

## Board of Directors Meeting in Public - Cover Sheet

<b>Subject:</b>	Chief Executive's report		<b>Date:</b> 7 <sup>th</sup> December 2023		
<b>Prepared By:</b>	Rich Brown, Head of Communication				
<b>Approved By:</b>	Paul Robinson, Chief Executive				
<b>Presented By:</b>	Paul Robinson, Chief Executive				
<b>Purpose</b>					
An update regarding some of the most noteworthy events and items over the past month from the Chief Executive's perspective.		<b>Approval</b>			
		<b>Assurance</b>	Y		
		<b>Update</b>			
		<b>Consider</b>			
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>					
Provide outstanding care in the best place at the right time	Improve health and well-being within our communities	Empower and support our people to be the best they can be	To continuously learn and improve	Sustainable use of resources and estate	Work collaboratively with partners in the community
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
<b>Principal Risk</b>					
PR1	Significant deterioration in standards of safety and care				
PR2	Demand that overwhelms capacity				
PR3	Critical shortage of workforce capacity and capability				
PR4	Failure to achieve the Trust's financial strategy				
PR5	Inability to initiate and implement evidence-based Improvement and innovation				
PR6	Working more closely with local health and care partners does not fully deliver the required benefits				
PR7	Major disruptive incident				
PR8	Failure to deliver sustainable reductions in the Trust's impact on climate change				
<b>Committees/groups where this item has been presented before</b>					
None					
<b>Acronyms</b>					
BAF = Board Assurance Framework CDC = Community Diagnostics Centre CQC = Care Quality Commission GP = General Practice		NHS = National Health Service UNICEF = United Nations Children's Fund UTC = Urgent Treatment Centre VCHA = Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance			
<b>Executive Summary</b>					
An update regarding some of the most noteworthy events and items over the past month from the Chief Executive's perspective.					
The Board is asked to:					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>APPROVE the recommendation from our People Committee that Sherwood Forest Hospitals makes arrangements to sign the NHSE Organisational Charter for Sexual Safety.</li> <li>NOTE the other updates included in this report.</li> </ul>					

## Operational updates

### Overview of operational activity

Attendance and non-elective admission numbers increased in October 2023 to be the highest of 2023/24, as seasonal pressures increased.

The non-elective pathway remains under sustained pressure as the mismatch between patient demand and hospital capacity leads to patients waiting longer than we would wish for admission – a position seen across many acute Trusts across the country.

Despite the high attendance and admission, there are a number of improvements to note – including increased levels of supported discharges, reductions in the number of long stay patients and reductions in the number of medically safe patients remaining in our hospitals.

In response to the pressures, during October and November, we enacted escalation actions including our full capacity protocol. We also opened some of our winter capacity slightly earlier than planned in mid-November to cope with rising winter pressures.

Despite the urgent and emergency care challenges, we continue to deliver a strong Same Day Emergency Care (SDEC) offer that is exceeding the national target and we benchmark well in terms of our ability to handover patients from our ambulance crews in a timely manner, which continues to release crews to serve our local population.

Our planned care activity was impacted in October by industrial action that took place for three days at the start of the month. Fortunately, we saw no further instances of industrial action in November and there are no further periods of industrial action have been announced at the time of writing. We welcome the progress that appears to be made nationally in negotiations that have made this reprieve in this year's industrial action possible.

During recent months, we have also seen the total referral to treatment waiting list size begin to stabilise, partly due to increased validation. And although our long waits position has slightly deteriorated, we have plans in place to reduce the number of long waiting patients by the end of the financial year as we focus on recovery plans for our fragile services.

Within our cancer services, we have some challenges in terms of the number of patients waiting greater than 62 days for treatment compared with earlier in the year. This is due to the periods of industrial action over the summer, however we continue our strong delivery of the national 28-day faster diagnostic standard as we remain one of only 10 Trusts in the region meeting the standard out of 23 trusts.

## National updates

### **NHS England letter on addressing the significant financial challenges created by industrial action in 2023/24 and immediate actions to take**

On Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023, NHS England issued [this letter](#) to address the significant financial challenges created by industrial action in 2023/24 and immediate actions for systems and providers across the country to take.

The letter sought to provide clarity on the funding and actions that our NHS has been asked to take to manage the financial and performance pressures created by industrial action following discussions with Government.

As a result of those pressures, the nationally-agreed priorities up to the end of the financial year are: to achieve financial balance, protect patient safety and prioritise emergency performance and capacity, while protecting urgent care, high priority elective and cancer care.

In response, systems across the country have been asked to complete a rapid two-week exercise to agree actions required to deliver the priorities for the remainder of the financial year. As a Trust, we have been supporting that exercise here in the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire system.

