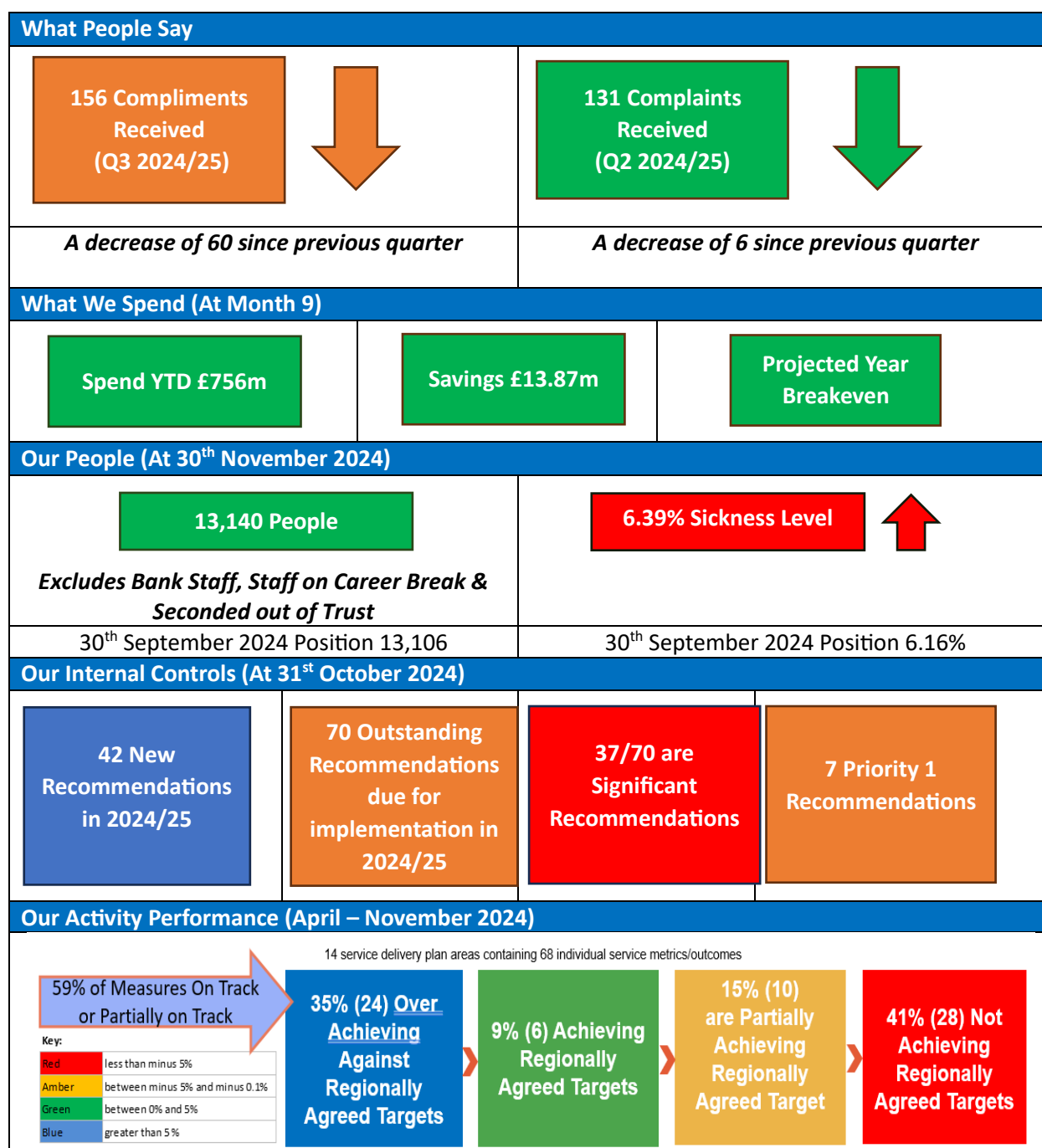


Chief Executive Update

Trust Board

Thursday 30 January 2025

1.0 Trust Key Metrics



2.0 Chief Executive resignation

2.1 The Southern Health and Social Care Trust's Chief Executive, Dr Maria O'Kane resigned from her role on 31 December 2024 with immediate effect to pursue other career opportunities.

