



TRUST BOARD / SLT COVER SHEET

	<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> <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>	
Meeting and Date of meeting	<i>Trust Board</i> <i>24th September 2026</i>	
Title of paper	<i>Mid-Year Update to Board Assurance Framework (BAF)</i>	
Accountable Director	Name	
	Position	
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This paper sits within the Trust Board role of:	Accountability	
This paper is presented for:	Assurance <i>(Notes on completion at end of document)</i>	
Links to Trust Strategic Priorities 	☐	Collaborative Working
	☐	Learning Organisation
	☒	Safety, Quality & Experience
	☐	Community First
	☐	Whole-Life Approach

1. Reason for Presentation of Paper / Report

The Board Assurance Framework (BAF) is reviewed mid-year for assurance against the current Corporate Risk Register.

2. Detailed summary of paper contents:

The framework of the Board Assurance Framework is still valid; however, the supporting detail held within the Corporate Risk Register has matured since January 2026.

The strategic risk themes remain unchanged and continue to align with the Corporate Risk Register; however, the narrative descriptions, rationale and key controls have been refreshed to better reflect the current risk environment and level of exposure identified through the Corporate Risk Register and SLTRA during 2026/27.

Updated reasoning to the strategic risks is detailed below:

Strategic Risk 1: Workforce and People

Persistent workforce shortages across a number of critical specialties, including Psychiatry, Gastroenterology and Haematology, continue to impact the Trust's ability to deliver safe, sustainable and timely care. Despite ongoing recruitment, international recruitment initiatives and service redesign, significant workforce gaps remain and continue to expose the Trust to risks relating to service continuity, access, quality of care, staff wellbeing and organisational resilience.

Strategic Risk 2: Operational and Service Delivery

Sustained demand, capacity constraints and unscheduled care pressures continue to impact patient flow, access to services and timely discharge arrangements across the Trust. Persistent overcrowding, use of escalation capacity and increasing pressures across elective and emergency pathways continue to create risks to safe, effective and timely care delivery.

Strategic Risk 3: Cyber Risk

The Cyber Security Risk has not been amended as the BAF wording remains aligned to Corporate Risk 4.1 and still reflects the current risk position. The controls and assurance mechanisms mirror what is on the August 2026 Corporate Risk Register.

Strategic Risk 4: Financial and Sustainability

Significant financial pressures, including the requirement to deliver substantial savings whilst maintaining safe services, continue to present a material risk to the Trust's ability to achieve financial balance and invest in strategic priorities. Ongoing reliance on non-recurrent funding, increasing service demand and competing investment requirements across workforce, estates, digital infrastructure and sustainability programmes continue to place pressure on organisational resilience and long-term sustainability.

Strategic Risk 5: Compliance and Reputational

Ongoing workforce, operational, financial and infrastructure pressures continue to increase the risk of regulatory scrutiny, statutory non-compliance and reputational damage. Significant risks relating to fire safety, infection prevention and control, contract management, estate infrastructure and service performance continue to require active oversight and assurance through the Trust's governance framework.

In addition to the wording for strategic risk 5, there is also an added existing control and source of assurance:

Existing Control and Source of Assurance (reflecting current risk rating)	Type of Control	Line of Assurance	Where is this assurance reported to and frequency of assurance? (i.e. what committee/Group within Trust)	Control Effectiveness (RAG Rating)
Estates Compliance and Infrastructure Oversight: Regular monitoring and reporting of statutory compliance, fire safety, environmental controls, backlog maintenance and capital prioritisation arrangements to ensure regulatory requirements and safety standards are maintained.	Preventative /Detective	Second Line	• Organisational Governance Steering Group • Patient Safety and Quality Committee • Trust Board	

3. Areas of improvement/achievement:

- The Board Assurance Framework has been reviewed against the current Corporate Risk Register and updated to ensure continued alignment between strategic risks and the principal risks being managed through the Trust's governance arrangements.

- Strategic risk narratives have been refreshed to better reflect the current risk environment, including workforce sustainability, operational flow challenges, financial pressures and compliance requirements, whilst maintaining alignment with the Trust's strategic priorities.
- Assurance sources and controls have been reviewed to ensure that reporting arrangements continue to provide the Board with appropriate oversight through the committee and steering group structure.
- The revised framework provides clearer traceability between Corporate Risks and Board-level strategic risks, supporting improved oversight and assurance.
- The review has confirmed that the existing strategic risk themes remain appropriate and continue to provide an effective framework for Board assurance.

4. Areas of concern/risk/challenge:

The review confirms that a number of significant risks continue to require Board oversight and are reflected within the updated Board Assurance Framework:

- Significant workforce pressures continue across a number of critical specialties, with several workforce-related risks remaining at extreme or high levels on the Corporate Risk Register. These pressures continue to present challenges to service sustainability, access and workforce resilience.
- Ongoing operational pressures associated with demand, patient flow, delayed discharge and unscheduled care capacity continue to place strain on services and remain a significant area of strategic risk.
- Financial pressures remain significant, including the requirement to deliver substantial savings whilst maintaining safe services and achieving statutory financial duties. The Trust continues to face a material risk associated with delivery of a break-even position.
- Cyber security, digital resilience and infrastructure investment remain key areas of concern in light of continuing cyber threats, ageing infrastructure and ongoing technical debt.
- Estates, infrastructure and statutory compliance risks, including backlog maintenance, fire safety and infection prevention and control requirements, continue to require active oversight through the Trust's governance and assurance framework.

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

Financial Impact		Safety and Quality Impact	
No, there are no Financial Impacts <i>(There is no direct financial impact arising from approval of this update. The Board Assurance Framework reflects strategic risks, including financial sustainability risks, already recorded and managed through the Corporate Risk Register.)</i>		No, there are no Quality, Safety or Experience Impacts <i>(There is no direct safety or quality impact arising from approval of this update. The Board Assurance Framework provides oversight of strategic risks that may impact upon quality, safety and the experience of service users.)</i>	
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.			
Corporate Risk Register	The Board Assurance Framework is informed by and aligned to the Corporate Risk Register, providing Board-level oversight of the principal risks that may impact delivery of the Trust's strategic objectives.		
Board Assurance Framework	N/A		
Equality and Human Rights	N/A		

Trust Board Role Fulfilment

Strategy	<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>
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Culture	<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 engagement, or initiatives intended to reinforce our organisational ethos.</i>
Accountability	<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

Approval	<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>
Assurance	<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>
Information	<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>
Discussion	<i>Used when an item is listed primarily for open discussion, brainstorming or gathering input from the members without requiring an immediate decision.</i>