

**Minutes of a Virtual Trust Board meeting held on
Thursday, 28th October 2021 at 10.15 a.m.**

PRESENT

Ms E Mullan, Chair
Mr S Devlin, Chief Executive
Ms G Donaghy, Non-Executive Director
Mrs P Leeson, Non-Executive Director
Mrs H McCartan, Non-Executive Director
Mr M McDonald, Non-Executive Director
Mr J Wilkinson, Non-Executive Director
Mr C McCafferty, Interim Director of Children and Young People's Services
/Executive Director of Social Work
Dr M O'Kane, Medical Director / Interim Director of Mental Health and
Learning Disability Services
Ms C Teggart, Director of Finance, Procurement and Estates
Mrs H Trouton, Executive Director of Nursing, Midwifery & Allied Health
Professionals

IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs A Magwood, Director of Performance and Reform
Mr B Beattie, Interim Director of Older People and Primary Care
Mrs M McClements, Director of Acute Services
Mrs V Toal, Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development
Mrs J McKimm, Head of Communications
Mrs R Rogers, Head of Communications
Mrs S McKinney, Boardroom Apprentice
Mrs S Judt, Board Assurance Manager
Mrs S McCormick, Committee Secretary (*Minutes*)

APOLOGIES

None.

1. CHAIR'S WELCOME

The Chair welcomed everyone to the virtual meeting including Mrs Susan McKinney, Boardroom Apprentice 2021. At this point, the

Chair particularly welcomed five members of Trust staff from the Mental Health and Disability Services Directorate and stated that she would appreciate their feedback in terms of what they will learn at today's meeting and how they take this learning back to their colleagues. Regular public attendees were also welcomed to the meeting.

The Chair reminded everyone regarding some aspects of virtual meeting etiquette and the business of the meeting proceeded.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The Chair asked members to declare any potential conflicts of interest in relation to any matters on the agenda. None were declared.

3. SERVICE IMPROVEMENT/LEARNING FROM SERVICE USER EXPERIENCE

'Voice of the Patient'

At the outset, the Chair advised circumstances had not permitted the 'Voice of the Patient' item to proceed as planned, however Mrs Trouton would share a number of experiences that have come through 'Care Opinion' and also provide background to the tool and its functionality within the Southern Trust. The Chair stated she had raised with a number of colleagues, her thoughts on how the Patient and Client Experience Committee, with the support of the Patient Client Council, can enable patients and their families to share their personal journeys with the Trust into the future.

Mrs Trouton provided an overview of Care Opinion with a focus on the recent pilot that commenced in June 2021 within the Acute Wards and now moving out to other areas. The aim of the pilot is to seek real-time feedback from patients and to address any concerns they have prior to discharge. To date, there have been 1328 participants in the scheme and members noted the emerging themes, along with the changes planned or already implemented to improve the patient experience. Mrs McClements provided assurance that all learning is being taken on board and staff are working hard to address any issues.

At this point Ms White, Royal College of Nursing Rep added to the positive feedback referred to in the presentation and put on record her sincere personal thanks to staff across various departments for the exceptional care she along with other family members have received.

Members welcomed the presentation and on reflection, the Chief Executive stated that from inception, Care Opinion had been about capturing the voice of the patient, but also about giving a voice to the patient/client to enable the Trust to make improvements. Mrs Magwood commended the work from a Quality Improvement perspective and stated as the organisation works to improve services, the approach taken in bringing in the patient experience at an early stage is very welcome. She added that whilst standards are essential from a Clinical Governance perspective it is important that data that drives improvement from an experience point of view is fully optimised.

Mr Wilkinson added that the Patient and Client Experience Committee have been privileged to follow the tool from its inception and pointed out it is only one of the ways feedback can be gleaned from service users and clients. He stated that this first hand real time feedback and learning is critical to inform the journey of improved service delivery and highlighted a helpful pilot with Junior Medics which has yielded valuable learning in terms of their relationship skills with patients.

