

Finance, Performance and Workforce (FPW) Committee Committee Chair Report for Meeting on 13th March 2025

The FPW Committee met on 13th March 2025. The formal record of the meeting remains the approved minutes.

1. Summary of areas considered

A. Unallocated Childcare Cases Report

The Committee acknowledged the current pressures and high referral activity into the service. As at 31 January 2025, the number of weekly unallocated cases stood at 256 (down from 306 in December 24). Whilst the number of Unallocated Disability Cases (180) remains high many are known to Autism Services and have active involvement / intervention plans.

There remains a small number of unallocated children in care cases, totalling 40 children, from an overall population of c.691 children. These cases are identified as being low risk and in settled long term foster placements.

The operational challenges continue, including the availability and recruitment of social workers across CYPS (particularly within the Family Intervention, Gateway Service and Looked After Children's Teams), inadequate regional workforce supply and increasing demand for services. Members noted the assurances from the Acting Director in relation to the mitigations in place across all teams to reduce risk and strengthen systems of governance including the proactive monitoring and prioritisation of Unallocated Gateway Cases. The Committee was also pleased to note that there are no unallocated Child Protection Cases.

B. Finance Reporting – Month 10

Members noted the key points from the Director's presentation on the Month 10 Finance Report (January 2025) including:

- The Trust is reporting a Month 10 surplus of £310k.
- It continues to forecast a year end break-even position.
- The Medicine and Unscheduled Care Directorate continues to overspend due to additional beds, including those agreed for Daisy Hill Hospital and 2 South. This overspend is being mitigated by underspends elsewhere.

- It is expected that underlying expenditure trends remain stable and within control totals and that the full £22m Low/Medium Impact savings plans will be achieved due to the continued positive movement in savings targets reported at Month 10, in particular the overachievement in Nursing saving target.
- The Trust is on target to spend its total capital allocation of £33m by year-end.
- The Trust's Prompt Payment Target is set at 95% of its suppliers paid within 30 days. It achieved 94.5% in January 25 and it is anticipated that the full year target will be achieved.

Committee members remain concerned at the continued overspend in Medicine & Unscheduled Care due to non-achievement of the medical agency target and increased medical pay costs including the unfunded uncommissioned beds.

The Trust is currently undertaking a detailed mapping of where medical locums are deployed. This medical locum spend project will remain a priority moving into 2025/26. A new approach to this challenge is currently being progressed with a dedicated project manager under the RISE programme. The Committee agreed to provide an update on the medical locum project at next meeting.

C. Regional Support for Financial Recovery – Critical Friend Final Report

Whilst no major risks or concerns were identified for the Southern Trust, a number of recommendations were made to further strengthen our financial controls. All the Trusts have agreed to share their reports. There has been no feedback to date from SPPG or the Department. Following consideration by SLT and the FPW Committee, an action plan will be prepared.

D. Draft Financial Plan 2025/26

The Trust has produced an indicative budget plan based on SPPG's indicative budget allocation. The Trust's financial position going into 25/26 financial year is an overall deficit of **£46.5m**.

The draft financial plan provides for the delivery of savings of **£27.9m** in 2025-26, which will have the least impact on patient safety and service delivery. Of the savings delivered in 2024-25, **£18.3m** are deemed repeatable. The Trust has also identified further low/medium non/recurrent recovery measures in 2025-26 of **£9.673m**. Two workshops were held in February to determine measures, further savings of £4m is still being worked through to achieve the financial plan in 2025-26.

The Trust has in place robust monitoring process with strong financial controls through the RISE Programme which will continue in 2025-26. There are now limited options to achieve further low/medium impact savings in 2025-26. One

of the anticipated savings will be from a reduction in the costs of the Urology Services Inquiry.

The Committee remains concerned that if the Trust is to find further savings to cover the remaining deficit of **£46.5m** (ie. which is net of £27.9m savings generated), this will require the implementation of a range of high/catastrophic measures that would result in a fundamental reduction and changes to service delivery and immediate detrimental impact on the safety of service provision. The Committee awaits feedback from SPPG/Department on the Trust's financial plan.

