



## TRUST BOARD / SLT COVER SHEET

	<p><i>The cover sheet purpose is to provide the Trust Board/Committee with a clear summary of the paper being presented, how it impacts on the people we serve, key matters for attention and the ask of the Trust Board/Committee</i></p> <p><i>The Accountable Director must satisfy themselves that the cover sheet is accurate and fully reflects the paper. The expectation is that the Accountable Director has read and agreed the content of both the cover sheet and paper.</i></p>	
<b>Meeting and Date of meeting</b>	<p style="text-align: center;">Trust Board Meeting 29<sup>th</sup> January 2026</p>	
<b>Title of paper</b>	<p style="text-align: center;">Board Assurance Self-Assessment 2025/26</p>	
<b>Accountable Director</b>	<b>Name</b>	<p style="text-align: center;">Ms Eileen Mullan</p>
<b>Report Author</b>	<b>Position</b>	<p style="text-align: center;">Trust Chair</p>
<b>Report Author</b>	<b>Name</b>	<p style="text-align: center;">Stephen Wallace</p>
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<b>This paper sits within the Trust Board role of:</b>	<p style="text-align: center;">Accountability</p>	
<b>This paper is presented for:</b>	<p style="text-align: center;">Approval</p>	
<b>Links to Trust Strategic Priorities</b>  	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Collaborative Working</p> <p>Learning Organisation</p> <p>Safety, Quality &amp; Experience</p> <p>Community First</p> <p>Whole-Life Approach</p>

## 1. Reason for Presentation of Paper / Report

Department of Health Arm's Length Bodies Boards are required to complete a Board Governance Self-Assessment on an annual basis. The completed self-assessment is intended to help Arm's Length Bodies improve the effectiveness of their Board and provide the Board members with assurance that it is conducting its business in accordance with best practice.

The Trust Board is required to undertake an annual self-assessment, and to date, we have used the Department's self-assessment tool. In 2025/26 however, we are piloting the Public Health Agency Board Self-Assessment approach which was kindly shared by their Board Chair. We have secured agreement from the Department of Health to conduct this in this way. The aim of this is to strengthen Board Effectiveness, encourage personal reflection and support our continued development as a Board. These insights will help inform future Board development discussions and identify opportunities for further strengthening our governance practices.

The outcome of this Self-Assessment will be shared with the Department of Health as part of the Annual Department of Health and Trust Annual Engagement Plan. At a Trust level the outcomes of the assessment will inform Board Development activities in 2026.

## 2. Detailed summary of paper contents:

This paper presents the findings of an online governance self-assessment survey completed by the Chair, members of the Board and members of the Senior Leadership Team. The respondent profile was as follows:

<b>Board Member / Director Attendee</b>	<b>Total Number</b>	<b>Number Responded</b>
Chair and Non-Executive Directors (Full Board Members)	8	8
Chief Executive and Executive Directors (Full Board Members)	5	5
Corporate and Operational Directors (Directors in Attendance at Board Meetings)	6	6

The survey consisted of question under the categories of six core principles of good governance, namely:

- **PRINCIPLE 1** Good governance means focusing on the organisation's purpose and on outcomes for applicants and beneficiaries
- **PRINCIPLE 2** Good governance means performing effectively in clearly defined functions and roles
- **PRINCIPLE 3** Good governance means promoting values for the whole organisation and demonstrating the values of good governance through behaviour
- **PRINCIPLE 4** Good governance means informed, transparent decision-making and managing risk
- **PRINCIPLE 5** Good governance means developing the capacity and capability of the governing body to be effective
- **PRINCIPLE 6** Good governance means engaging stakeholders and making accountability real

The assessment reflects many areas of strength as well as additional comments provided identifying some development opportunities. The results suggest good levels of governance maturity with a positive culture and solid foundations, combined with a shared appetite for continued improvement and alignment to best practice.

### 3. Areas of improvement/achievement:

A few notable areas of achievement from the self-assessment were:

In response to the following:

- **“Establishing clarity: The Board has developed and communicated a shared understanding of its mission, vision, remit and strategic priorities”**, responses received indicated a total of 95% towards agree/strongly agree.
- **“The Board has developed clear deliverable objectives and priorities that derive from the relevant legislation and remit agreed with the sponsor department”**, responses received indicated a total of 95% towards agree/strongly agree.
- **“The Board is actively involved in strategic planning and policy decisions”** responses received indicated a total of 94% towards agree/strongly agree.

### 4. Areas of concern/risk/challenge:

Some additional comments noted a desire to see more interaction in terms of constructive challenge between directors or noting that there could be more

refinement to the agenda and papers presented to simplify the Board oversight process.

**5. Impact on Statutory Duties: Provide details on the impact of the following and how.**

<i>Financial Impact</i>	<i>Safety and Quality Impact</i>
No, there are no Financial Impacts	No, there are no Quality, Safety or Experience Impacts

**6. Risk Assessment (Risk level and state if a risk assessment be completed)**

N/A

**7. Other Business Intelligence/data (If appropriate)**

N/A

**8. Impact: Provide details on the impact of the following and how. If this is N/A you should explain why this is an appropriate response.**

<b>Corporate Risk Register</b>	N/A
<b>Board Assurance Framework</b>	N/A
<b>Equality and Human Rights</b>	N/A

**Trust Board Role Fulfilment**

<b>Strategy</b>	<i>Papers in this category should address forward-looking priorities, long-term objectives, or service transformation. These are typically focused on shaping the future of the organisation and will often involve decisions on direction, investment, or innovation.</i>
<b>Culture</b>	<i>These papers aim to influence or reflect the values, behaviours, and staff or patient experiences within HSC. They may relate to leadership development, equality, diversity and inclusion, staff</i>

	<i>engagement, or initiatives intended to reinforce our organisational ethos.</i>
<b>Accountability</b>	<i>Papers falling into this area relate to governance, assurance, performance monitoring, compliance, and risk. They provide evidence that responsibilities are being fulfilled, standards are being met, and corrective actions are being taken where necessary.</i>

### **Reasons for Paper Presentation**

<b>Approval</b>	<i>Used when an item requires a formal agreement or endorsement by the meeting / committee members. Examples are approving minutes, budgets, proposals or policies.</i>
<b>Assurance</b>	<i>Used when an item can be measured against a certain criteria / standard. Examples are a project is on course with delivery or financial targets are being met.</i>
<b>Information</b>	<i>Used when an item is presented for the purpose of updating or informing the attendees without requiring a decision or action, such as reports, updates, or announcements.</i>
<b>Discussion</b>	<i>Used when an item is listed primarily for open discussion, brainstorming or gathering input from the members without requiring an immediate decision.</i>