Mrs McCartan asked if this was an electronic bespoke package. Mrs Trouton explained the online system can be accessed by anyone through an app enabling them to upload service user feedback at any time and can also be utilised as a data analysis tool by staff prior to patients leaving hospital. Mrs McCartan welcomed the positive assurance provided in terms of seeking to provide safe quality care. Mrs Toal advised this exceptional tool has reinforced the staff recognition theme alluded to at the Board Workshop in September. She welcomed the valuable information available to assist with the development of the People Plan and drive this from an improvement and training point of view, as well as staff recognition.

In conclusion, the Chair thanked Mrs Trouton for the informative presentation and asked that work would continue on looking at ways to create a safe space for patients and service users to share their real life experiences.

4. CHAIR'S REMARKS

The Chair spoke of the sustained pressure across the health and social care system which continues to increase on a daily basis and shared some statistics on attendances and admissions across the Southern Trust over the four week period since 30th September 2021. She asked all present to be mindful of the ongoing pandemic situation and emphasised the importance of the public knowing the plans for the

months ahead and what measures are being taken to protect them. To that end the Chair welcomed recent publications/announcements regarding Autumn/Winter surge planning, along with the £230m funding reallocation to the Department of Health (DoH). She also commended the rolling out of the booster and flu vaccination, along with all measures that prevent the spread of Covid 19 and was delighted to record a special recognition award had been given to all Southern Trust staff by the Newry Chamber of Commerce, as thanks to all Health Care staff for the vital role they have played in helping to care for citizens across the locality.

5. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S EMERGING ISSUES

The Chief Executive informed members of a number of emerging issues.

– Surgical services in the Southern Trust

Work is progressing regionally and locally to develop plans for surgical services in Northern Ireland. The Trust is currently looking at a change in model and will undertake a consultation process for any changes required. The Chief Executive advised that updates will be provided to Trust Board.

Action – Chief Executive

Ms Donaghy raised the workforce issues amongst Doctors and asked how optimistic the Trust was in terms of being able to secure additional surgeons for this area and also the plan to carry out more integrated work on a regional basis. In responding the Chief Executive stated that the recruitment and retention challenge facing surgical services is an issue for all Trusts and the Trust is involved, along with the other Trusts, in regional discussions to develop plans for surgical services. Mrs McClements advised that recruitment to general surgery has been progressing, however to date no appointments have been made and she alluded to the need to reconfigure these posts in keeping with surgical career pathways and training perspectives. The Trust is currently optimising its own surgical pool to make best use of the current resources and in terms of recruitment, promoting the Southern Trust as an attractive employer of choice. Dr O'Kane concurred and added that as a result of the pandemic, general surgery has become a disincentive for trainees, along with an unattractive Work Life Balance for staff. She emphasised the surgical team was keen to promote improved efficiency, making sure waiting times are positively impacted and perusing ways of optimising the working capacity and attracting staff into the Organisation because they

will see this has a significant training opportunity. All forms of virtual training have been exploited throughout the pandemic; however it is imperative that trainees and surgeons themselves get hands on experience to avoid deskilling, which is becoming an increasing concern across the region. Ms Donaghy welcomed the matter was being progressed both locally and regionally.

– **Winter Planning**

Members were reminded about a number of significant challenges including longer patient waiting times and staff burnout along with major capacity gaps across all Trusts. Major Service decisions will be required over the winter period and these will be communicated through Trust Board appropriately.

– **New Planning Model**

In light of the future HSCB closure, discussions are underway with regards to the Future Planning Model. The recently consulted model outlines a move towards a greater Integrated Care System (ICS). A regional consultation has taken place. Members were advised Trust Chief Executives will meet Department of Health Officials in November 2021 with regards to how health and social care will be planned and delivered in the future.

– **Senior Management Structures**

The Chief Executive presented the outcome of Senior Management Team engagement on internal restructuring. The new structure comprises a Deputy Chief Executive and six corporate Directorates. Members asked a number of questions in relation to recruitment to these posts and the 3 current vacant posts at Senior Executive level to which the Chief Executive responded.

