

**Minutes of the 165th Public Trust Board Meeting
on 27 March 2024 at 9am in the
Boardroom, Non Clinical Support Building, RVH**

Present

Mr Ciaran Mulgrew	Chairman
Mr John Conaghan	Non-Executive Director
Mrs Patricia Gordon	Non-Executive Director
Professor Carmel Hughes	Non-Executive Director
Mr Joe McVey	Non-Executive Director
Mr David Small	Non-Executive Director
Mrs Bernie Owens	Acting Chief Executive
Miss Brenda Creaney	Executive Director Nursing and User Experience (joined the meeting at 0930)
Mrs Maureen Edwards	Executive Director Finance, Estates and Capital Development
Dr George Gardiner	Acting Medical Director
Ms Tracy Reid	Interim Executive Director Social Work

In Attendance:

Mrs Gillian Somerville	Director of Human Resources and Organisational
Mrs Paula Cahalan	Interim Director Child Health and NISTAR, Outpatients, Imaging & Medical Physics
Mrs Heather Jackson	Interim Director Trauma, Orthopaedics, Rehab Services, Maternity, Dental, ENT & Sexual Health
Mr Colin McMullan	Interim Director Adult Community & Older People Services & Allied Health Professionals
Dr Peter Sloan	Interim Director of Mental Health and Intellectual Disability
Ms Kerrylee Weatherall	Interim Director Children's Community Services
Mrs Bronagh Dalzell	Head of Communications
Mr Peter Watson	Head of Office
Miss Judith Payne	Business Support Manager, Minute Taker
Dr John Maxwell	

Apologies:

Prof Catherine Ross	Non-Executive Director
Mr Gordon Smyth	Non-Executive Director
Dr Cathy Jack	Chief Executive
Mr Alastair Campbell	Director Performance, Planning and Informatics

Mrs Patricia Ferguson
Ms Moira Kearney

Operational Director, Encompass
Interim Director of Cancer and Specialist Services

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P20/2024 Chairman's Business

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the 165th meeting of the Belfast Trust Board.

There were no members of the public in attendance.

The Chairman advised the Trust Board that Dr John Maxwell had been offered the post of Interim Medical Director. Dr Maxwell is a Consultant in Emergency Medicine and has previously been a Chair of Division at the Belfast Trust, and more recently returned from Australia where he has spent the last 3 years as Medical Director in a large hospital in Perth.

The Chairman also took the opportunity to thank Dr Gardiner for all that he has done and continues to do in the Acting Medical Director role, and to officially record his tremendous admiration for the way that Dr Gardiner has conducted himself and the enthusiasm which he has shown in the role.

The Chairman also welcomed Mr Brian Cavanagh to the Board meeting. He noted that Mr Cavanagh is providing coaching and training to the Non-Executive Directors, and would be observing Trust Board as part of that process.

The Chairman noted that there were apologies from Professor Ross, Mr Smyth, Mr Campbell and Ms Kearney.

The Chairman indicated his expectation that electronic papers would be in place for the next meeting of the Trust Board. The Chairman reminded those presenting papers to the Board, that papers should be no more than 10 pages in duration, unless specifically required by virtue of the statutory responsibilities of the Board.

Conflicts of Interest

None declared.

Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of 1 February 2024 were agreed.

Matters arising

There were no matters arising other than those which were already on the agenda.

P21/2024 Action Log

Mr Watson referred the Board to the tabled action log.

Mr Watson highlighted the first action on the log and noted that it had been agreed that in fact this should be updated to be an Amber, with the update reflecting that, "Mr Campbell to liaise with Mrs Gordon and return to the action for completion as the demands of encompass implementation permit."

Subject to this amendment the Board agreed to the moving of the “Green” completed actions to the collated completed items log.

P31/2024 Statutory Functions Report

This item was taken earlier on the agenda given that Miss Reid was required to attend another urgent commitment.

