

**Minutes of the One Hundredth and Thirty Seventh Trust Board Meeting held on
Thursday 24th June 2021 at 10:00am via Video-conferencing**

Present:

Mr Robert McCann	Chairman
Mrs Jennifer Welsh	Chief Executive
Mr Owen Harkin	Executive Director of Finance/ Deputy Chief Executive
Maura Dargan	Executive Director of Social Work
Mr Seamus O'Reilly	Executive Director of Medicine
Mrs Suzanne Pullins	Interim Director of Nursing and User Experience
Mr Jim McCall	Non-Executive Director
Mr Gerard McGivern	Non-Executive Director
Mr Paul Corrigan	Non-Executive Director

In attendance:

Mrs Jacqui Reid	Interim Director of Human Resources and Head of Office
Mrs Wendy Magowan	Interim Director of Operations
Mr Neil Martin	Interim Divisional Director Strategic Development and Business Services
Mr Roy Hamill	Interim Divisional Director of Community Care
Mrs Briega Donaghy	Interim Divisional Director of Integrated Care
Mrs Margaret O'Hagan	Divisional Director of Surgical and Clinical Services
Mr Nick Carson	Head of Communications
Dr Petra Corr	Interim Director of Mental Health and Learning Disability
Mrs Karen O'Kane	Executive Office Manager
Samantha Stewart	Boardroom Apprentice
Mrs Catherine Cassidy	Assistant Director for Social Care Governance, Workforce Development and Training for item 8.

TB51/21 Apologies

Apologies were received from Glenn Houston, Non-Executive Director, Billy Graham, Non-Executive Director and Audrey Harris, Interim Director of Medicine and Emergency Medicine

TB52/21 Conflicts of Interest/Declarations of Interest



There were no conflicts of interest declared.

TB53/21 Chairman's Report

Mr McCann commenced his report by advising that the Department of Health had issued the HSC Board Members Handbook. This is a very detailed document, which will be an invaluable resource for members. Members were invited to peruse the document and Mr McCann advised that training would be organised in due course.

Mr McCann also noted that the Trust would be taking part in the Boardroom Apprentice Scheme for the fourth year and Ciara Carton would be joining as the new Apprentice in September 2021. Mr Corrigan will again take on the role of Boardroom Buddy for Ms Carton.

Mr McCann reminded Trust Board that the nominations for this year's Chairman's Awards would close at the end of June and that members would be contacted about judging panel membership following this.

Mr McCann concluded by saying that he had recently attended the Medical Awards Night, which was a hybrid virtual/in-person ceremony. He said it had been a good ceremony and it was gratifying to see that Junior Doctors were still committed to improving services for patients, despite the pressures of working through a pandemic.

TB54/21 Chief Executive's Report

Mrs Welsh provided an update on Covid-19 and said that Trust Board would be aware from media coverage of the growing number of cases of the Delta variant, which has now become the dominant variant in Northern Ireland. This has not translated into significant hospitalisation at present and the Trust would hope that this continues to be the case. Mrs Welsh reinforced the importance of vaccination and said the Public Health Agency was working with local councils, and other groups, in relation to further pop-up vaccination clinics. These clinics would be similar to those provided by the Trust, and partner agencies, in the Ballysally area. Mobile vaccination services would also be considered. The Trust



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has also been advised to begin planning for a significant flu season, including Respiratory Syncytial Virus which mainly affects children. National and regional work has already begun on this matter.

The Trust continues to work on its Rebuild plans and the submission for July and August 2021 are now with the Department of Health (DOH).

Mrs Welsh also mentioned the Medical Awards night and the recent launch of the Carer's Week. The purpose of Carer's Week is to enable the voice of carers to be heard and to highlight the useful resources available for carers. Mr Robin Swann, Minister of Health had joined the launch.

TB55/21 Account of Patient Experience

Mr Hamill said he was happy to present feedback from some patients and clients who had submitted their experience through the Care Opinion portal. Mr Hamill then provided a synopsis of three cases involving teams from Ballycastle Homecare and District Nursing, Podiatry Services in Causeway and Mid-Ulster and the Palliative Care Services.