The Chair requested Item 8, would be taken next on the agenda.

STRATEGY

8. TRUST SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN INCLUDING RESILIENCE PLAN TO ADDRESS WINTER PRESSURES AND ANY SUBSEQUENT WAVES OF COVID19 PANDEMIC OCTOBER 2021 – MARCH 2022

The Chair introduced the item and emphasised the importance of Trust staff and the Southern population understanding the measures and plans in place in light of the challenges ahead over the next 4-6 month period. The Chief Executive pointed out the document was one of five Resilience Plans for submission to the DoH by Trusts to address predicted Winter pressures. He emphasised how important the document was in light of the enormity of the pressures right across the region.

Mrs Magwood outlined the key elements and stated the document demonstrates service delivery proposals to address the predicted increase in unscheduled care as well as reflecting the ongoing response to the Covid pandemic and the regionally predicted further 'surge'. She asked members to be mindful of the fluidity of the plan as the organisation reacts and responds to operational services as the need arises.

At this point members were referred to page 43, Appendix 1 which outlines the approach the Southern Trust will adopt to address the anticipated challenges, focusing specifically on three key areas:

- Measures to avoid ED attendance/acute hospital admissions
- Optimising Flow - Bed Capacity/Discharge
- Regional Interface and extreme contingency bed 'spaces'

Members considered the detail and Mr McDonald asked if the GP Out of Hours (GP OoH) Service had been ruled out as a potential source in terms of assisting with avoiding admissions/ED attendance. In response, Mrs Magwood pointed out that the detail within the Winter plan is an enhancement or an addition to normal services and reminded members GP OoH works as part of the organisation's core response to avoiding admissions. Mrs Magwood advised she had identified by exception, the areas the Trust is doing something different/more of throughout the Winter period. She stated the ability to enhance the cover already provided at GP OoH has not been included within the plan and explained the rationale for this. Mr McDonald continued by asking if there was evidence to suggest GP OoH could become a more resilient service throughout the winter months to which Mr Beattie confirmed there were early indications of an increased interest from GPs. He referred to the skill mix approach adopted by the Trust in prior years which has been helpful and stated work will continue to build further robustness and reliance within the service.

Mr Wilkinson asked if the Trust was likely to get additional funding to support the resilience plan and in relation to outcomes, what evidence is available to show that these mitigating processes do have an impact. In responding Ms Teggart advised, the Trust has set aside £1.7m of its annual budget allocation for the Winter Plan. She also advised the Trust is awaiting the outcome of a bid for additional funding, lodged as part of the October Monitoring Round, with a further round expected in January 2022. Mrs Magwood assured members the winter period is extensively monitored at Operational level by the Trust SMT and the Trust undertake continual evaluation to assist learning and further decision making year on year. From a regional perspective, outcomes from other Trusts are closely monitored and a regional group analyses information. Learning is shared regionally throughout the winter period.

At this point Mrs Magwood referred to a number of pressures including Acute Hospital Bed Capacity and uncertainty in the financial context. Members noted the potential impact on the Trust's ability to deliver against plans. Mrs Magwood assured members that mitigation factors have been put in place and the Trust is currently involved in regional modelling, however the support of the local Community and Political representatives is required to assist in getting through the winter period.

Ms Donaghy referred to the gap in Acute beds and asked if decisions required on thresholds for admission/discharge would require regional agreement. Mrs Magwood assured members that all alternative pathways are explored and welcomed the work of the Acute Care at Home Team, providing hospital level care at home. Dr O'Kane added there was evidence of robust decision making by clinical teams which has assisted in favourable conversion rates.

The Chair recorded appreciation for the comprehensive overview and mitigations in place to assist the Trust and regional counterparts through the challenging winter period.

6. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 30TH SEPTEMBER 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 30th September 2021 were agreed as an accurate record and duly signed by the Chair.