2.2 Colm McCafferty, The Trust's Executive Director for Social Work and Director of Children and Young People has assumed Acting Chief Executive role.

3.0 Winter pressures

- 3.1 The health and social care system continues to experience severe pressure on services.
- 3.2 An emergency meeting involving the Health Committee, health minister and health officials took place on 7 January. Mr Nesbitt told the Committee that patients facing long waits in hospital emergency departments were often having to “surrender their dignity and privacy” and said staff were facing “moral injury”.
- 3.3 The Minister confirmed that the number of people admitted to hospital with flu in Northern Ireland this winter is 3.6 times higher than the previous year.
- 3.4 Multiple NHS hospitals in England declared critical incidents in early January due to rising demand from winter illnesses and the impact of recent severe weather.

4.0 Trust Internal Controls

- 4.1 The Trust commenced this year with 243 BSO internal audit recommendations as due for implementation in 2024/25. 105 of these were carried forward from 2023/24. Currently the Trust has 70 recommendations remaining to implement prior to 31 March 2025, of which 37 are deemed significant and 7 of which are Priority one.
- 4.2 The priority one recommendations relate to reports regarding Payments to staff 22-23; Management of Endoscopy Waiting Lists 23-24; Non Pay Expenditure 23-24; Payments to Medical Staff and Management of Job Planning 23-24 ;Budgetary Control and Financial Stability and Business Continuity 23-24
- 4.3 The operates an Internal Audit Forum continues to meet monthly to oversee progress with Directorate representatives and significant Trust and Internal Audit resource remains focused on this area.
- 4.4 The Trust has already 50 recommendations due in 2025/26 or beyond from existing audit reports. This number will significantly increase with the finalisation of all the Internal Audit reports for 24/25 through ARAC over the forthcoming months to give the opening position for 2025/26.

5.0 Cervical Cytology Review reports published

- 5.1 The Cervical Cytology Review (CCR) is complete, and two key reports were published in December by the Southern HSC Trust (SHSCT) and Public Health Agency (PHA). The first report details findings from the review and the second report focuses on cervical cancers in the Southern Trust Area and across Northern Ireland.
- 5.2 The vast majority of previous smear results have been reconfirmed as normal, the review has identified eleven women who are now receiving follow up care from gynaecology services.

5.3 The findings set out in both reports will now be the subject of independent expert analysis commissioned by the Department of Health (DoH). This analysis to be completed in the New Year, after which the Health Minister will decide on any appropriate next steps.

5.4 Representatives from SHSCT, PHA and the Department of Health (DoH) attended a Health Committee meeting on 23 January to provide an update on the Cervical Cytology Review.

6.0 Pay Settlement

6.1 In December, the Health Minister confirmed that a pay rise of 5.5% would match offers given to healthcare workers in England and Wales.

6.2 The payment will be made in two separate instalments, with health workers expecting at least 10 months of back pay to June 2024.

6.3 The pay offer has been welcomed by most of Northern Ireland's health unions. The union NIPSA said it would not be accepting the offer in its current form as it is committed to securing a guarantee of 12 months back pay.

7.0 Three year health and social care strategic plan

7.1 A new three-year strategic plan for health and social care was published by Health Minister in December. The plan involves a wide range of initiatives based on three central themes - Stabilisation, Reform and Delivery.

7.2 The three-year plan sets out a series of initiatives to improve healthy living, primary care, hospital care, social care, productivity and patient safety, while tackling health inequalities. This includes challenging Health and Social Care Trusts to deliver 46,000 additional outpatient assessments and 11,000 additional treatments annually by 2027.

7.3 The newly published document should be read alongside the recently published framework 'Hospitals – Creating a Network for Better Outcomes' which sets out the basis for decisions on reconfiguring hospital services. It also complements existing strategies, frameworks and reviews spanning health and social care provision including elective care, cancer care, mental health, urgent and emergency care, adult social care and community pharmacy.

