

**Chief Executive Update**

**Trust Board**

**Thursday 26 June 2025**

## **1.0 encompass**

**1.1** Following a successful Go-Live on Thursday 8 May, the Trust is currently in its stabilisation period.

**1.2** A downturn of activity for the first six weeks of Go-Live was agreed to allow staff time to learn how to use encompass to do their jobs. We are now working closely with each service and Epic colleagues to ensure that we return to delivering the same or greater levels of activity as they were prior to Go-Live.

**1.3** We are working to maximise the system, supporting clinicians to personalise for their specific optimum use and adapt to this new way of working as quickly as possible. We are also learning how to use the system to make data driven decisions, which is one of the key benefits of an electronic care record.

**1.4** Professional leads continue to develop and deliver tailored training across their disciplines to support colleagues and we are very encouraged by the continued enthusiasm and engagement from staff right across the organisation to make the best use of encompass.

**1.5** On 19 June, we participated in a regional encompass workshop to discuss; what resources are needed to optimise the use of the system, support and further developments.

## **2.0 Violence targeted at ethnic minorities**

**2.1** A recent statement from DOH Chief Professional Officers said the appalling and violent scenes of recent days in some parts of Northern Ireland are nothing short of shameful.

**2.2** The statement recognised the hugely valuable contribution that our diverse internationally educated and recruited colleagues and friends make to our health and social care service.

**2.3** The Southern Trust Chief Executive also issued a statement to all staff to emphasise that The Trust is committed to supporting our international colleagues, and championing equality, diversity, and inclusion.

## **3.0 Assaults on nurses**

**3.1** Over 30,000 attacks have been recorded on nurses across Northern Ireland's 5 health trusts in the last five years. The figures were obtained through a FOI request from the 5 health trusts and reported on by media.

**3.2** Whilst the majority of assaults were physical, the attacks range from verbal threats, indecent exposure, biting and even broken bones.

**3.3** The Department of Health said it condemns all violence and aggression towards Health and Social Care staff, and its dedicated framework aims to ensure a consistent, zero-tolerance approach. The new framework was launched in December 2023 to support HSC employers in tackling these behaviours towards our staff.

## **4.0 Cervical Cytology**

**4.1** Cervical cancer campaigners met recently with the Health Minister accompanied by some Health Committee elected representatives and stressing to the Health Minister the need for a Cervical cancer screening Statutory Public Inquiry.

**4.2** Dr Michael McKenna, SHSCT Consultant Pathologist, spoke about his experience of whistleblowing in a recent TV interview when he raised concerns about the underperformance of screeners in the Cytology lab of the Southern Trust. The Trust continues to engage with Dr McKenna as part of this ongoing process with a further follow up meeting to take place before the end of June.

## **5.0 Medical workforce challenges**

**5.1** As we have previously updated, like other Trusts across Northern Ireland and throughout the UK, the Southern Trust is impacted by rising demand and workforce pressures across many professions.

**5.2** Within the Southern Trust, due to difficulties recruiting and retaining medical consultants, we are facing ongoing challenges across a number of specialties.

**5.3** We currently have a specific focus on obstetrics and gynaecology, psychiatry and haematology. Significant efforts are being invested into managing these particularly vulnerable services, as work continues across health and social care regionally on longer term workforce plans and developing service safe service models that meet the needs of all patients into the future.

## **6.0 Daisy Hill Hospital Stabilisation**

**6.1** Significant work has taken place over the last 2 years to primarily stabilise our general medical workforce in DHH as well develop and implement a range of hospital and community enablers to support unscheduled demand and pressures experienced in the hospital.

**6.2** The stabilisation project has largely been a success that has supported the maintenance of general medical services at DHH.

**6.3** Whilst overall unscheduled care remains challenging across our health and social care system and continued oversight and management is required, the focus will now move from one of stabilisation to a rebuild agenda, building on the positive work and improvements that are now being embedded.

## **7.0 Belfast Cardiac Surgery**

**7.1** A series of Departmental interventions were announced in a Ministerial written statement for the NI Assembly (June 5) after the Health Minister expressed “deep-seated concerns” at the findings of the Independent Review into the BHSCT Cardiac Surgery service.

**7.2** The DOH’s performance accountability process for Belfast Trust has been raised to Level 5, the highest level. The Minister said there will be external expert support for the Belfast Trust and they have enhanced Departmental accountability, now formalised as a Departmental Accountability Team.

## **8.0 Pay awards**

**8.1** Ministers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland all recently announced pay awards following review body recommendations - a 5.4% average increase for resident doctors, formerly known as junior doctors, 4% for consultants and other senior doctors, and 3.6% for nurses and other health workers.

**8.2** Almost 350,000 nursing staff in England, Wales and Northern Ireland have been asked to vote from 9 June on a 3.6% pay increase. The RCN has not set a date for the consultation to close. RCN dismissed the award as "grotesque" and say the vote will be crucial in determining the next steps which could include a ballot for strike action.

**8.3** Resident doctors in England are already being balloted on strike action over pay. Other health unions are organising votes on the pay awards.

## **9.0 New Emergency Medicine Consultants**

**9.1** Up to 26 additional Emergency Medicine Consultants should be in post by the end of this year in hospitals across Northern Ireland.

**9.2** The recruitment is the result of work involving the Department of Health, HSC Trusts and the Royal College of Emergency Medicine (RCEM) to ensure there are pathways in place for newly qualified Consultants to find employment in the HSC.

**9.3** Funding for these new posts has been provided by a reduction in spending on locum doctors within Emergency Departments. Some of the new Emergency Medicine Consultants are already in post, while others are currently going through recruitment processes. The new consultants will take up posts across all five Trusts and will be deployed according to clinical and staffing need.