

North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust Board Briefing – March 2025 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.



Patient Story

This month's Patient Story featured Ruth - a peer support worker with previous experience of receiving care from the Trust. You can watch the recording of the story and Board discussion [at this link](#).

REACH Recognition Team Award

This month's REACH Recognition Team Award was presented to the Primary Care Admin Team. You can watch the recording of the REACH Award [at this link](#).

Chief Executive's Report

Kenny Laing, Chief Nursing Officer, presented the report on behalf of the Chief Executive, which is available [at this link](#). You can watch the recording of the CEO Report [at this link](#).

ICB Briefing 20 February 2025

Kenny Laing, Chief Nursing Officer, presented the report on behalf of the Chief Executive. The report is available [at this link](#).

Chair's Report

The Chair's written Report to the Board is available [at this link](#). You can watch the recording of the Chair's Report [at this link](#).

Questions from Members of the Public

There were no questions from members of the public. N.B. Anyone can submit a question for consideration and discussion at the Board via the [Ask The Board facility](#) on the Trust website.

Mortality Surveillance Quarter 3 Report 2024/25

Dr Dennis Okolo, Chief Medical Officer, presented the report. Dennis reassured the Board around the breadth of involvement in the committee reviewing performance as well as the process for learning from findings. The current rate is below the 2-year reporting average. The most reported category correlates to a person's physical health. There were 21 episodes of care rated as good or excellent (100%), 5 reported diagnoses of Cancer as the 1a cause attributed to the death and 8 reported diagnoses of respiratory disease as the 1a cause attributed to the death.

Patient Safety Incident Response Framework Quarter 3 Report 2024/25

Dr Dennis Okolo presented the report. There were 7 cases of suspected suicide, however no current concerns reported within current reviews of patients open to the Trust at the time of their death. Patient safety incident investigation remains ongoing with no new immediate updates to report.

Safeguarding Adults and Children Quarter 3 Report 2024/25

Zoe Grant, Deputy Chief Nursing Officer, presented the report. All required statutory and mandatory training relating to safeguarding children and adults is within the target performance range during Q3. Areas at team level that need improving have been identified. The first being corporate services that includes our medical staffing and the second being Acute and Urgent Care. A plan is in place to improve this compliance.

Quality Committee Assurance Report

Jennie Koo presented the report from the meeting of the Quality Committee held on 6 March 2025. Urgent and emergency care remains very challenged. The Trust is currently experiencing high demand for inpatient admissions. Clinically Ready For Discharge (CRFD) cases continue to increase and this has resulted in 9 of our patients currently utilising Out of Area beds – every effort is being made to repatriate into local care.

We have received informal written report for Holmcroft GP surgery which was inspected by the CQC on 12th February 2025 and are awaiting the formal report. The initial findings are positive, suggestive of good levels of assurance with some areas of improvement. We had received a CQC notification regarding concerns reported to them in relation to our Crisis Care Service, some of which we were aware of and acting around and some where we are taking additional actions. We have forwarded a response outlining our appraisal of the concerns and the actions taken. The CQC are assured by our response and have formally closed the notification.

Improving Quality and Performance Report (IQR) Month 10

Lisa Dodds, Deputy Chief Finance Officer, presented the report on behalf of the Chief Finance Officer. There are 4 special cause variations (orange variation flags) – signifying concern:

- CAMHS 4 week wait (Referral to Assessment)
- Referral to Assessment within 4 weeks
- Statutory and Mandatory Training
- Sickness Absence

There are 4 special cause variations (blue variation flags) – signifying improvement:

- Care Plan Compliance
- Vacancy Rate
- Staff Turnover
- Year to date agency spend as a % of total pay bill

Veterans Aware / Veterans Covenant Annual Update

Rachael Birks, Deputy Chief Operations Officer, presented the report on behalf of Ben Richards, Chief Operating Officer. Key highlights for 2024/25 include:

- The Trust achieving the Silver Award of the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme - recognising our commitment to identifying and sharing best practice across the NHS, as an exemplar of the best standards of care for the Armed Forces Community
- Links established with the local Sea Cadet unit, as a demonstration of our support for the cadet movement
- The ongoing development of dedicated GP slots for veterans within our Primary Care Services
- Creation of a Veterans Wellbeing Portal on the Trust's Wellbeing website
- An increase from 83% to 91% on the Trusts LMS training for Veterans,

Finance position month 10

Lisa Dodds presented the report on behalf of the Chief Finance Officer. The Adjusted Financial Performance in month is a £1,243k surplus against a plan of £110k, giving an underspend of £1,133k. The position year to date is £1,749k surplus against a planned deficit of £233k giving an underspend of £1,972k. The Trust is forecasting to deliver a £2.4m surplus.

Finance and Resource Committee Assurance Report

Russell Andrews presented the report from the meeting of the Committee held on 6 March 2025. Updates were received relating to: Trust Performance, Business Opportunities, Finance Position, ICS Finance, Financial Planning, Estates and Capital, Digital Project updates, Risk Register, Wireless Business Case and Committee Cycle of Business.

Charitable Funds Committee Board Assurance Report

Russell Andrews presented the report from the meeting of the Committee held on 2 March 2025. The agenda covered several items including the quarterly charity development update report, a working draft of a new fundraising policy and the timeline for 2024/2025 annual accounts. The Committee approved the following items:

- Revised Terms of Reference for the Charitable Funds Committee
- Renewing NHS Charities Together membership for a further 12 months
- Purchase of outdoor play and sensory items for Dragon Square through funds secured from the Morrison's Foundation
- A proposal for a Combined Charity Grants Programme funded via the legacy donation.

Board Cycle of Business

Nicky Griffiths, Deputy Director of Governance, presented the report. A full review has been undertaken of the cycle of business. Consultation around Committee cycles of business has been undertaken with the Executive Lead and Chairs and aligned to the Senior Leaders Team and Trust Board cycles of business. The Board approved the cycle of business for 2025/26.

Consent items

The Safer Staffing Monthly Report for January 2025 was presented as a consent item and can be read in the [Board papers bundle](#)

Any Other Business

The Board meeting closed at noon. Date and time of next meeting in public is 10.00am, 8 May 2025. To access papers and meeting link, please visit <https://www.combined.nhs.uk/about-us/our-board/board-meetings/>