Those plans have been requested against a backdrop of NHS England asking systems to set ambitious plans for 2023/24 in the context of NHS funding increasing in real terms between 2019/20 and 2023/24 to over £160billion, recognising the actions that systems have had to take to deal with a range of significant new pressures.

The impact of more than 40 days of industrial action this financial year are acknowledged within those plans, with that pressure alone creating unavoidable financial costs that are estimated at more than £1billion nationally with an equivalent loss of elective activity.

To cover the costs of industrial action to date, NHS England has taken the following actions which have been agreed with Government:

- Allocating a total of £800million to systems sourced from a combination of reprioritisation of national budgets and new funding.
- Reducing the elective activity target for 2023/24 to a national average of 103%, which will now be maintained for the remainder of the financial year.
- Discontinuing the application of holdback to the Elective Recovery Fund (ERF) for the rest of the year and formally allocating systems their full ERF funding.

By 22<sup>nd</sup> November, systems were asked to agree the steps required to live within their re-baselined system allocation and reflecting the impact of the reduced elective activity goal.

Within those plans, systems were asked to show how they will deliver financial balance, including by showing:

- How they have fully worked-up efficiency plans, including the reductions in agency staffing set out at the start of the year;
- Where they require flexibility on programme funding;
- An elective plan that is refocused on driving productivity from core capacity, identifying the insourcing/outsourcing and waiting list initiatives you still consider necessary within a balanced financial plan focused on the longest waits, urgent elective, and cancer care.

Plans were also asked to be based on a scenario where there are no further junior doctor or consultant strikes.

The Trust and our partners in the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire ICS submitted its return by 22<sup>nd</sup> November and we remain in discussions with NHS England on the outcome of those plans.

### **Trust receives advance notice of Thirlwall Inquiry, including upcoming request for evidence**

The Board is asked to note that NHS England has given Sherwood Forest Hospitals formal advance notice of the Thirlwall Inquiry beginning its work, including with the advance notification of a request for evidence.

The Inquiry was announced following the trial of Lucy Letby, who was sentenced to life imprisonment and a whole life order on each of seven counts of murder and seven counts of attempted murder. That trial, which concluded on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2023, considered offences that took place at the Countess of Chester Hospital, part of the Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.

The Thirlwall Public Inquiry published [its terms of reference](#) in October and is now starting its work, with the inquiry to investigate three broad areas:

- A. The experiences of the Countess of Chester Hospital and other relevant NHS services, of all the parents of the babies named in the indictment.
- B. The conduct of those working at the Countess of Chester Hospital, including the board, managers, doctors, nurses and midwives with regard to the actions of Lucy Letby while she was employed there as a neonatal nurse and subsequently, including:
  - i. whether suspicions should have been raised earlier, whether Lucy Letby should have been suspended earlier and whether the police and other external bodies should have been informed sooner of suspicions about her
  - ii. the responses to concerns raised about Lucy Letby from those with management responsibilities within the Trust

- iii. whether the Trust's culture, management and governance structures and processes contributed to the failure to protect babies from Lucy Letby
- C. The effectiveness of NHS management and governance structures and processes, external scrutiny and professional regulation in keeping babies in hospital safe and well looked after, whether changes are necessary and, if so, what they should be, including how accountability of senior managers should be strengthened. This section will include a consideration of NHS culture.

The Public Inquiry has asked NHS England to cascade on their behalf a request for evidence to all trusts with neonatal units, so that it can better understand their work.

NHS England has requested that all Trusts notify their Boards of this development, which is the purpose of this written update to our Trust Board today.

While we are still awaiting to receive that letter as a Trust, the information published on the gov.uk website suggests that the letter from the Public Inquiry will formally request evidence from the Trust around the following questions:

28. Whether recommendations to address culture and governance issues made by previous inquiries into the NHS have been implemented into wider NHS practice? To what effect?

29. What concerns are there about the effectiveness of the current culture, governance management structures and processes, regulation and other external scrutiny in keeping babies in hospital safe and ensuring the quality of their care? What further changes, if any, should be made to the current structures, culture or professional regulation to improve the quality of care and safety of babies? How should accountability of senior managers be strengthened?

30. Would any concerns with the conduct of the board, managers, doctors, nurses and midwives at the Countess of Chester Hospital have been addressed through changes in NHS culture, management and governance structures and professional regulation?

Members of our Executive Team are now working to coordinate the Trust's response to those questions in anticipation of receiving that letter.

## Other Trust updates

### Trust strategy update

The refresh of the Trust's strategy is continuing ahead of its launch in April 2024, with the promise that there will be plenty of opportunities for our Trust Board, patients, members, partners and the communities we serve to help shape that work.

