 2023

The minutes of the previous meeting were proposed by Mr Hegarty, seconded by Prof McKenna and unanimously approved by the Board as a true and accurate record of discussion.

3/23/6

MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

3/23/7

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Mr Guckian began by adding his congratulations to Mr Gillespie on his appointment as Interim Director of Planned Services.

General Pressures

Mr Guckian referred to a report of business and advised that the Trust's acute hospitals continued to be under intense pressure across a wide range of areas as the Trust continued to rebuild services post Covid. He said he wanted to apologise to anyone whose care had been delayed as a result of this, including excess waiting times for services.

Industrial Action

Mr Guckian said a paper would be presented later in the meeting on the recent industrial action however he advised there was a further day of strike action on 21 February 2023 for UNISON, NIPSA and UNITE unions, with ongoing continuous action short of strike by NIPSA being notified from 1 February 2023 with no end date. He said there was also further discontinuous action short of strike by NIPSA and UNISON from 1 to 31 March.

Mr Guckian said the industrial action was having a major impact on services and he wanted to thank all staff including staff side officers, for the work done on agreeing derogations so that those patients in greatest need continued to receive services wherever possible.

Mr Guckian apologised to all service users impacted by this action.

Dromore and Trillick GP Practice

Mr Guckian advised the Trust has agreed to continue to manage the GP Surgery contract until June 2023. Members were advised that the GP rota has been populated for April and May 2023 and is being progressed for June 2023. The SPPG has agreed to continue to pay the same sessional rate to GPs. Mr Guckian said there continued to be the regular cohort of GPs in place which means continuity of care is being provided to patients and all GPs are very content with processes and management arrangements in place within practice.

Mr Guckian advised that the Trust will continue to seek to recruit a Practice Manager and a Social Worker was appointed on 9 January.

Mr Guckian reiterated that the lookback exercise had now concluded and the Trust awaited a report from Dr Herron and the Practice Managers involved. It was noted that Dr Herron has concluded that no patient came to serious harm as a result of the backlog.

We Are With You Wellbeing Project

Mr Guckian advised that the Trust's Health Improvement, Equality and Involvement Department had been successful in a NHS charities application for 2 year funding to support a new staff wellbeing project called "We are with you Wellbeing Project".

He said the project will recruit 50 health champions across the Trust to take a lead in promoting health within their team/department. The Project will develop an engagement with health champions at various wellbeing events.

Mr Guckian added that one of the key objectives is to recruit 8 Wellbeing Guardians (Trust Directors) who will have a role to promote and support the project at the Trust and said he will be the first Wellbeing Guardian with a focus on financial wellbeing. Mr Guckian said the Project will consult with and listen to staff and facilitate and support the delivery of at least 144 associated wellbeing initiatives across the organisation.

3/23/8

IMPROVEMENT STORY – WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S DIRECTORATE – NEONATAL UNIT, SOUTH WEST ACUTE HOSPITAL

Mr Cassidy welcomed Mrs McKenna, Assistant Director Health Care, to make a presentation on the improvement of services within the Neonatal Unit at South West Acute Hospital.

Mrs McKenna shared with members a presentation detailing the staffing challenges which faced the Neonatal service and which resulted in the closure of the Unit for a period. She outlined the extensive discussion with staff to understand the issues facing the service and the establishment of a Project Board in 2022 to provide oversight in respect of work streams including governance arrangements, training, recruitment, communication, staff wellbeing, service user and data collection/analysis. She also advised that the Project Board, with approval of the SPPG, has invited critical friends to be advisors and offer experiences from services within and outside the UK.

Mrs McKenna said the Unit reopened in October 2022 to women over 35 weeks gestation and outlined the work undertaken to increase the staffing complement.

Mrs McKenna concluded her presentation by referring to a service user's story although given a technical difficulty it was agreed that Mrs McGinley would share the presentation with members.

Dr McPeake advised members that a deep dive on this service had been undertaken earlier at the Governance Committee.

3/23/9

CORPORATE RISK REGISTER AND BOARD ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK

Dr Lavery referred members to the Trust's Corporate Risk Register and Board Assurance Framework. He advised that there were 21 risks on the Corporate Risk Register as approved at Trust Board on 2 February.