Mr McCann thanked Mr Hamill and asked if the Trust had received submissions that would be critical of Trust services. Mr Hamill responded that on occasions there would be indications of where things could have gone better and opportunities for learning are followed up.

TB56/21 Minutes of Meeting held on 27th May 2021

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed on the proposal of Mr McCall and seconded by Mr McGivern.

TB57/21 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

TB58/21 Delegated Statutory Functions Report



Maura Dargan introduced Catherine Cassidy, Assistant Director, Social Care Governance, Workforce Development and Training, who would be presenting the Delegated Statutory Functions (DSF) Report for approval for submission to the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB). Maura Dargan also thanked Trust Board, for the opportunity to present the DSF Report to them, and her Divisional Director colleagues for their input. She then gave an overview of the report and advised that an accountability meeting has been held with HSCB. Local action plans will be required for those areas with evidenced deficits.

Mrs Cassidy then outlined the action plans required for the following areas: Children's, Mental Health and Older People, Learning Disability, Community Care and Sensory Impairment. Whilst there were measures agreed in relation to Physical Disability, no action plan was needed. In the Acute Services sector, an action plan will be required for the Acquired Brain Injury service.

Mrs Cassidy concluded by saying that HSCB had commended the Trust on leading the way in a number of areas, including on the Mental Capacity Act and on having the lowest number of unallocated cases in the region. It was noted, however, that there would be challenges going into 2021/22 due to changing demographics and Covid-19.

Mr McCall thanked Mrs Cassidy for her presentation and commended the report, given the effects of Covid-19 on services in 2020/21. He asked about the number of unallocated cases. Mrs Cassidy replied that whilst there had been 16 at the end of March 2021, this had increased significantly in the early part of 2021/22 and the Trust's priority was on strengthening front line teams and supporting newly-qualified social workers. She expected that there would be an improvement in the number of unallocated cases going forward.

Mr McCall also asked about the increasing demand for specialist residential accommodation for young people and if a regional solution was being pursued. Maura Dargan responded that discussions continue with DOH, HSCB and other Trusts and that a draft framework is being developed. Mitigation measures are in place but these can, at times, result in financial pressures due to high cost placements.

Maura Dargan and Mrs Cassidy also provided an update on recruitment, including a recent regional campaign, which the Trust took the lead in. In this exercise the Trust had offered out posts to cover 75% of its vacancies. Maura Dargan agreed with Mr McGivern that temporary appointments were a challenge and



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added that social workers could pick and choose where they wish to work. Maura Dargan assured Trust Board that there were strong governance arrangements around unallocated cases and support for staff.

In response to a comment from Mr Corrigan that, as a Non-Executive, he was not convinced that he was assured on an ongoing basis through the integrated assurance framework about all key areas within the DSF Report, Mrs Welsh said this was a fair point and she confirmed that this was an area she and Maura Dargan had discussed in terms of strengthening. Maura Dargan noted that she was reviewing what other Trusts currently do and would consider how best to provide assurance to Trust Board. Mr Corrigan was reassured by this.

Mr McCann referred to the statistics on unaccompanied minors and asked if this was a concern. Mrs Cassidy advised that HSCB lead on this and the issue is more cross-border traffic at present and the numbers had decreased due to Covid-19. This, however, would likely start to increase again and the regional service, managed by Belfast Trust, will require support from the other Trusts.

Trust Board approved the DSF Report.

TB59/21

Performance Report as at 31st May 2021

Mr Martin introduced the Performance Report by commenting that the main areas to be covered would be, Unscheduled Care, Breast Service and Community Rebuild.

Unscheduled Care:

Mr Martin informed Trust Board that in Antrim the numbers attending the Emergency Department (ED) in May 2021 were now higher than the numbers in May 2019, and in June 2021, to 21st June, there had been an 11% increase from June 2019. The Trust had experienced 7 days with over 300 attendances each day. The numbers attending Causeway Hospital are still slightly down on the figures from 2019 but are increasing.