8.0 Hospital Network consultation extended

8.1 The Health Minister announced an extension to the closing date of the consultation on the reconfiguration framework for hospitals, to allow additional time for the public to engage in the consultation process.

8.2 The consultation, "Hospitals – Creating a Network for Better Outcomes", was launched on 2 October and will now run until 28 February 2025. It was previously due to close on 19 February.

8.3 In-person events have been confirmed for the 5 Trusts to provide information about the proposals, answer questions from the public, and encourage participation in the consultation process. SHSCT Hospital Network Consultation Event will take place on 18 February 2025 in Armagh City Hotel commencing at 7pm.

9.0 Ten-year Social Care Workforce Strategy

9.1 The Health Minister has published a plan to develop a sustainable social care workforce over the next decade.

9.2 The Social Care Workforce Strategy 2025-2035 details how the Health & Social Care system will attract, grow, retain and develop the social care workforce – the largest in the HSC sector with more than 40,500 practitioners.

9.3 The purpose of the strategy is to ensure that N. Ireland has a social care workforce that is well trained, adequately resourced and supported to deliver high quality care to those in need.

9.4 Some actions have already commenced, including the development of the Care in Practice Framework (CIP). It sets out career progression and learning pathways for new and experienced social care practitioners and was developed by the NI Social Care Council in partnership with the Department of Health.

10.0 Consultation on ‘Being Open’ Framework and Duty of Candour

10.1 The Department of Health has launched a public consultation asking for views on the draft ‘Being Open’ Framework and the establishment of a Duty of Candour in Northern Ireland.

10.2 The Framework aims to address some of the recommendations made in the 2018 report from the Inquiry into Hyponatraemia Related Deaths (IHRD) by Justice O’Hara KC, which made a number of recommendations around the Duty of Candour.

10.3 It has been developed involving statutory and voluntary and community stakeholders, as well as service users, carers, staff from HSC organisations and independent health sector organisations.

10.4 The consultation is open for 14 weeks and closes on 21 March 2025. The consultation documents and details on how to respond are available on the DOH website at <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/consultations/being-open-framework-consultation>

11.0 Domiciliary Care Services for Adults in Northern Ireland

11.1 The Department of Health published The Domiciliary Care Services for Adults in Northern Ireland (2024) bulletin on the numbers of clients receiving domiciliary care, contact hours, domiciliary care visits and intensive domiciliary care provision.

11.2 The publication is based on the domiciliary care survey week 8 to 14 September 2024. This publication does not include data for 2024 from Belfast or South

Eastern HSC Trusts due to their transition to Encompass from 9th November 2023.

11.3 Northern, Southern and Western HSC Trusts provided domiciliary care services for 14,033 clients, compared to 13,577 in 2023. SHSCT provided domiciliary care services for 4781 clients in 2024, compared to 4637 in 2023.

11.4 345,927 domiciliary care visits were provided to clients from the Northern, Southern and Western HSC Trusts. Compared to 2023 this was an increase of 3.4% (11,239). 104,544 domiciliary care visits were provided to SHSCT clients in 2024.

11.5 Compared to the contact hours of domiciliary care provided by the Northern, Southern and Western HSC Trusts in 2023 (154,421), the 2024 figure of 158,865 (61,082 provided by SHSCT) represents an increase of 2.9% (4,444).

12.0 Plan to reduce hospital waiting lists in England

12.1 Sir Keir Starmer, Prime Minister has announced plans to help reduce hospital waiting lists in England.

12.2 More NHS hubs will be set up in community locations and there will be greater use of the private sector. He also promised patients more choice over where they are treated.

12.3 Sir Keir said his plans would reduce the number of long waits by half a million over the next year. Doctors' leaders welcomed the plan but expressed concern over whether there were enough staff to achieve the goals being set.

12.4 The overall waiting list for NHS appointments, procedures, and surgeries in England stands at just under 7.5 million.