The Board approved the minutes of the meeting held on 30th September 2021.

7. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Members noted the progress update from the relevant Directors to issues raised at the previous meeting.

CULTURE

9. PEOPLE PLAN

The Chair welcomed Mrs Toal and Mrs Williamson to present the work to date on the strategy document 'Our People 2021-2024' and members were reminded this will be one part of a fully integrated set of three strategic documents; Corporate Plan; Safety, Quality & Experience and Our People.

At the outset, Mrs Toal referred to the recent Board workshop convened in September 2021 which had been very productive in feeding into the thinking behind the strategy, with the document's principle outcome being 'A framework for transforming our workplace..... transforming our care'.

Mrs Toal and Mrs Williamson outlined the purpose and key components of the plan advising that the next 5 months would be used to engage with the workforce on the content of the framework and build awareness and understanding, to create the connections and conditions to enable our people to come forward in active support of its implementation and to agree key areas of focus across each directorate. Members noted a formal launch of the published framework is expected in April 2022.

Discussion ensued and members welcomed the ethos of the plan and the priorities, 'Wellbeing, Belonging and Growing' being key to creating the culture the organisation is striving to achieve. In particular members reflected on the importance of dealing with behaviour inconsistent with Trust values. Whilst challenges were acknowledged, there was an emphasis on the need to empower staff to embrace the movement to cultural change through listening and support. It was stated the plan should be permeated with actions and suggestion made that it may be beneficial to look at a model creating a network of staff working as cultural champions and first leaders.

As regards next steps, Mrs Toal emphasised the vital role leaders within the organisation have to play and stated the next 5 months will be crucial

in terms of engaging with this cohort and Directorate teams will be working to develop their people priorities.

In conclusion, the Chair thanked both Mrs Toal and Mrs Williamson for the informative presentation and good progress to date. She invited members to consider both individually and what the Trust Board collectively can do to be 'the first followers' in making this a lasting change. The Chair requested all responses to be forwarded by 3rd December 2021.

Action – Chair

10. TRUST ANNUAL QUALITY REPORT (ST1077/21)

Mrs Magwood presented the Trust's Annual Quality Report for approval and reminded members the document is published in response to the DoH's Quality 2020 Strategy. She stated the report provides an overview of the 2020/21 year with respect to how the Trust performed against a range of core indicators of quality and includes some examples of improvements led by staff. The report also outlines how the Trust responded to the Covid19 pandemic, detailing service changes and workforce mobility and resilience during a significantly challenging period. Members noted across the region, all Trusts publish their Annual Quality Report to coincide with World Quality Day on 11th November 2021. The Chief Executive commended the detail within the document and stated it clearly reflected the excellent flavour of services staff deliver across the Southern locality.

In conclusion, Mrs Magwood advised the Southern Trust Connect App has been shortlisted as part of the 'Belfast Telegraph' I.T. Awards taking place on 5th November 2021 and she commended the work undertaken by both Trust Human Resources and Organisational Development and I.T. teams on the project.

The Board approved the Trust Annual Quality Report 2020/21 (ST1077/21)

Dr O'Kane left the meeting at this point.

ACCOUNTABILITY

11. PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

- **Committee Chair Report from 2nd September 2021**

Mrs Leeson presented her Committee Chair Report from the meeting held on 2nd September 2021.

- **Committee Annual Report 2020/21 (ST1078/21)**

Mrs Leeson presented the Committee Annual Report 2020/21 for approval.

The Board approved the Committee Annual Report 2020/21 (ST1078/21)

- **Revised Terms of Reference (ST1079/21)**

Mrs Leeson presented the Committee Terms of Reference for approval.

The Board approved the Committee Terms of Reference (ST1079/21)

12. GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

- **Committee Chair Report from 9th September 2021**

Ms Mullan presented her Committee Chair Report from the meeting held on 9th September 2021.

- **Minutes of meeting held on 13th May 2021**

Ms Mullan presented the minutes of the Governance Committee meeting for information purposes.