Mrs Magowan told Trust Board that the current situation is not unique to the Northern Trust, all hospitals and Trusts are facing the same pressures, and the reasons for this are multi-factorial. These reasons include, for example, the increase in demand to pre-Covid-19 levels, the need for the system to reset and changes in primary care. Added to this is the public's perception of how Primary Care now works and this may mean more people defaulting to ED. Mrs Magowan also noted that whilst reform work, such as Phone First, is taking place, people still need to come to ED for examination.



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Mrs Magowan is working with the region on an Unscheduled Care Action Plan which is being developed by Sharon Gallagher, Chief Executive, HSCB, and endorsed by the Regional Management Board. This plan is looking at how to make the system more efficient. Mrs Magowan also added that planning was ongoing for what would potentially be a difficult winter period.

Mr McGivern asked if people were attending ED because they cannot access their general practitioners (GP) and if practices were closed. Mrs Magowan replied that as far as the Trust was aware all practices are open and using a system of telephone triage. It was noted that there does seem to be a perception that access to GPs is difficult. Mrs Donaghy added that it had been agreed to share public messages about what primary care are doing in order to counter this perception.

Breast Services:

Mr Martin reported that the performance on the 14 day breast target was 33% in May 2021 but was now sitting around the regional average. The service had struggled across the region in April and May.

Mrs O'Hagan updated Trust Board that there was now an upward trajectory and in June more than 90% of suspected cancers were seen in 14 days in the new triple assessment clinic. Referrals are being triaged by risk and low risk patients are being seen within 4 weeks. The wait for breast surgery is at 8 weeks and a regional process has been agreed for all high priority tumour groups, including breast surgery and 31 patients were seen in 4 weeks. There is still, however, a long waiting list for lower priority breast surgery. Mrs O'Hagan said the Trust was now in a better position due to the hard work of the team and also help received from both the Southern and South Eastern Trusts. Moving forward there will be a regional process for dealing with referrals and surgery.

Rebuilding – Community Nursing:

Mr Hamill began by outlining the pressures on community nursing such as vacant posts and complex referrals. Mr Hamill stated that the team have not had much opportunity for annual leave and that there was now a plan in place to deal with the backlog. Once the plan is actioned, he was hopeful of delivering closer to the baseline agreed for the service. Mr Corrigan queried why there was a dip in the projected figures for the July and August plan. Mr Hamill said this was due to the need for staff to take annual leave and that there was more annual leave to be taken due to staff accumulating and carrying over leave due to the pressures of Covid-19.



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Mr Corrigan asked Maura Dargan about the challenges in health visiting and the absence rate. Maura Dargan advised that some staff had been redeployed but that there were a number of staff who were ill and the service had a reducing staffing complement to begin with.

In relation to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), Maura Dargan reported that the activity in June 2021 was slightly above baseline but was related to a previous recording issue whereby telephone review appointments had not been included pre-Covid-19. This has now been resolved.

Mr McCall alluded to the impact that recruitment and retention of staff was having on performance and asked if there was a recognition of this at a regional level. Both Mrs Pullins and Maura Dargan gave a short update on progress for nursing and social work recruitment respectively. DOH are developing a recruitment strategy for social work and nursing leaders are working hard to increase the number of student nurses. Mrs Pullins also stated that the Trust is undertaking internal efforts to retain staff. Mrs Welsh added that not all Band 5 nurses perform the same job, therefore it can be difficult to run a general recruitment exercise. Mrs Reid concluded the discussion by noting that she was working with DOH on the workforce strategy and Mrs Magowan is looking at the internal workforce planning and strategy.

TB60/21

Finance Report as at 31st May 2021

Mr Harkin informed Trust Board that the Financial Plan submitted in May 2021 had shown an underlying deficit of £68.8million, which consisted of a core deficit of £33.6million and other matters such as Covid-19 costs of approximately £17.7million and £4.3million for the Nightingale facility at Whiteabbey. All indicative spend is under review at present to ensure figures are accurate. The Trust is also working with DOH and HSCB on the funding of these initiatives. Mr Harkin said a regional plan would be issued in due course and this would likely necessitate action to be taken to break-even across the region.