Dr Lavery shared a proposal to reduce the grading of risk ID1338 from extreme to high. Following consideration the proposal was unanimously supported.

Dr Lavery advised that there were no proposed new risks for consideration.

Dr Lavery referred to a summary report of actions and said there were no outstanding issues.

Dr Lavery referred to outstanding actions from the Board workshop and in particular to risk ID1216. He said due to pressures this risk had yet to be finalised and that a meeting had been arranged for March.

3/23/10

ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANLINESS REPORT – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2022

Mrs Keenan referred members to the Environmental Cleanliness Audit Report for the period October – December 2022.

Mrs Keenan advised that in respect of bi-monthly audits there were no scores less than 75%. She said there were a number of areas that had not completed the full number of audits and assured members that since December these audits had now been completed. Mrs Keenan also advised that during the reporting period there had been some issues with inputting information and this was being taken forward by the lead nurses.

In moving to quarterly audits, Mrs Kennan said there were no areas again with a score of less than 75%, and her staff had gone back to areas where there were no audit completed and reported.

In concluding her report Mrs Kennan said there were no areas with a score of less than 75% in respect of 6 monthly and managerial audits.

Mrs Keenan referred members to her report for more detail.

3/23/11

PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE TEMPORARY CHANGE TO EMERGENCY GENERAL SURGERY SERVICES AT SOUTH WEST ACUTE HOSPITAL

Mrs Molloy advised that the Trust was part way through the consultation period which commenced in January 2023. She said the consultation included 7 face to face engagement events, 2 virtual workshops and staff engagement events.

Mrs Molloy said the consultation will close on 10 April and that she has in place a team of staff who will begin to develop a very comprehensive Outcome Report using the feedback from the engagement events and questionnaire responses. Mrs Molloy asked members to note that the Outcome Report will come to the July Trust Board meeting.

The Chair thanked Mrs Molloy for leading on a very full and genuine consultation process.

3/23/12

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR MONTH 10

Ms McCauley referred members to the Trust's financial performance report for month 10, ending 31 January 2023.

Ms McCauley referred to table 3 which confirmed the approved increase in the Trust's forecast deficit from £6m to £6.6m. She referred also to table 4 which reported that against the forecast deficit of £6.6m the Trust was reporting a deficit at end of January of £7m indicating that the Trust was getting closer to the year end forecast of £6.6m. Ms McCauley advised that there were no new issues emerging through financial performance monitoring and that Acute, Adult Mental Health and Disability and Primary Care and Older People's Directorates had all increased their overspends during the period, an indication of the challenge to services over the winter period.

Members were advised the Trust achieved almost £900k against its agency savings target. Ms McCauley said the Acute and Women and Children's Directorates were challenged to deliver against their targets in full and so there had been a renewed focus during February and further focus in March by Directorate senior teams on the plans to hold back commitments over the next few weeks in order to maximise savings.

Ms McCauley referred to table 6 which demonstrated that pay expenditure had increased for Acute and Women and Children's Directorates but had decreased for PCOP Directorate. Moving to table 7 she said this indicated the reduction to normal run rate level for domiciliary care/direct payments following the payment of arrears in December. Ms McCauley added that there was a continued rise in independent homes expenditure and this was an area now which was having an increased focus within related Directorates.

Ms McCauley referred to table 8 – non pay expenditure internal – and said drugs and pharmacy consumable related budgets had increased during this period which was very much linked to activity levels. She noted that heat, light and power had also increased and was again almost entirely related to usage levels.

Ms McCauley said given the increase in pay budgets members would not be surprised to note that medical and nursing agency and bank usage had all increased during the period, again an indication of the challenge of winter and hospital pressures.

Ms McCauley said as previously noted, the Trust was on target to deliver against its capital plan of £36m with spend at month 9 of £16m.

Prof McKenna raised 3 questions following Ms McCauley's presentation.

First, Prof McKenna asked for an update on the regional reduction on agency spend. Mr Guckian advised that the financial performance report reflected the need to readjust the workforce because of demand and pressure on services. He added that he is the Chair of the Regional Agency Reduction Group however he said the recommendations from this group were not short term fixes but would focus on a long term workforce strategy. Mr Guckian advised that in the coming weeks the Trust would be introducing a new HSC Agency Workers; Nursing and Healthcare Support Framework which will seek to eradicate off contract workers.

