

Enclosure No: 3

CEO BOARD REPORT

Report provided for:				Report to:	Trust Board
Information	<input type="checkbox"/>	Assurance	<input type="checkbox"/>	Date of Meeting:	8th May 2025
Discussion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Approval	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Presented by:	Dr Buki Adeyemo, Chief Executive
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Aligned to Board Assurance Framework Risk	Risk 1 The Trust fails to deliver effective care leading to regulatory restrictions
Approval / Review:	Execs
Strategic Priorities:	The report contains information that aligns to the Trusts strategic priorities of - Prevention, Access and Growth
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	There is no direct impact on the protected characteristics as part of the completion of this report.
ICS Alignment / Implications:	Strategic fit with system priorities
Recommendation / Required Action	Receive and discuss
Executive Summary	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.

These include:

- NHS England abolition
- Government confirms mental health spending fell in 2024/25
- CQC releases community mental health survey results 2024
- Mental health and emotional wellbeing service launches
- Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board (ICB) appoints new executive arrangements.
- Operational planning 2025/26
- Responding to the NHS Reset
- Combined Healthcare puts patient voices at the centre of its Culture of Care Programme
- National Staff Survey
- Independent Prescribers Conference
- Combined Healthcare receives Morrison's Foundation donation
- Combined Charity launches grant programme

VERSION CONTROL:

Version	Report to	Date Reported
V1	Public Trust Board	02.05.25

Chief Executive's Report to the Trust Board 8 May 2025

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This 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.

2.0 NATIONAL CONTEXT AND UPDATES

NHS England abolition

The aftermath continues after the announcement on 13 March by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care that the Government plans to abolish NHS England. The process is expected to take two years to complete and will include a headcount reduction of around 50 per cent across both NHS England and the Department of Health and Social Care. It has also been announced that a 50 per cent reduction in running costs will be required from ICBs (Integrated Care Boards) by December 2025.

While we have retained a strong financial balance for some years, we have been open and honest about the system's increasing financial deficits. We cannot operate in isolation from our system partners, so we face these challenges together as we adapt to what is on the horizon. We will continue to work closely with our system partners at the ICB, UHNM (University Hospitals of North Midlands) and MPFT (Midlands Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust) including agreeing an operational and financial plan by the end of April.

Provider organisations have been given a corporate savings target for which they have to submit plans by the end of May. The targets are based on reducing corporate cost growth from 2018/19 to 2023/24 by 50%.

Government confirms mental health spending fell in 2024/25

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care has announced that the share of NHS spending for mental health as a percentage of its overall budget fell in 2024/25 and is set to fall further in 2025/26.

In a statement released on 27 March, Wes Streeting confirmed that mental health spending as a share of baseline NHS spending would fall by 0.07%. It previously fell from 9.0% in 2023/24 to 8.78% in 2024/25.



CQC releases community mental health survey results 2024

The Care Quality Commission has released the results of its community mental health survey 2024. It received feedback from 14,619 people who received treatment between 1 April and 31 May 2024, and found that people are continuing to have poor experiences of NHS community mental health services, particularly in crisis care support, information about medication and support for wider needs.

The results show little change from 2023's survey, but there have been improvements for support in accessing care and information about some aspects about medication. Feedback on child and adolescent mental health services showed that waiting times were long (45% waited three months or more for their first appointment) and a third weren't sure who to contact in a crisis. Survey respondents using older people's mental health services reported more positive experiences in being listened to, being treated with care and compassion and being involved in their care plan.

Combined Healthcare was one of the NHS Trusts which provided care to respondents of the survey. We have received our benchmark report and are working with relevant teams to address any concerns raised in the feedback.

Mental health and emotional wellbeing service launches

The contract for Staffordshire County Council to deliver mental health and emotional wellbeing services for children and young people ends on 31 March 2025. Following a robust joint commissioning process, the council and Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care board have awarded the contract to Changes Health and Wellbeing, working with North Staffordshire Mind, and The Dove Service. From 1 April, they will deliver a new service called 'Stay Well'.