The spend by directorates continues as expected but Mr Harkin reinforced the need for directorates to maintain spend at the current levels. Finance staff will continue to work with divisions to address any concerns. Mr McGivern asked if the Trust had received a savings target yet. Mr Harkin said it had not yet received an indication but a regional target would be identified by DOH and then apportioned out to Trusts. The only target at



present is the MORE Pharmacy savings, which the Trust has been successful in delivering.

TB61/21

Approval of Business Cases

Mr Harkin apologised for the number of business cases being presented but said this was a good news story as the Trust had received additional general capital and for backlog maintenance, etc. The evidence provided by the Trust to DOH had led to this additional funding.

Replacement of Roof Antrim Day Centre

Mr Harkin noted that this case had been presented previously and approved, however it was being re-presented as it now includes asbestos removal costs. The total cost of the business case is £525,000. Mr Corrigan asked why it had taken so long to get this work carried out, given that it had previously been rated as urgent. Mr Harkin said he would double-check the timeline and update Mr Corrigan.

Trust Board approved the business case.

Electrical Infrastructure Upgrade at Antrim Hospital Site

Mr Harkin said the preferred option was option 4 at a cost of £5.74million. A new structure will be built and this also includes enabling works for the Trust's 10-year capital plan. Trust Board were asked to approve the business case for submission to DOH.

Trust Board approved the business case.

Whiteabbey Hospital Low Voltage Infrastructure Works

This business case was part of the backlog maintenance programme and funded by the general capital allocation.

Trust Board approved the business case.

Trust Wide Water Safety Works

This case was also being funded from the general capital allocation. Mr McCann asked if there was any potential risks at present. Mr Harkin said there was not; this work was part of the Trust's backlog maintenance programme.

Trust Board approved the business case.

Asbestos Removal



Mr Harkin referred to the three stages required for asbestos removal in any identified building, analysis, removal and reinstatement. Mr McGivern asked if the Trust carried out a review of all buildings. Mr Harkin explained that the Trust took a risk-based approach through surveys and the asbestos register. There will be further work required but this case covers what can be actioned within the current funding.

Trust Board approved the business case.

Cases in Development

Mr Harkin referred to the paper presented to Trust Board proposing that a small sub-group, consisting of the Chairman, the Chair of Audit Committee and himself, as Director of Finance, have delegated authority to approve a number of business cases currently in development. These cases would require approval before the next scheduled Trust Board meeting in August 2021.

Trust Board approved the proposal.

TB62/21 2020/21 Rural Needs Monitoring Report

Mr Martin informed Trust Board that there was a statutory requirement to submit a monitoring report on rural needs and examine any Trust policies to see if mitigation is required. Mr Martin added that more internal training would take place and a toolkit developed.

The report was approved for submission.

TB63/21 Principal Risk Document

Trust Board noted the Principal Risk Document, which was discussed at the Assurance Committee meeting on 10th June 2021.

TB64/21 Capital Report as at 31st May 2021

Trust Board noted the Capital Report. Mr Martin acknowledged that it was early in the financial year and, at present, the Trust is slightly overcommitted. Progress had also been made in the number of outstanding post project evaluations and Mr Martin was hopeful of further improvement.

Mr McGivern commended staff on the improvement.



TB65/21 Use of the Trust Seal

Trust Board noted the occasions when the Trust Seal was used.

TB66/21 Committee Minutes

Assurance Committee Minutes of 11th March 2021

Trust Board noted the Assurance Committee minutes of 11th March 2021.

TB67/21 Any Other Business

Trust Board were informed that the Minister of Health had published a Recovery Plan for Cancer Services.

Mrs Welsh acknowledged that this was Mrs Donaghy's final Trust Board meeting before she moved onto her new position as Chief Executive of the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority. Mr McCann formally recorded the thanks of Trust Board for Mrs Donaghy's contribution to the Trust during her service.

TB68/21 Public Questions

There were no public questions.

TB69/21 Date of Next Meeting

The next Trust Board meeting will be held on Thursday 26th August 2021 at 10:00am