Secondly, Prof McKenna said in past discussion reference had been made to agency nursing being mainly focussed on certain wards and units and asked if these areas had been identified. Mrs Hargan said this work was multi-dimensional with 6 work streams operating under the steering group. She said the first task was the introduction of the HSC Agency Workers; Nursing and Healthcare Support Framework. She said the Trust was very reliant on agency nurses for some areas where market forces operated against us and there were other parts of our service very difficult to work in. Mrs Hargan said some staff chose to leave the employment of the Trust and work in agency where they can attract a higher rate of pay and select the shifts they want to work. Mrs Hargan said the Trust was looking at workforce models so the Trust can ensure it provides opportunity for progression for staff. She said this work would be a programme of work for the next 2 years.

Thirdly, Prof McKenna referred to the nursing bank and asked why staff chose to work with agency and bank. Mrs Hargan said the Trust was in the early stages in reviewing bank arrangements but assured members that every Trust is looking at this. She said there were a range of considerations and added that when the Trust invited the Innovation Lab to look at this they identified a very wide range of 101 determinants in relation to the use of agency. Mrs Hargan said the Trust continued to have small areas very reliant on agency and some areas very high usage.

Mr Guckian concluded by emphasising how good a place the HSC is to work in terms of career opportunities, pension arrangements, professional education and support. He said he would encourage all staff to remain within the HSC family.

It was noted that agency spend for January was high and it was explained this was because of short term absence including annual leave and sickness.

Mr Hegarty referred to the Trust's deficit position being dependent on the delivery of a number of planning assumptions including agency savings of £2.4m and asked what assurance could be given that the Trust would meet this target. Ms McCauley advised that the Trust has a range of contingencies around this plan which include other opportunities for savings should Directorates be unable to deliver on this

target. Ms McCauley said the Trust continued to liaise with SPPG on this and recognise the challenge to it being achieved.

3/23/13

ENDOWMENT AND GIFTS COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held on 6 December 2022

Canon Rev McGaffin referred members to the minutes of a meeting of the Endowment and Gifts Committee held on 6 December 2022 for information. She said she had previously briefed Board on the issues discussed at this meeting.

Verbal Update from meeting held on 7 February 2023

Canon Rev McGaffin referred to the Committee meeting held on 7 February and provided members with an update on the discussion that took place.

It was noted that E&G fund balances as at 31 December were £2.5m excluding the staff support fund. Canon Rev McGaffin noted that each Directorate has been set a target for expenditure in 2022/23 amounting to £500,000 and an update on the spending plans was provided by Acute, PCOP and Women and Children's Directorate.

Canon Rev McGaffin advised that the Committee approved a spending proposal.

Canon Rev McGaffin advised that the Harlequin Charitable Accounting System is now fully operational as a stand alone system.

Canon Rev McGaffin provided an update on Superfunds and Charities Commission Registration. She said the Committee was also briefed that a business case is being developed regionally to secure additional legal resources which are required to move forward with the charities registration. It was noted that DLS attended the Committee to provide a regional update, an overview of the legal process and workload and to answer queries from the Committee.

Canon Rev McGaffin advised that a revised proposal of a 4 superfunds model was presented for the consideration of the Committee however following discussion with DLS the Committee felt that the Trust was not at a stage where this could be agreed.

Canon Rev McGaffin said it was also agreed that Ms McCauley will bring a paper on the restricted funds by Directorates to CMT and Directorates would then be requested to develop plans about how they spend monies over a 12-18 month period with a sharp focus on the running down of restricted funds.

Concluding her report Canon Rev McGaffin advised that the Committee was briefed that the guidance for managers and staff will be updated to take account of the learning over the last couple of months around the quality of proposals coming to Committee and to streamline the process where the proposal is capital. It was noted that this will come back to Committee in due course.

3/23/14

AUDIT AND RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held on 10 October 2022

Mr Hegarty referred members to the minutes of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee held on 10 October. It was noted that a verbal update had been provided to the November Board meeting.