The Trust's current strategy is due to end in March 2024, meaning a new strategy is needed to help set the direction of the Trust and how it aims to continue to deliver great patient care to the communities it serves.



Once developed, the strategy will set the direction for the Trust over the next five years up to 2029 under a new-look vision that will aim to deliver outstanding care by compassionate people in a way that enables healthier communities.

During December and January, the Trust's governors and host of Trust ambassadors will be getting out-and-about in our hospitals and the wider community to help take that strategy 'out on the road' to help engage key stakeholders on our new approach.

Those conversations will play a vital role in helping to test-out the strategy, including to share the new vision with our communities, partners and colleagues and talk about what we are committing to deliver over the next five years.

The events will take place online and across our hospitals, including with a host of pop-up stalls and sessions – both in-person and online.

Dates and locations for those events will be shared across our Trust communications as soon as they are confirmed, so keep a look out for those over the coming weeks to find out how you can have your say.

### **England's Chief Nursing Officer and Chief Midwifery Officer visit Sherwood Forest Hospitals**



The work of Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust's maternity team was in the spotlight during November when England's Chief Nursing Officer and Chief Midwifery Officer visited King's Mill Hospital on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> November.

Dame Ruth May, Chief Nursing Officer for England, and Kate Brintworth, Chief Midwifery Officer for England, spoke to midwives, nurses and maternity support workers who showcased various aspects of their work.

The pair were given a tour of the Sherwood Birthing Unit, the Maternity Ward, and Neonatal Unit at King's Mill, where maternity services were rated 'good' in the Care Quality Commission's (CQC) latest report.

This is the first time that England's Chief Nursing Officer has visited the Trust since it achieved Pathway to Excellence accreditation almost exactly a year ago.

During their visit, the pair also heard from the Trust's Recruitment and Retention Midwife, Sharon Parker, who explained how the Trust has created a safe, nurturing environment for newly-qualified midwives. Since taking up post in 2022, Sharon has successfully recruited into all vacant posts for newly-qualified midwives and all these midwives still work for the Trust – something that is recognised as a huge success given the challenge nationally.

The Trust also shared news of its Neonatal team achieving Stage 2 Baby Friendly accreditation from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The programme enables services to support families with feeding and help parents build a close and loving relationship with their baby.

Claire Allison, Tobacco Dependence Maternity Lead for the Trust's maternity tobacco treatment service, also showcased how the Trust supports pregnant families to quit smoking. The specialist Phoenix team recognises that smoking in pregnancy is the result of addiction to nicotine, which requires treatment, so they provide free, friendly support that is tailored to each individual - without judgement or pressure. More than 185 babies have been born 'smoke-free' as a result of the team's support.

During their visit, the Chief Nursing Officer and Chief Midwifery Officer also presented the Pastoral Care Award to the Trust in recognition of the support the Trust provides to its internationally-educated Nurses and Midwives from the moment the recruitment process begins and throughout their employment. The Trust has been recruiting international colleagues for more than four years and currently has more than 200 international Nurses and two international Midwives.

We are immensely proud of our teams and the care and dedication they provide to our patients here at Sherwood. We were really pleased to be able to showcase just some of the great things going on here across our hospitals to two of the county's most senior leaders.

### **NHSE organisational charter for sexual safety**

At its meeting on Thursday 9 November, the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board confirmed it has signed [NHS England's organisational charter for sexual safety in healthcare](#).

The charter commits organisations to taking and enforcing a zero-tolerance approach to any unwanted, inappropriate and/or harmful sexual behaviours within the workplace.

Like NHS England and our ICB colleagues, we are clear that those who work, train and learn within the healthcare system have the right to be safe and feel supported at work. We all have a responsibility to ourselves and our colleagues and must act if we witness these behaviours.

Having reviewed the charter, our the Trust's People Committee has recommended that the Trust's signs the charter itself as a demonstration of our commitment to tackling this important issue.

We are now making arrangements for the Trust to sign that charter and, over the coming weeks, we will be taking the practical steps needed to realise the commitments we are signing up to within this charter.

We will keep the Board updated about this important work as it progresses.

### **Sherwood Forest Hospitals gains 'Veterans Aware' accreditation**



During Remembrance Week in early November, we were delighted to receive the news that Sherwood Forest Hospitals has been accredited to the highest standard available from the Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance in recognition of the support we provide for armed forces serving personnel and veterans.

Over the last 12 months, we have worked to strengthen the support provided to the area's armed forces community by working towards achieving a gold standard of the independently-assessed Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance accreditation.

