

174th Meeting of BHSCT Board (Public session)

Thursday 4 September at 12:45pm

in the Boardroom, Non Clinical Support Building, Royal Hospitals

Present

Mr John Conaghan	Non-Executive Director (<i>chaired the meeting</i>)
Mrs Ellen Finlay	Non-Executive Director (<i>joined the meeting via MS Teams</i>)
Mr Joe McVey	Non-Executive Director
Mr David Small	Non-Executive Director
Mrs Fiona Cotter	Interim Director of Finance
Mr Chris Hagan	Medical Director (<i>joined the meeting as noted below</i>)
Mrs Olga O'Neill	Interim Director of Nursing and User Experience
Ms Kerrylee Weatherall	Interim Executive Director Social Work/Interim Director Childrens' Community Services

In Attendance:

Dr Brian Armstrong	Director Unscheduled and Older People's Services
Ms Paula Cahalan	Director Child Health and NISTAR, Maternity, Dental, Gynaecology and Sexual Health
Mr Alastair Campbell	Director Performance, Planning and Informatics
Mrs Tara Clinton	Director ACCTSS and Surgery
Mrs Bronagh Dalzell	Head of Corporate Communications
Ms Moira Kearney	Interim Director of Cancer and Specialist Services (<i>left the meeting as noted below</i>)
Mr Colin McMullan	Interim Director Adult Community and Older People Services and AHPs
Mrs Marion Mulholland	Director, Trauma and Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation Medicine, Imaging, Medical Physics and Outpatients
Mr David Porter	Director of Strategic Development
Dr Peter Sloan	Interim Director Mental Health, Intellectual Disability and Psychological Services
Mrs Gillian Somerville	Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development
Mr Peter Watson	Head of Office

Apologies:

Miss Patricia Gordon	Non-Executive Director
Professor Carmel Hughes	Non-Executive Director
Professor Catherine Ross	Non-Executive Director
Mrs Maureen Edwards	Interim Chief Executive

There were no members of the public in attendance.

1. Trust Board Workplan

P145-2025

The workplan was noted.

2. Conflicts of Interest

Mr Conaghan invited conflicts of interest to be declared. It had earlier been noted that Mrs Finlay had declared that as an Equality Commissioner at ECNI, she had not read, nor would she be commenting on, the Annual Progress Report to the Equality Commission

3. Apologies

Apologies were noted as above.

4. Chairman's Business

The Board had earlier agreed that Mr Conaghan should chair this meeting of the Board.

Mr Conaghan welcomed all to the 174th meeting of the Belfast Trust Board in Public session

Mr Conaghan noted that papers had been tabled on Wednesday 27 August. The Interim Chief Executive Report was then received on Tuesday 2 September. Mr Conaghan clarified that members had had an opportunity to consider the papers.

Mr Conaghan placed on record his congratulations to Mr Joe McVey on his recent appointment as the Commissioner for Victims and Survivors for Northern Ireland. Mr Conaghan noted that he knew that Mr McVey would be an outstanding advocate in safeguarding and promoting the interests of victims and survivors. Mr Conaghan noted that Mr McVey's appointment to this full time role regrettably meant that he would have to step aside from his role as a non-executive director at the Trust from October. Mr Conaghan extended his thanks as a Board for all Mr McVey had done during the previous 18 months.

Mr McVey thanked Mr Conaghan for his kind words, noting that it had been a pleasure to be part of the Trust. He thanked colleagues around the table who had afforded him the opportunity to find out more about the work of the Health Service. Mr McVey also thanked his colleague non-executive directors, including Mr Mulgrew who had been an exemplary Chair. Mr McVey also (in her absence) thanked Miss Gordon for her work particularly in the past two

months. Mr McVey noted that it had been a privilege and a pleasure to be on the Board and he wished continued success to the Trust.

Mr Conaghan asked Mr Watson to reference questions received from members of the public.

Mr Watson noted that on 14 July, the Board had received details of questions raised by Mr Stanford Smith, and the responses to those questions.

Mr Watson noted that on 12 August, the Board had received details of questions raised by Mr and Mrs Sharp, and the responses to those questions.

Mr Watson noted that there had been further correspondence from Mr Stanford Smith, and also from Mrs Angela Haughey, which correspondence was currently being considered.

5. Minutes of previous meeting – 3 July 2025

P146-2025

Mr Conaghan turned firstly to the minutes of the public Board meeting of 3 July 2025. Mr Conaghan sought and received confirmation from the Board that the minutes were a true and accurate record of those meetings.

Mr Conaghan enquired if there were any matters arising from those minutes that were not already picked up on the Action Log. There were no such matters.

6. Action Log

P147-2025

The Board then considered the Action Log.

It was agreed that the actions coded Green should be removed from the log, with the exception of Action P015-2025 regarding whistleblowing, where it was agreed that the action should be left as “in progress”.

ACTION:Mr Watson

7. Chief Executive’s Business

P148-2025

Mr Conaghan referred to the report tabled by Mrs Edwards (who was a late apology for the meeting).

Mr Watson advised that Mrs Edwards had signalled that she was content that colleagues on Executive Team pick up any queries arising, or alternatively she would be happy to address these herself.