Verbal Update from meeting held on 13 February 2023

Mr Hegarty provided members with an update on the discussion at Committee held on 13 February. He said an issue had arisen regarding the timeliness of Committee minutes coming to Trust Board and noted that this was scheduled for further discussion at a future Board workshop.

Mr Hegarty advised that the internal audit plan for 23/24 was approved at the Committee meeting and the NI Audit Office and external audit plan for 22/23 was also shared for the year.

Mr Hegarty said discussion had taken place also on Committee oversight on ICT and the Committee received an update on the work of the access healthcare team.

3/23/15

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION – EXCEPTION REPORT

Mrs Molloy provided members with an exception report for month 10. She advised that January had seen a difficult outturn in that a number of areas had worsened against the targets set by the SPPG. In overall terms she said there were 17 service metrics RAG rated red, compared to 11 the previous month. Mrs Molloy said 8 services areas deteriorated in respect of performance during January, and 2 areas had improved. Mrs Molloy reminded members that January also saw a strike day and that a range of services had been affected by that.

Mrs Molloy outlined the services which deteriorated from amber to red during the month and the services which had been previously performing well but that had deteriorated significantly against target.

In terms of actions Mrs Molloy advised that the Finance and Performance Committee has already received reports on AHP services and been provided with greater detail on the issues affecting performance in these services. She referred to the deterioration in performance in respect of District Nursing and said the Trust was working with the service on a rebuild plan and also the Performance and Transformation Executive Board will undertake a specific deep dive. Mrs Molloy referred to endoscopy and said while this service saw an increase in activity, performance moved to red, however she explained that there is a one month coding lag and she expected this position to improve based on a manual review of patients seen in the month.

Mrs Molloy advised that 2 services had improved during the month which were the activity level for Cancer 62 day pathway and an improved length of stay for unscheduled patients in Altnagelvin Hospital which is now in line with expected performance.

Mrs Molloy advised that during January the focus on the handover of patients by NIAS to EDs within 3 hours had continued. She said the Western Trust was close to meeting this target and that the Trust continued to be the best performing Trust in Northern Ireland in this area.

Mrs Molloy concluded that in this final quarter of 22/23, all Trusts are expected to have fully or almost fully returned to pre-Covid levels and she said the January position would therefore present a challenge to recover from.

The Chair thanked Mrs Molloy for her report and expressed his concern about the 17 service areas RAG rated red given the Trust is expected to move to pre-Covid levels in the last quarter. Mrs Molloy said it was important for Trust Board to note the challenging position being faced across a range of services.

Prof McKenna referred to AHP services and encouraged the Trust to build contacts with AHP tutors at Ulster University so as to establish clinical contacts. Mr Guckian advised that he has been invited by Ulster University to join them to mark the integration of Health Sciences into Magee and said this would provide that opportunity.

Mrs Laird commended the good performance during January in the in the midst of industrial action and said this should be reflected to staff. Moving into 23/24 she asked what was the trajectory for performance likely to be. Mrs Molloy advised that these discussions had now commenced and said the Trust was beginning to work

through what is achievable. Mrs Laird said she would like staff to be supported in this step up of activity.

3/23/16

DRAFT EQUALITY ACTION PLAN AND DISABILITY ACTION PLAN

Mrs Molloy shared with members for approval a draft HSC Equality Action Plan 2023-2028 and a draft HSC Disability Action Plan 2023-2028 and for information an Audit of Inequalities.

Mrs Molloy said the 6 HSC Trusts had worked collaboratively to revise and draft the Equality Action Plan 2023-2028 and the Disability Action Plan 2023-2028. She said to inform the new Plans, Trusts collated available research and data to identify emerging themes and held listening events to gather experiences from people. She said the draft Plans were based on consideration of this research and feedback and would therefore hopefully make a real and meaningful difference to the lives of people in Northern Ireland by considering the inequalities they experience and to better promote equality of opportunity. Mrs Molloy commended Trust equality leads for leading this work.

Mrs Molloy said the Plans will be monitored within Trusts through established monitoring structures.

Mrs Molloy commended the draft Plans to members for approval.

Mr Guckian said as the largest public organisation in the Western area, the Trust had a real responsibility to ensure an equality culture and said he endorsed Mrs Molloy's proposal.

