

**Minutes of One Hundredth and Twenty Eighth Trust Board held on Thursday
26th March 2020 at 10:00am, Boardroom, Trust Headquarters, Bretten Hall,
Antrim**

Held via Teleconference for Non-Executive Directors

Present:

Mr Robert McCann	Chairman
Dr Tony Stevens	Chief Executive
Mr Owen Harkin	Executive Director of Finance
Mr Seamus O'Reilly	Executive Director of Medicine
Mr Gerard McGivern	Non-Executive Director
Mr Paul Corrigan	Non-Executive Director
Mrs Geraldine McGahey	Non-Executive Director
Mr Jim McCall	Non-Executive Director
Mr Glenn Houston	Non-Executive Director
Mr Billy Graham	Non-Executive Director

In attendance:

Mrs Jennifer Welsh	Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Operations
Mrs Karen O'Kane	Executive Office Manager
Mrs Claire Nevin	Boardroom Apprentice

- TB21/20 Apologies**
There were no apologies received.
- TB22/20 Conflicts of Interest/Declarations of Interest**
There were no conflicts of interest declared.
- TB23/20 Minutes of meeting held on 23rd January 2020**
The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting
- TB24/20 Matters Arising**
There were no matters arising requiring discussion.
- TB25/20 Performance Report as at 29th February 2020**
Mr McCann advised that the Performance Report was being taken as read. He made reference to a query raised by Mr Graham on a serious adverse incident that had occurred in Children's Services. Maura Dargan had provided Mr McCann with an explanation, which he shared with Trust Board members.
- TB26/20 Finance Report as at 29th February 2020**
Mr Harkin began by reporting that finances would not be an



impediment to any preparations needed for dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic and that finance staff would continue to capture spend. The Trust was still projecting break even at year end. In relation to the Audit Committee meeting scheduled, Mr Graham had agreed to stand this down. Mr Harkin provided an update on the potential requirements for the annual accounts process.

TB27/20

Update on Covid-19

Mr O'Reilly began by advising Trust Board members that the situation was fairly complex and fast moving and that Trust staff had done considerable work over the past few weeks. Trust Board members received a wide-ranging and comprehensive brief on the Covid-19 pandemic and the Trust's preparations. The following were the main areas discussed.

Accountability and Structure:

Mrs Welsh outlined the Trust's structure for dealing with the pandemic, including noting that a number of separate workstreams had been developed to focus on areas such as Acute Services, Community Services, Personal Protection Equipment as well as links to the independent sector, General Practice and domiciliary care providers. The Trust was working with General Practice to establish Covid-19 centres, which would be led by primary care staff and supported by the Trust. There are three centres being planned currently – Antrim, Ballymena and Coleraine.

Regional Surge Plan:

Dr Stevens gave a verbal update on the regional surge plans. He noted that the plans could, and would, change on a daily or weekly basis. At this stage it was not yet clear when the peak would occur and what it would look like. Dr Stevens said it was likely that there would be a regional approach on cancer services and other specialities would likely follow suit.

Clinical Ethics:

Mr O'Reilly informed Trust Board that there were several pieces of work ongoing in relation to clinical ethics, in agreement with clinicians. There are many factors that will need to be taken into account to facilitate the necessary discussions with patients and their families. Trust clinicians will require both ethical and legal support. The Trust also has a palliative care work stream both in the hospital and community services which is already providing training. There will be arrangements at both Trust and regional level and Maura Dargan is chairing the local committee, with input from the Directorate of Legal Services, lay members and clinicians with both medical and legal experience.

Mr O'Reilly, in response to a query from Mrs McGahey, provided an assurance that all appropriate guidance would be followed in developing the ethical framework.

Testing:

Trust Board members also received a verbal update on the Trust's arrangements for testing and were informed of the exceptional work carried out by the laboratory staff to have the testing platform up and



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running. The Trust are considering how to increase the number of tests it can carry out and internal guidance would be developed in relation to testing. Mrs Welsh also took the opportunity to explain to Trust Board members, given a number of recent media stories, about the different tests available and their efficacy.

Mr O'Reilly said that at present, in line with current guidance, the Trust was only testing symptomatic patients.

Absence:

Mrs Welsh indicated that a number of Trust staff were symptomatic and were on sick leave, while a larger number were off work to self-isolate. Enhanced absence recording would be in place from 26th March 2020, with a daily update shared with directors.

There was further discussion on the role that volunteers could potentially play and Mrs McEneaney would take this forward. Mrs Welsh commended the support offered from the local community and local businesses and a process has been developed to oversee these.

In relation to the potential impact on nursing homes, Mrs Welsh advised Mr McCall that the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority would be leading on this. Mrs Welsh also outlined work taking place on staff resilience and support, as well as plans to enhance contact for patients and families.

Trust Board members expressed their support for staff and commended the work undertaken to date.

TB28/20

Public Questions

There were no public questions.

TB29/20

Date of Next Meeting

To be confirmed for Thursday 23rd April at 10am.

Mr McCann concluded the meeting by wishing Dr Stevens well in his retirement and that he could not say enough about what Dr Stevens had provided to the Trust.

Dr Stevens thanked Trust Board saying that he had thoroughly enjoyed his time working in the Northern Health & Social Care Trust and with Trust Board members.