Miss Reid referred to the Report which had been tabled. The Chairman thanked Miss Reid for her Report, and asked that the Board’s Corporate Parenting Responsibilities be considered in greater detail at a Board Workshop.

ACTION:- Mr Watson/Miss Reid

In response to a question asked, Miss Reid confirmed that the Social Care Committee was provided with all relevant details.

Discussion took place in relation to the social worker vacancy level across Northern Ireland, which it was advised was circa 9%. This shortfall however was in the context of growing demand on the Trust’s statutory responsibilities, and with particular pressures in particular areas. Ms Weatherall noted for example that working in Children’s Social Work prevented particular challenges to work life balance and so was not attractive to many.

In response to a question asked, Miss Reid confirmed that the Trust did work with partner organisations in the community and voluntary sectors in the discharge of its functions. Ms Weatherall noted that skill mix was also being explored to seek to address the demands on the service.

It was agreed that the demands in Social work should be on the agenda for a Strategic Trust Board.

ACTION:- Mr Watson

P22/2024 Chief Executive’s Business

Mrs Owens referred to the report she had tabled to the Trust Board.

Mrs Owens updated the Trust Board that she understood that 9 out of 10 unions had indicated their acceptance of the Agenda for Change pay offer.

Echoing the Chief Executive’s thanks to all who had worked to maintain a safe level of care during the industrial action by junior doctors, the Chairman in particular thanked Dr Gardiner for his leadership.

Mr Small enquired as to the position in relation to outstanding pay disputes. Ms Somerville advised that in addition to Junior Doctor pay, there was also dispute in relation to childrens’ social work relating to workforce recruitment and retention. Ms Reid outlined some of the work carried out in this area and advised that Board would be further advised.

P23/2024 Finance Report

Mrs Edwards referred to her report.

Mrs Edwards explained that because of the bringing forward of the Board meeting, financial closedown timescales meant that the paper was provided closer to the Board meeting than usual.

Mrs Edwards indicated that there was little change in the budgetary performance, and there was still an expectation that the Trust would break even as a result of the recent financial settlement.

Mrs Edwards indicated that the focus of the Trust would now be on the financial position for 2024/25, in the context of a significant budgetary deficit at the Department of Health.

Mrs Edwards advised that she considered it inevitable that the Department of Health would seek plans to address projected deficits. Such plans would, in the view of Mrs Edwards, have to include proposals which would directly impact on the service provided to patients and service users.

Mrs Edwards provided assurance to the Trust Board that Directors and their staff continue to engage in the Trust's Delivering Value Programme.

Finally, Mrs Edwards indicated that it was expected that the new Maternity Hospital would be handed over to the Trust by the contractors on Friday 29 March. Following handover, clinical commissioning, staff training and encompass readiness in the new hospital will be progressed, and it is expected, subject to formal sign off of life and water systems during the commissioning phase, that the first birth would take place within the calendar year.

The Chairman enquired in relation to the concerns that there had been regarding water safety. Mrs Edwards confirmed that the contractor had met the requirements of the contract, but that there would be ongoing testing to ensure that operational requirements are met. Responding to a question asked, Mrs Edwards indicated that chlorine dioxide dosing levels varied between the building and operational phases.

Responding to a question regarding the revenue consequences of the move to the new building, Mrs Edwards provided assurance that these had been fully funded and that staffing was not considered a risk; indeed a lot of the additional staff were already in post.

The Chairman commended all who had brought the project to this stage and asked that Mrs Edwards provide him with the relevant contact addresses so that he could personally write and relay the thanks of the Trust Board. The Chairman enquired in relation to media regarding the handover of the building, and Mrs Dalzell confirmed this would be arranged in the coming weeks.

ACTION :- Mrs Edwards/Chairman/Mrs Dalzell

P24/2024 Service Delivery Plan

The report provided by Mr Campbell was noted. It was agreed that where Directors are personally unable to attend Board meetings, the relevant Codirector(s) should be asked to attend to address any questions arising. It was also agreed that all questions asked in advance of the meeting, would be shared with the entire Trust Board.