E. The Reform, Improvement, Savings and Efficiencies Programme.

The Committee commended the work undertaken by the RISE team in 2024-25. The programme has provided the required structured focus and support necessary to ensure that savings plans were identified, monitored and appropriate mitigation steps put in place to facilitate operational delivery.

The main area of underachievement continues to be within Medical bank and agency spend and a range of plans are in place to reduce the level of this negative impact.

F. Medicine & Unscheduled Care 2023/24 Financial Overspend Review

The Committee welcomed the Review with its identified areas for improvement. It was noted that the middle grade tier of doctors within the Emergency Department is largely unfunded and there are also significant gaps within the MUSC medical staffing.

G. SHSCT Financial Management and Oversight, Learning and Missed Opportunities Review

Members welcomed the progress made.

- 94% of the actions are completed, three recommendations remain to be implemented by 31 March 2025.
- Internal Audit recently completed a follow up audit on Budgetary Control and reported an improved position with a Satisfactory Assurance provided with no recommendations.

H. Service Delivery Plan (SDP) Performance

It was noted that the Trust is now measuring against 60 metrics (in this period) with discussions ongoing with PHA around HCAI targets. Based on the Trust's measure of performance against the 60 metrics, 52% of the SDP measures are 'on track or partially on track'

With regards to SPPG RAG assessment, 17 out of 23 indicators RAG rated red for SHSCT were deemed unacceptable by SPPG in Quarter 3, 12 of which are linked to unscheduled care and the Timely Care project. The areas noted were similar to the other Trusts.

A regional position is not available for 33 metrics for a range of reasons and this means it is increasingly difficult to provide a meaningful assessment of performance at a regional level. Issues in relation to data flow and data quality from the Encompass system (in use in three Trusts) has resulted in gaps in SDP reporting.

The Committee recognises that the Encompass rollout may have an impact on the Trust's own performance reporting going forward.

I. Update on The Strategic Outcomes Framework (SOF) and System Oversight Measures (SOM)

The SPPG wishes to gain assurance from the Trusts regarding the delivery of the strategic priorities and outcomes set out in the SOFs and SOMs, ensuring they underpin strategic and operational plans for FY24/25 and FY25/26. This will be closely aligned to other mechanisms to hold Trusts to account, including sponsorship and the HSC Support and Intervention Framework.

The Trust's response to the Strategic Outcomes Framework (SOF) and System Oversight Measures (SOM) was approved by Trust Board on 30th January 2025.

Reporting on SOMs is to commence on 1st April 2025, noting the challenges in the Trust in relation to Quarter 1 reporting as a result of Encompass Go Live on 8th May 2025. Once clarity is received from SPPG and the arrangements for the SOF/SOM monitoring and reporting arrangements finalised, a paper will be presented to Trust Board outlining the Trust's internal governance arrangements.

J. Support and Intervention Framework

The planned reporting arrangements are as follows:

The FPW Committee will be regularly sighted on any Level 4 or 5 item and receive a 'deep dive' at every meeting until the area is de-escalated. These areas will be escalated to Trust Board.

The FPW Committee will be regularly sighted on any Level 3 item and will receive a 'deep dive' on performance within these areas as agreed. The

Committee will then be in a position to escalate the issue to the Board by exception.

A summary report will be provided at each Trust Board meeting in relation to all of the areas on the SIF with Level 1, 2 and 3 areas reported in detail at confidential Trust Board only.

K. Workforce Reporting

Workforce reporting will recommence at the next committee meeting once the Encompass implementation has taken place.

2. Issues for escalation to Trust Board

None for escalation

3. Action(s) requested / required of Trust Board

- Note the areas considered
- Note the previous minutes of the FPW Committee meetings held on 28th November 2024 and 13th March 2025
- Note the Committee Work Programme 2025

Alastair Hughes

Non-Executive Director, on behalf of the Finance, Performance and Workforce Committee.

25th March 2025