13. PATIENT & CLIENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

- **Committee Chair Report from 16th September 2021**

Mr Wilkinson presented his Committee Chair Report from the meeting held on 16th September 2021.

- **Minutes of meeting held on 17th June 2021**

Mr Wilkinson presented the minutes of the Patient and Client Experience Committee meeting for information purposes.

- **Committee Annual Report 2020/21 (ST1080/21)**
Mr Wilkinson presented the Committee Annual Report 2020/21 for approval.

The Board approved the Patient & Client Experience Committee Annual Report (ST1080/21)

14. ENDOWMENTS & GIFTS COMMITTEE

- **Committee Chair Report from 4th October 2021**
Ms Donaghy presented her Committee Chair Report from the meeting held on 4th October 2021.
- **Minutes of meeting held on 15th June 2021**
Ms Donaghy presented the minutes of the Endowments and Gifts Committee meeting for information purposes.
- **Committee Work Programme 2022 (ST1081/21)**
Ms Donaghy presented the Committee Work Programme 2022 for approval.

The Board approved the Committee Work Programme 2022 (ST1081/21)

15. AUDIT COMMITTEE

- **Committee Chair Report from 14th October 2021**
Mrs McCartan presented her Committee Chair Report from the meeting held on 14th October 2021.
- **Minutes of meeting held on 15th June 2021**
Mrs McCartan presented the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting for information purposes.
- **Committee Work Programme 2022 (ST1082/21)**
Mrs McCartan presented the Committee Work Programme 2022 for approval.

The Board approved the Committee Work Programme 2022 (ST1082/21)

16. REPORT TO THOSE CHARGED WITH GOVERNANCE 2020/21

Members discussed the final report as presented to the Audit Committee on 14th October 2021.

Ms Teggart pointed out the audit had raised four Priority 2 and four Priority 3 recommendations all of which are being progressed or are fully implemented at this point. She referred to the accrual in relation to holiday pay and advised Trust's still await direction from the DoH on the matter. Mrs McCartan advised that as Chair of the Audit Committee she had requested a paper be prepared for the meeting scheduled for February 2022 in advance of year end preparation work.

17. APPLICATION OF TRUST SEAL (ST1083/21)

Ms Teggart sought approval for the Application of the Trust Seal to contract documentation as outlined in members' papers.

The Board approved the Application of the Trust Seal (ST1083/21)

18. MID-YEAR ASSURANCE REPORT

Ms Teggart presented the draft Mid-Year Assurance Statement for information and stated the document had also been reviewed by the Audit Committee on 14th October 2021. She reminded members that the DoH continue to pause a number of key governance activities including the Mid-Year Assurance Statement; therefore there is no requirement to formally submit to the Department, however the Trust continue the progress internally.

19. CHAIR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS AND VISITS INCLUDING NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS' BUSINESS AND VISITS

The Chair drew members' attention to the written report detailing events the Trust Chair and Chief Executive had attended since the previous meeting, together with details of some good news stories and innovative work across the Trust. A list of Non-Executive Directors' business and visits was also noted.

20. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair asked the Executive Directors of Medicine, Social Work, Nursing and Finance if there were any other issues relating to their

professional roles they wished to bring to the Board's attention. There were none noted.

At this point, in response to the Chair's request for feedback on the meeting, Mr Entee stated that it had been a positive experience to hear about the breadth of items discussed by the Board and he particularly welcomed the focus on patient care and the appreciation of staff by Trust Board members. He asked about community and voluntary sector reporting to Trust Board to which the Chair advised that the Trust Board has an annual cycle of reporting in place which covers information from a range of areas and welcomed Mr Entee to attend a future meeting to hear more.

In conclusion, the Chair recorded thanks to everyone for their attendance and participation in the virtual meeting and advised the next meeting would take place on Thursday, 27th January 2022 at 9.45 a.m.

The meeting concluded at 1.30pm

SIGNED: _____

DATED: _____