ACTION :- Mr Watson

Non-executive directors referenced queries in relation to Mental Health services which they would discuss further with Dr Sloan.

Clarification was provided by Mrs Johnson in relation to the performance for Breast Surgery, who also updated in the support which was being provided to colleagues across the region.

P25/2024 Encompass

Mrs Owens updated that the 90 day Go Live Readiness Assessment had been very positive, while the 60 day Go Live Readiness Assessment would take place shortly.

Mrs Owens updated that role specific training was now underway, while Training “Captains” had been recruited.

It was further noted that Bedded cutover dry runs have been tested by our staff, with attention to the safe and effective transfer of medicine information.

In response to a question asked, Mrs Owens provided assurance in relation to the checks which were completed to ensure that the transfer of information had been effective.

Mr McVey noted that he had recently attended the ICT Department on a visit and had been very impressed. He enquired in relation to lessons which could be learned from the roll out of encompass at Southeastern Trust. Mrs Owens advised that there was significant learning from the experience at Southeastern Trust including in relation to workflow and the distribution of tasks to administrative staff.

The Chairman noted that while it was important that we learned lessons from the experience at Southeastern Trust, there would inevitably be, “bumps along the road” requiring us to be agile in responding to issues that arise. The Chairman indicated however that it was important that all worked to ensure that the Trust returned to pre-encompass levels of activity as soon as was possible.

P26/2024 Safety Quality Visit

Prof Hughes referred to her report of the visit where she had met two staff members from Ward 2 North at Belfast City Hospital.

The Chairman advised that following discussion among the Non-Executive Directors it had been decided that they would instead embark on a series of less formal

Listening and Learning Visits, which would be carried out alongside the Safety Quality Visits undertaken by other directors.

P27/2024 Updated Involvement and Consultation Scheme

Mr Bryan Nelson joined the meeting for this agenda item.

Responding to a question raised, Mrs Owens advised that the Chairperson and Chief Executive of the Patient and Client Council (PCC) had attended the Trust Executive Team, and would be attending the wider Senior Leadership Team. A meeting was also scheduled with the Trust Chairman and Chief Executive.

It was agreed that the PCC Chair and Chief Executive should be invited to Trust Board in due course.

ACTION:- Mr Watson

Miss Creaney advised that her colleagues in Patient and Client Support Services were exploring care partnering work in hospitals, supported by PCC.

In response to a question asked about the timeframe for consultation, Mr Nelson noted that this was a regionally agreed scheme so once approved by each Trust Board, then he expected the Scheme would go out for consultation.

Mr Nelson confirmed that the Trust Involvement Group was referenced in the documentation.

Mr Small noted that this while a statutory duty, it was important to recognise that consultation was of itself appropriate.

P28/2024 Minutes of Assurance Committee Meeting of November 2023

The minutes of the Assurance Committee were noted.

In response to questions asked, Dr Gardiner advised that work continued on SAls with a number having been completed during the past 4 weeks.

In relation to Job Planning, Dr Gardiner indicated that the position had improved but not as rapidly as had been predicted. Dr Gardiner indicated that while work was being taken forward “at pace” by the Chairs and Clinical Directors, work on job planning and appraisal was impacted upon by the additional work arising from preparations for encompass.

P29/2024 – Trust Corporate Plan

Discussion on the Trust Corporate Plan was deferred to a later Trust Board to allow further discussion.

P30/2024 – Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan and the Trust of Sanctuary application.

The papers were noted.

The Chairman indicated that Belfast was a City of Sanctuary and it was important that organisations become places of sanctuary and in turn make Belfast as welcoming as possible for newcomers, in particular asylum seekers and refugees. We want to be the first Trust of Sanctuary in Northern Ireland

P32/2024 – Charitable Funds Application

The application was approved by the Board.

The meeting concluded at 1035 and moved to Confidential session.

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