

Enclosure No: 5

Chairs Report – February 2025

Report provided for:				Report to:	Public Trust Board
Information	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Assurance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Date of Meeting:	13 th February 2025
Discussion	<input type="checkbox"/>	Approval	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Presented by:	Janet Dawson, Chair
Prepared by:	Janet Dawson, Chair
Executive Lead:	

Aligned to Board Assurance Framework Risk	Risk 1
Approval / Review:	N/A
Strategic Priorities:	Prevention - We will continue to grow high-quality, integrated services delivered by an innovative and sustainable workforce
Key Enablers:	Quality - We will provide the highest quality, safe and effective services
Sustainability:	Share learning and best practice
Resource Implications:	No
Funding Source:	N/A
Diversity & Inclusion Implications	Includes details of support delivered to all staff following recent civil unrest and racist incidents
ICS Alignment / Implications:	Strategic fit with system priorities
Recommendation / Required Action	For information and assurance
Executive Summary	<p>The report updates the Board on strategic activity undertaken since the last meeting and draws the Board's attention to any other issues of significance or interest.</p> <p>These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Future of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and a changing world - Keeping in touch

- Combined welcomes ICB Chair, David Pearson to Harplands
- Thank You to Staff

VERSION CONTROL:

Version	Report to	Date Reported
V1	Trust Board	06.02.25



Chair's Report February Board

The Future of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and a changing world

Along with many other people, I have been dismayed recently by the speed with which the progress made on human rights and equality over the past few decades have been consigned to history. It is alarming and the enthusiasm and relief with which this has been embraced, both in the US and elsewhere, is worrying as DEI programmes and support teams are cancelled. The inference is, and in some cases, clear conclusions drawn, that being an equitable employer dilutes the quality of the workforce. This flies in the face of hard evidence demonstrated over years of research that diversity brings real strength to organisations rather than weakening them.

Why is this in my board report? It's here because in this Trust we don't agree with that point of view, and we believe in doing the right thing even if it for some reason becomes unfashionable. Our people are here because they have the skills required to do their roles and are valued for what they bring and who they are. We work very hard to make this a welcoming place to work for everyone and while we don't always get it right, we work even harder to make things better. It's so important that we remember that for everyone, liberties hard fought for can be easily lost. For us EDI is not a programme or a project that can be stopped. It is part of our values and part of how we operate, and we will continue to demonstrate that being a welcoming organisation where everyone feels they belong will always be part of our story.



Keeping in touch

The pace of activity on National, Regional and System meetings has increased in recent weeks partly as a result of Regional and System financial pressures and partly to provide an opportunity for NHSE and Department of Health and Social Care leaders to share their thoughts directly with colleagues at Provider level. This more open approach is a welcome addition to the communication arrangements. Wes Streeting and Amanda Pritchard hosted a webinar for Chairs and Chief Executives on the 2025/26 priorities and planning process just before the long-awaited guidance was issued at the end of last month. I also attended a NHSE webinar on the new operating model and the roll out nationally of a new leadership competency programme.

NHS Confederation Chairs met to discuss the new NHS leadership development programme and we also had an interesting discussion on the merits and challenges associated with Group Boards across multiple Trusts – not always as straightforward as it might appear. The Mental Health Trust Chair's group meets weekly sometimes making it difficult to attend them all, but this provides a useful insight into wider practice and shared challenges. The normal Regional and System meetings and I & I feedback meetings continue monthly and are business as usual.

Combined welcomes ICB Chair, David Pearson to Harplands

Unfortunately, due to illness, I was unable to be present to welcome ICB Chair, David Pearson, for a tour of some of our services at Harplands Hospital. However, I am delighted that David joined us to see how much has changed since his last visit.

David was able to see Combined's innovation in developing all-age telephone and walk-in crisis care access under one roof. He also saw the new facilities being developed through Project Chrysalis in the new Ward Two - admiring the calming atmosphere and in particular the use of artwork to create a welcoming environment. David also discussed with our frontline staff the challenges with implementing the Right Care Right Place arrangements as well as issues with getting other systems to agree funding for Out of Area patients.

Many thanks to Aisling Birch - crisis care service manager, Craig Lythgoe- crisis care deputy team manager, Leanne Norman- crisis care centre team manager and Sarah Larvin, Ward 2 Deputy Ward Manager for being on hand to welcome David.

And for leading the overall visit, our Chief Executive Buki Chief Operating Officer Ben, Deputy Operating Officer Rachel Birks and Associate Director Donna Cantrell.



Thank you

As ever, I would like to thank all our staff for their continued commitment to our patients and service users even when they are dealing with winter sickness absence of colleagues and the January weather. A thank you too to the members of the leadership and executive teams who are supporting work across the System. This is critical and important work but we acknowledge that brings time pressures which have to be managed.

Janet Dawson
Chair
February 2025