Following consideration the draft Plans they were proposed by Mrs Laird, seconded by Dr McPeake and unanimously approved by Board.

3/23/17

INDUSTRIAL ACTION – UPDATE

Mrs Hargan advised that since the last Trust Board meeting, the Trust had continued to experience further industrial action including strike action. She said UNITE strike action scheduled for 16 and 17 February and 23 and 24 February was postponed in favour of a full day strike action on 21 February in conjunction with other trade unions in health and education.

Mrs Hargan advised that the previous specific action short of strike notified by NIPSA in relation to the withdrawal of personal cars, had been suspended as the issue had been resolved by the DoH.

Mrs Hargan outlined the impact of industrial action across a range of services. She said cumulative impacts continued to be a concern across the Trust and said while the impact could be seen most immediately in acute services and unscheduled care, there was also significant concern about the cumulative impact of strike action and action short of strike in children's services and community services.

Mrs Hargan said trade unions and staff continued to work in partnership in preparing for industrial action and to manage impact to patients where possible. However, she said it was very important for Trust Board to be reminded of the impact that preparing for industrial action has on management time in contingency planning, negotiation of derogations and working with external partners such as GPs.

Mrs Hargan advised that the Trust had now also received notification from the Royal College of Midwives and the Pharmacists Defence Association that they both intend to run a ballot for industrial action. She said the RCM ballot is expected to close on 7 March and the PDA ballot is due to come on 21 March. Mrs Hargan said if both unions secure a mandate for industrial action they would be required to take their action within 4 weeks.

Mrs Hargan said there are discussions ongoing nationally with the Secretary of State and other unions have been invited to join. She said it is hoped this will postpone industrial action while these discussions are ongoing. Mrs Hargan asked if any member has any influence over people at national level she would encourage that to avoid future industrial action.

The Chair acknowledged that leading up to a strike day is very challenging for managers but said he was assured at how well the disruption is managed. He said he was hopeful for the national and regional discussions which are taking place.

Mr Hegarty sought clarity in respect of the cancelled red flag procedures and urgent endoscopy procedures. It was noted that these patients were rebooked onto the following cycle.

Mr Cassidy highlighted that action short of strike by NIPSA is having a huge impact on children's services.

3/23/18

PEOPLE COMMITTEE

Minutes of meetings held on 15 September 2022 and 5 October 2022

Mrs Laird referred members to the minutes of the meetings of the People Committee held on 15 September and 5 October 2022 for information. She said a verbal brief had previously been provided to Board. She said the 5 October meeting had been arranged to allow the Committee to consider the workforce challenges before it on 15 September.

Verbal update of People Committee meeting held on 27 February 2023

Mrs Laird advised that a meeting of People Committee scheduled for 8 December had been postponed due to industrial action.

Mrs Laird referred to the People Committee meeting on 27 February and said the key theme for discussion was “Looking after our People” which included reports on the Trust’s Health and Wellbeing Strategy and TWIST West, Occupational Health modernisation including the development of the Occupational Health Psychological Service.

Mrs Laird referred to the forthcoming Staff Recognition Awards and noted that the team award had been highly contested. She said during discussion 2 issues had been raised, first the opportunity for staff to join virtually and the quality of application forms. She said both would be further considered for future Awards.

Mrs Laird advised that discussion took place on the Committee’s draft work plan and said given the current recruitment and workforce challenges she had suggested that this be included as a standing item.

Mrs Laird referred to discussion on the HR Metrics and said that it was noted that absence had now increased to 9.13% following a regional agreement with TU side that Covid sickness will be recorded as sickness absence going forward.

Mrs Laird referred to discussion on succession planning and said she was pleased that the People Committee would be giving this proper focus within its discussions.

Mrs Laird referred to job planning and advised that it was reported at Committee that 35% of consultants have an approved 2022/23 e-job plan. She said she would like to see this position improve and that Mrs Hargan will bring a full report to the next Committee meeting. It was noted that appraisal and mandatory training have improved.

3/23/19

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no further items of business.

3/23/20

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Western Health and Social Care Trust Board will take place on Thursday, 6 April 2023 in Trust Headquarters, Altnagelvin Hospital.

**Mr Sam Pollock, CBE
Chair
6 April 2023**