

Chair's Report - February 2021

I am pleased to provide a written report to the Board of Directors which covers some key updates for members' attention and assurance.

As we start the new year, I make no apology for once again recognising the continued commitment of the Executive Team and our entire workforce as they respond to this third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. A response which is, in many ways, more challenging than before. Our staff are understandably fatigued and are managing the normal pressures and demands that come during the winter months together with this current and lengthy national lockdown introduced to tackle the third wave. This has presented both professional and personal challenges which our staff continue to manage with great professionalism, flexibility and courage.

I remain very proud of this organisation and the individual and collective determination of our staff and teams to deliver the best possible care to our local communities.

I also want to recognise the continued support of our Non-Executive Directors and the leadership of our interim Chief Executive Mark Greatrex.

Emergency governance arrangements

The emergency governance arrangements established at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic remain in place and following their extension in December 2020 to the end of January 2021, we are now seeking to extend them further.

This further extension responds to the latest guidance and advice received from NHS England and Improvement on 26 January 2021 and we bring a paper to this meeting of the Board of Directors (at agenda item 10) to confirm this.

Weekly NED assurance meetings

The weekly NED assurance meetings (*conducted via video conference with all Non-Executive Directors present and with some Executive colleagues*) have continued and remain important in providing a high degree of assurance to Non-Executive Directors.

Each of these meetings includes a detailed briefing on the local and regional situation, longer-term trends in Wirral and Cheshire East and the wider Cheshire & Merseyside and North West regions. The weekly workforce position is reported, providing an overview on staff capacity and absence levels, together with the latest data on staff testing for COVID-19 including Lateral Flow Testing and more recently the COVID-19 staff vaccination programme. The Trust position in relation to PPE is shared, including opportunities and requests for mutual aid across the region. The financial position is reported every week, based on briefings received at regional level from NHSE/I and updates from weekly CEO and Chairs' regional briefings have also been reported for information and assurance. A report on the high-level organisational risks, particularly in response to the Trust's response to and impact of the response to COVID-19 is shared at every meeting following escalation to the Strategic Command Group.

Other exceptional items are discussed or shared for information through this forum and in accordance with our emergency governance arrangements. During the reporting period of December and January these have included;

- A briefing on Infection Prevention & Control measures in place across the Trust, including nosocomial infections
- The restart and restoration of services plans
- The service model and equality impact assessment (EIA) for the Community Intermediate Care Centre

- The outcome measures associated with the Board Assurance Framework
- The Care Quality Commission (CQC) consultation
- A review of the emergency governance arrangements in the context of the third wave of COVID-19
- The Marine Lake Health & Wellbeing Centre development

Additionally, in January 2021 and due to the increased operational pressures on the Trust, the bi-monthly Quality & Safety Committee was postponed (to 24 February 2021). However, the agenda for the weekly NED assurance meeting was extended with the Chief Nurse and Medical Director present to provide an update on key quality and safety matters and quality performance aligned to the quality governance framework that has remained in place during the pandemic.

Board Development Programme

The Board of Directors has collectively taken the decision to pause the next stage of the board development programme due to the on-going operational pressures associated with COVID-19. We remain engaged with Gatenby Sanderson and all members of the Board have completed initial assessments, but the priority must be on service provision and supporting our workforce and our local community.

Informal Board

Our informal board programme for the year remains in place but the session scheduled for January 2021 was cancelled to allow Executive Team colleagues to focus on service delivery and the Trust's response to COVID-19.

Council of Governors

We continue to work with our governor colleagues and were pleased to welcome two new governors to the Trust in December 2021 and held a useful virtual induction session in January 2021.

On behalf of the Board of Directors I would like to formally welcome;

Gary Hartley-Kelly - public governor, Wallasey constituency
Jan Hegarty - staff governor

We held a formal meeting of the Council of Governors on 25 January 2021 which provided an opportunity to brief governors on the on-going response to COVID-19 and I was pleased that the reappointments of Beverley Jordan, Non-Executive Director and myself as Chair of the Trust were supported for a further 3 years.

My thanks to all our governor colleagues who continue to support the Trust during these unprecedented times.

Healthy Wirral

Finally, together with our interim CEO and other Executive colleagues, I continue to participate actively and represent the Trust in the Healthy Wirral programme of work and in a range of regional and national fora. I appreciate valuable and productive discussions with Chair colleagues across the system.

Over the last few months we have also welcomed the opportunity to comment on the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the Cheshire & Merseyside HealthCare Partnership, through the HealthyWirral programme work.

I invite the members of the Board of Directors to receive this report for information.

Professor Michael Brown CBE DL
Chair

27 January 2021

Lead Governor Report

Council of Governor elections - declaration of results

The results from the governor elections were declared in early December 2020 and we were delighted to welcome Jan Hegarty, Social Worker as a staff governor, and Gary Hartley-Kelly as a public governor for the Wallasey constituency to the Council.

We are looking forward to working with both Jan and Gary.

New governor induction programme

We held an induction meeting with our new governors on 19 January 2021 providing them with information on the Trust, the role of the Foundation Trust governor and the role of the Board of Directors.

The design of the day was led by governor colleagues and based on the experiences and knowledge of existing governors. I would therefore like to formally note my thanks to Veronica Morris, public governor for Wirral West, Veronica Cuthbert, public governor for Wirral South and Kevin Sharkey, public governor for Wirral South for their time, energy and commitment in helping to deliver an engaging session for our new governors.

We also launched a governor mentor programme and look forward to being able to support both new and experienced governors with the opportunity to learn and exchange ideas.

Our thanks to Professor Michael Brown, Chairman, the Non-Executive Directors and Alison Hughes, Director of Corporate Affairs for their attendance, presentation and support at the meeting. My thanks also to all governor colleagues who were able to attend to give our new members a warm welcome.

Your Voice Group

Following our CoG development day in November 2020, a group of governors were pleased to attend the meeting of the Your Voice group in January 2021 to engage with members and to provide an update on the work of the Council of Governors.

We hope this forum will continue to provide an opportunity for public members of the Trust to engage with governors who have the general duty to represent the views of the public and the local community.

My thanks to those governors who support the Your Voice group and we look forward to the next meeting in March 2021.

Reappointment of the Chair and Non-Executive Director

According to the FT constitution and FT Code of Governance, the Council of Governors is collectively responsible for the appointment and re-appointment of Non-Executive Directors to the Board of Directors.

In May 2020, the Council of Governors approved a six-month extension to the existing terms of office for Professor Michael Brown and Beverley Jordan until 28 February 2021. This was



**Wirral Community
Health and Care**
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based on advice from NHS England and NHS Improvement in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In January 2021 the members of the CoG Remuneration & Nomination (RemNom) Group met to consider both reappointments. The RemNom group has specific terms of reference to lead the process and receive information and evidence in respect of Chair and NED re-appointments in order to make a recommendation to the full Council of Governors.

On 25 January 2021, at the formal meeting of the Council of Governors, the Chair of the RemNom group, Lynn Collins, public governor Wirral West, presented the recommendation from the RemNom group that Professor Michael Brown be re-appointed as the Trust Chair for a further 3 years and that Beverley Jordan be re-appointed as a Non-Executive Director of the Trust for a further 3 years.

This proposal was unanimously supported by the Council of Governors and I am therefore delighted on behalf of the governors to congratulate both Michael and Beverley and we look forward to continuing our work with them.

Bill Wyllie
Lead Governor (public governor, Wallasey)

26 January 2021