The current provider, Action for Children, will continue to deliver the 'Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing service' until their contract ends on 31 March 2025.

Stay Well will provide a wide range of group and 1-2-1 mental health interventions to support emotional health and wellbeing. It will also offer information, advice and guidance for families, professionals and schools, including online resources and training opportunities.

Stay Well will be provided from locations throughout Staffordshire, i.e. wellbeing centres and community venues, (including schools and colleges) and with an expanding range of services, aims to reduce waiting times.



3.0 STAFFORDSHIRE AND STOKE-ON-TRENT INTEGRATED CARE SYSTEM (ICS)

Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board (ICB) appoints new executive arrangements.

Peter Axon will be stepping down as Chief Executive in July and it has been agreed that Dr Paul Edmondson-Jones, the ICBs current Chief Medical Officer, will take up the position on an interim basis. Paul will be supported by Elizabeth Disney, the ICB Chief Transformation Officer, as his deputy and Dr Rachel Gallyot will be acting up as Chief Medical Officer to provide clinical leadership during this period.

Claire Finn has been appointed as the Interim Chief Finance Officer for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent ICB. Claire will join the ICB board in June, bringing over 20 years' experience of working in NHS finance. Her new role will support the organisation to meet the financial targets set by NHS England, as outlined in the ICB Reform programme.

Claire is currently the Interim Chief Finance Officer for Derbyshire ICB and has previously held the role in University Hospitals Derby and Burton NHS Foundation Trust.

The appointment follows the announcement earlier this year that Paul Brown, the current Chief Finance Officer, will step down in the summer after five years in the role.

4.0 OUR TRUST

Operational planning 2025/26

It has been a busy and challenging few weeks of planning for the trust and our NHS system partners. We have spent time engaging across our organisation and with our partners on the opportunities for service improvements.

We have done the work to produce a plan that delivers our activity and maintains our workforce numbers. This will ensure we live within the finances we are allocated. Our Operational Plan will be presented at board this month for approval and submitted to NHS England via the ICB by the end of the month.

Responding to the NHS Reset

Within the Trust, we recognise that the current challenges are amongst the most severe many of us will have encountered in years of working in the NHS. We must acknowledge the challenges ahead and understand that both our organisation and the wider NHS will have to make difficult decisions. As an organisation I am confident we can rise to this challenge and continue to deliver the best possible care to the population we serve,

This is exemplified annually in our Dragons' Den initiative, through our Quality Improvement programmes and also through the numerous projects previously implemented under the Cost Improvement Programme. We know that true and lasting transformation can only be achieved through innovation – applying our talent and imagination to every challenge that comes our way. And that is what we are determined to do as we look to respond to the current situation.



As an initial action, we have taken the difficult decision to pause recruitment for corporate roles from 1 April 2025. We are keeping this under review, and we may need to adapt our position as we get more clarity, but in the meantime we do appreciate that the uncertainty this is causing is uncomfortable and unsettling and have committed to continually update the organisation.

We have adapted our previous Cost Improvement Programme approach to increase its frequency, ensuring that we can quickly adapt and respond but also ensuring that our quality and equality assurance processes remain robust and fit for purpose. Over the first quarter we expect many of our ideas and plans implemented and we will therefore also be updating Finance and Resources Committee on a monthly basis (as opposed to quarterly) to provide additional assurance to the Board.

4.1



Combined Healthcare puts patient voices at the centre of its Culture of Care Programme

A new programme is being introduced, in collaboration with the Royal College of Psychiatrists, to develop a culture of care that puts patient voices at the centre of decision making across the trust's mental health and older adults inpatient wards.

The Culture of Care standards are part of NHS England's Inpatient Quality Transformation Programme, which aims to improve the culture of inpatient mental health care, with particular consideration of the experiences of inpatients with learning disabilities and autism.

The goal is to make these environments safe, therapeutic and equitable places for patients to be cared for, as well as creating fulfilling places for healthcare staff to work that are trauma and autism informed, and culturally competent. The programme is based on co-production, with the voice of patients a central component to identifying opportunities for quality improvement.