Dr Armstrong provided clarification in relation to the ambulance handover targets.

8. Trust Service Delivery Plan Report

P149-2025

Mr Campbell referred to the report, which he noted was the first Systems Oversight Measures Report.

Mr Campbell referenced the challenge of the lack of connectivity with the Strategic Outcomes Framework.

Mr Campbell highlighted the ongoing confidence issues with the data in a number of areas, as an understanding was sought as to how new data differs from reporting pre-encompass.

Mr Campbell noted that he hoped to be able to present benchmarking data in November.

Mr Hagan joined the meeting.

Mr Campbell noted that Review DNA rates were falling as a result of a focus from clinical and administrative teams, and an increase in patient initiated follow up arrangements.

Ms Kearney left the meeting.

Mr Campbell highlighted the small decrease in inpatient/daycase patients waiting, and a small increase in outpatient patients waiting.

Mr Campbell noted that the detail provided in the papers in relation to those specialties in the Support and Intervention Framework was out of date, advising for example that the Regional Emergency Social Work Service should be included.

Mr Campbell finally noted that he would be sending out details to the Board in relation to the Reset Plan.

The Board asked Mr Campbell if he could update on the financial costs of DNAs. Mr Campbell agreed to do so.

ACTION:Mr Campbell

Following query from the Board as to whether work was being progressed centrally by the Public Health Agency or the Department of Health in relation to DNAs, Mr Campbell updated on the work of the waiting list management team who were proactive in sharing details and also assisting with text message validation. Mrs Dalzell noted that there had been suggestion that SPPG would pick up the need for greater public awareness as to DNA costs, and said she would follow up with SPPG.

ACTION:Mrs Dalzell

Mr Campbell reflected that increasing use of Mycare by the public would also be of assistance.

The Board again registered their frustration at the ongoing use of targets which were unrealistic and unachievable. Mr Campbell noted that he and colleagues in other Trusts continue to lobby for realistic and achievable targets, but there was difficulty in securing traction to change the targets.

The Board noted that the Trust and Department of Health had signed a partnership agreement.

9. Finance Report

P150-2025

Mrs Cotter referred to the tabled finance report, which included a projected end year deficit of £32m (this revised and reduced deficit projected following receipt of £32m deficit funding).

The projected end year deficit also included assumptions that £77m saved last year would be realised again this year. Mrs Cotter noted that these savings would again be difficult to achieve and would in large part be non-recurrent and come from slippage.

Mrs Cotter noted that the deficit was to have been addressed through the various regional workstreams but it was likely that the outputs from such workstreams would only be realised in later financial years.

Mrs Cotter noted that the Interim Permanent Secretary had now asked each Trust to produce a breakeven plan by mid September. Mrs Cotter noted that any implementation of such plans would have serious service impact, and there would be no such implementation without the proposals being brought to the Board.

While overall the Trust was on target to achieve the £77m savings, Mrs Cotter noted that this was consequent upon a combination of delivery in nursing savings, failure to deliver medical savings to the required level, and offsetting pharmacy savings achieved in the early part of the financial year.

Mrs O'Neill provided the Board with additional details regarding the actions being progressed to achieve savings in nursing.

Mrs Cotter clarified that it would only be with the introduction of the Medical Agency Framework across the region, that medical savings would be achieved.

Mrs Finlay commented upon the vacancies in social work and commended the work of Ms Weatherall, which work she advised should also be captured in the People Report.

ACTION: Ms Weatherall

10. Update on capital schemes P151-2025 A&B
(to include Maternity Hospital and plans for Muckamore Abbey Hospital site)

Mr Porter advised that he did not have anything additional to add, beyond that which he had reported to the Board earlier in the day during the confidential session of the Board meeting.

11. Updates from Committees/Standing Reports P152-2025

Assurance Committee

Mr McVey referred to the report which had been tabled in relation to the work of the Assurance Committee. Mr McVey thanked Mr Watson for drafting the update. Mr McVey noted that while changes were being considered in relation to committee structures, the work of the Assurance Committee would continue “business as usual”.

Mr Small noted that the work of the current committee remained particularly demanding, and that his experience was that there could and should be more detailed review of data before it was tabled at Assurance Committee, or the committee which would replace the current Assurance Committee.

Mr Hagan provided reassurance that the new committee structure would see a reduced demand on the work of what would be a re-named Assurance Committee.

12. Papers for Direction

It was noted that there were no papers for direction.

13. Papers for approval P153-2025 A&B

Annual Progress Report to Equality Commission

Mr Campbell referred to the report tabled for approval, which confirmed that the Trust was meeting its statutory requirements. Mr Campbell commended the award winning work of this team led by Mrs Orla Barron.

The Board approved the Annual Progress Report to the Equality Commission.

Annual Report to DAERA on implementation of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016

Mr Campbell also referred to this Annual Report tabled for approval. The Board approved the Annual Report to DAERA on the implementation of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.

14. Papers for Oversight

It was noted that there were no papers for oversight.

15. Papers for Assurance

It was noted that there were no papers for assurance.

16. Any Other Business

There being no other business, the meeting concluded at 1345.