

North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust Board Briefing – September 2024 Board

This briefing aims to keep you informed of the discussions at our Trust Board. To watch the recording and read the papers, please visit the [Board Meeting page](#) on the Combined Healthcare website. Please note this briefing does not replace the official Board minutes, which will be published in due course and be available on the website.



Service User Story

This month's Service User Story featured Doreen, whose life changed after suffering a serious fall. The STR team, along with other services from Combined Healthcare, helped to give Doreen her life back. You can watch the recording of the story and subsequent discussion [at this link](#)

REACH Recognition Individual Award

This month's REACH Recognition Individual Award was presented to Cassie Powell, Whole School Approach Coordinator in the Community Directorate. You can watch the recording of the REACH Award [at this link](#).

Chief Executive's Report

Dr Buki Adeyemo, Chief Executive, presented the report, which is available [at this link](#). Buki in particular welcomed the support that had been given to staff following the recent civil unrest. In addition to the items in the written report, there was a confirmation that the recent staff pay award was to be fully funded centrally. You can watch the recording of the CEO Report [at this link](#).

ICB Briefing 18 July 2024

Dr Buki Adeyemo, Chief Executive, presented the report to the Committee. The report is available [at this link](#). You can watch a recording of the discussion [at this link](#)

Chair's Report

Janet Dawson gave a Chair's Report to Board. Her written report is available [at this link](#). Janet in particular talked about the pleasure of recent meetings and discussions with Dragon Square, the Mental Health Support Teams and the Performance Team. Janet also welcomed our new Non-Executive Director- Martin Evans and Associate Non- Executive Director- Roger Banks. There had also been a very helpful meeting with Stoke-on-Trent City Council. You can watch the recording of the Chair's Report [at this link](#).

Questions from Members of the Public

There was a question from Peter Landon about the sale of the Ashcombe Centre. It was confirmed that there is no proposed asset sale. **N.B. Anyone can submit a question for consideration and discussion at the Board via the [Ask The Board facility](#) on the Trust website.**

Safer Staffing Annual Report 2023/24

Kenny Laing presented the Report. We are increasing our number of newly qualified nurses and the numbers of Professional Nurse Advocates. The fill rates in year have generally been positive - 95% to 100%. The Registered Nurse fill rates were a challenge. There were exceptional circumstances that had led to a high agency usage rate that were no longer applying.

The Quality Committee had asked to raise with the Board the importance of nurse apprenticeships and looking at whether additional funding could be made available to help in this regard. Kenny agreed to review the situation with a view to making recommendations in the coming year.

Patient Safety Quarter 1 Report

Dr Dennis Okolo presented the report. The report shows that compared with 2023/24, there was a minor reduction in serious incidents. It also shows that the majority of incidents were from the Community and Acute and Urgent Care directorates. The number of male deaths from suspected suicide had reduced slightly, and lay predominantly in areas of highest deprivation. On one occasion, there had been less than ideal repeated transfers between ourselves and UHNM. Arrangements for this type of situation were being reviewed to see if they could be tightened.

Mortality Surveillance Quarter 1 Report

Dr Dennis Okolo presented the report. This reviews the care of persons who had died from natural causes. The care of the majority of patients were rated Very Good. The predominant causes were physically related, with a small number also involving alcohol. There was one patient whose care had been deemed not to be good, but this did not appear to have a causal link with their death.

Quality Committee Committee Assurance Report

Prof Pauline Walsh presented the report from the meeting of the Quality Committee held on 5th September 2024. There had been a presentation about the Darwin Centre, which had a difficult recently. The team had been very positive, taken the challenges on board and conducted a deep dive and created an action plan to address the challenge. The Committee was very reassured by the Mental Health Compliance Act Compliance Plan, with most actions completed. The Committee had also considered the issue of four week waits for CAMHS, around which there was a wider discussion by the Board.

Improving Quality and Performance Report (IQR) Month 4

Eric Gardiner presented the report. There was generally good performance, with a couple of exceptions including CAMHS waits. Agency spend had reduced significantly to below the agency cap and was ahead of where we had expected to be at this point in the year.

Staff Survey Report

Kerry Smith presented the report. Overall there was a good set of results with above average cohort scores across all areas.

Having said that, there were areas that needed addressing and the Trust is not complacent. There would be a particular focus on (i) EDI, Disability and Anti-racist approach; (ii) Sexual Safety and (iii) Anti-Bullying and Harassment. Looking forward, we are also looking to streamline the reporting process for the coming year.

People, Culture and Development Committee Assurance Report

Russell Andrews presented the report from the meeting of the People, Culture and Development Committee held on 29th July 2024. There had been a long discussion on sickness absence rates, with the largest reason being anxiety and stress. Partly connected to this, the Committee had also looked at the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, which was an area of strength for the Trust. The Committee had received a demonstration of VR Park, had discussed the implementation of the People Plan and approved the Communications Delivery Plan.

Finance Report Month 4

Eric Gardiner presented the report. There was a generally positive position with a marginally better position than expected. The Trust was forecasting another year of breaking even.

Finance and Resource Committee Assurance Report

The report from the meeting of 5th September 2024 was presented by Russell Andrews. The Committee had discussed the system financial challenge with a commitment to play our part.

Audit Committee Assurance Report

Pauline Walsh presented the report from the meeting of 12th July 2024. There had been discussion of actions around an outstanding debt with Staffordshire County Council, which was still in discussion between the parties. The Committee had received assurance around our Data Security and Ligature Risks. The Anti-Fraud Progress Report had been rated green.

Charitable Funds Assurance Report

Russell Andrews presented the report from the meeting of 2nd September 2024. The funds are in a healthy position, largely due to a legacy donation. We will be putting an application into NHS Charities Together. The Committee received and approved an excellent 2 year development plan and had received good support from Finance, TMO and Comms colleagues.

Board Assurance Framework Quarter 1

Nicky Griffiths presented the BAF. This has gone through the relevant committees. There had been approval of score decreases on Risk 1 and Risk 2. A proposed score decrease in Risk 6 and Risk 8 had not been approved, due to a desire to see greater detail of the impact of mitigations over an extended period of time.

Consent items

A number of reports were presented as consent items, which can be read in the [Board papers bundle](#):

- Quality Committee Assurance Report from meeting held on 1st August 2024
- Finance and Resources Committee Assurance Report from the meeting held on 1st August 2024
- Safer Staffing Monthly Report July & August 2024

Any Other Business

Ben Richards informed the Board that the Trust had been singled out for national recognition for our work with veterans. The Board meeting closed at 12.05pm. Date and time of next meeting in public is 10am, 10th October 2024. To access papers and meeting link, please visit <https://www.combined.nhs.uk/about-us/our-board/board-meetings/>