Ward teams, including experts by experience, have led regular community meetings, allowing patients and their loved ones to provide feedback on the care they have received and the environment on the ward. The project team is also working closely with learning disability and autism specialist colleagues to ensure the voices of patients with learning disabilities and autism who have experienced mental health inpatient stays are properly captured and represented.

In a recent episode of the Combinations Podcast, colleagues from the trust and a guest from the Royal College of Psychiatrists discuss the project.



4.2



National Staff Survey

The National NHS Staff Survey 2024 results showed that North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust has maintained its very high levels of involvement in the survey. Overall, two thirds of our workforce (64%) made sure their voice was heard by responding to the survey in Autumn 2024 – 11% higher than the average for our comparator group. But it still means that 1 in 3 of our people did not feel able or willing to take part, so we will be thinking over the coming year about what we can do to improve that participation rate. We want to do so because we know that every completed survey helps us understand what is working well and how we can make the Trust an even better place to work.

We are delighted that the Trust's overall results for all NHS People Promise themes are higher than the average for our comparator group. That tells us there is much we are doing right. After a really challenging year for the NHS, we saw increases in our scores for 'we are recognised and rewarded', 'we are always learning' and 'staff morale' since 2023.

There was also a positive improvement in the number of colleagues reporting that there is enough staff in the organisation to be able to do their job properly, and a reduction in reports of unrealistic time pressures, along with increased reporting of opportunities to improve knowledge and skills, and enthusiasm about work.

This year's results have also shown a reduction in the number of colleagues reporting discrimination related to their religion or a disability, and sexual orientation. But there are some other areas where the results are not so good and where it is clear we need to be taking action. For example, reports of discrimination on grounds of ethnic background and gender both worsened – albeit only slightly. There was an increased number of colleagues report feeling unwell through work-related stress.

The survey also highlighted a reduction in team working towards achieving objectives, and increased reports of experience of physical violence from service users, families or members of the public.

We have heard this feedback loud and strong and are actively working to address these concerns. As initial steps:

- we are working to strengthen our anti-discrimination activities and efforts
- we will launch a civility and respect campaign and toolkit
- we will be reviewing leadership, organisational development and career development offerings within the Trust.

4.3



CEO Board Report



Independent Prescribers Conference

On 20 March, we hosted our annual Independent Prescribers Conference. With the theme 'Safe – Effective – Competent' the event welcomed an audience from across the field to hear from a wide range of speakers. Chief Nursing Officer at Combined Healthcare, Kenny Laing opened the event, while I had the privilege of closing the day.

The conference continues to be an important event for independent prescribers, and it was fantastic to see so many new and familiar faces. Thank you to those who were behind the organisation of the conference.

Combined Healthcare receives Morrison's Foundation donation

Combined Charity, the charity of Combined Healthcare, recently received over £7,000 from the local Morrison's Foundation. The Specialist Children's Short Breaks Service, based at Dragon Square was successful in its bid to the Foundation for funds for specialist garden equipment and toys for the children who use the service.

Around 50 children with learning disabilities and other complex needs access Dragon Square. They will soon be able to enjoy the new equipment this summer in the service garden.

Combined Charity launches grant programme

In 2024, Combined Charity received a special legacy donation from a former patient of Ward 7 at Harplands Hospital. The generous donation was gifted for the benefit of Harplands Hospital with no further restrictions placed on how this money should be spent, but a suggestion of delivering further improvements to the Ward 7 garden, which is currently being explored.

Combined Healthcare is now inviting staff at Harplands to identify needs for funding and to apply for the grants fund. Staff are encouraged to apply for funding, big or small. The trust envisages seeing the funding go towards initiatives which may help to improve patient experience or outcomes, staff wellbeing ideas or additional equipment to benefit patients while on wards.

5.0 Conclusion

Once again, it has been a busy month at Combined, full of further examples of the initiatives and activities that continue to contribute to us being outstanding in all we do and how we do it.