As a Trust, we originally signed the Armed Forces Covenant in 2016 as a commitment to ensuring that those who serve or have served in the armed forces and their families are treated fairly whenever they need the Trust's services. This commitment also covers all members of staff and volunteers across the Trust.



The VCHA's aim is to make sure that patients from the Armed Forces Community, including families, are paid due regard, and are not disadvantaged in terms of access to and outcomes of healthcare, as a result of their military life in line with the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant.

Achieving the gold standard accreditation shows the strength of our commitment to supporting our armed forces veterans and serving personnel across Nottinghamshire.

### **Mobile clinical research van visits King's Mill**

Members of the local community have been invited to find out more about clinical research by visiting a mobile research unit at King's Mill Hospital, when the Nottinghamshire Mobile Research Unit visited King's Mill Hospital between Monday 20<sup>th</sup> November and Friday 1<sup>st</sup> December.

The unit – which has a fully-equipped research clinic – aims to make it easier for members of the public to access research opportunities and take part in clinical trials.

Sherwood Forest Hospitals already carries out research in its dedicated facilities at King's Mill Hospital alongside local GP practices.

During its stay at King's Mill, patients and members of the public had the opportunity to talk to clinical research colleagues between 10am and 3pm every weekday where they were able to learn about how the Trust's Research and Innovation team carries out cutting-edge research. This includes screening for undiagnosed liver disease and treatment for high cholesterol.

The Trust currently has more than 4,000 patients taking part in research trials in more than 25 areas, including Respiratory, Oncology and Rheumatology. As a Trust, we are planning to build on this work by expanding studies into areas not previously involved in research.

Having the unit outside the hospital is showcasing how we can make research more visible and accessible to the local community in the hope that more people have the opportunity to participate in clinical research studies and provide them with access to new treatments and interventions.

## **Newark Hospital updates**

### **Update on the NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board's (ICB) review of the overnight opening hours of Newark Hospital's Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC)**

The NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) has led a number of public engagement events over recent months to discuss the best permanent opening hours for the UTC, enabling local people to feedback via an online survey that was available on the ICB website and promoted at a number of public engagement events.

The UTC, which is run by Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, provides urgent care and non-life-threatening treatment for injuries or conditions, such as cuts, simple broken bones, wounds, minor burns and minor head, eye and back injuries.

The UTC is currently open for 13 hours a day between 9am to 10pm, slightly exceeding the national minimum standard of 12 hours per day. Those opening hours were put in place in March 2020 as a temporary measure to address ongoing staffing issues made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Prior to the pandemic, the UTC was often closed overnight at short notice due to lack of staff availability. Typically, when the UTC was open overnight, it would treat, on average, one patient per hour, in contrast to between 4-6 patients per hour during the daytime.

As a Trust, we remain committed to working alongside our Integrated Care Board colleagues to provide a safe, sustainable urgent treatment centre at Newark Hospital, operating at least 12 hours per day, in line with the specification for urgent treatment centres across England.

As part of that engagement period, we worked alongside ICB and NHS England colleagues to host a 'clinical senate' to give credibility to these discussions around the longer-term opening hours of the facility.

The senate saw a collective set of independent clinical advisors receive a presentation about the proposals, as well as allowing the independent experts to visit and talk to several Newark Hospital colleagues about their experiences.

On Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> November, the independently-facilitated Options Appraisal Panel were due to consider the findings of the listening exercise, independent clinical expert advice from the East Midlands Clinical Senate and a range of evidence, including data about the local population and the safe staffing and running of the UTC service.

The outcomes of the listening exercise and Clinical Senate review – along with the process followed by the Options Appraisal Panel – are then due to be considered by the Nottinghamshire County Council Health Scrutiny Committee (HSC) at its next scheduled meeting on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

### **Additional health tests introduced at Newark Hospital, as 'accelerated' Community Diagnostics Centre activity is rolled-out**

It is our pleasure to bring you exciting news of the latest developments in our efforts to bring Nottinghamshire's first Community Diagnostics Centre (CDC) to our area, with the benefits of those tests now boasting a physical presence at Newark Hospital.

Community Diagnostics Centres are being developed across the country to create 'one-stop shops' for patients to access the health tests and investigations they need in a single visit. The Centres will also help to reduce waiting times for these vital tests, in-turn helping patients to receive an 'all clear' or diagnosis sooner.

The new Centre will be built alongside Mansfield Community Hospital in Stockwell Gate, Mansfield. Once open, it is expected to benefit tens of thousands of patients each year to help them get the answers they need to their health concerns sooner.

That work is continuing at pace and, rather than waiting for the full Centre to open in Spring 2025, we are delighted to confirm that hundreds of additional health checks and scans are already being made available across mid-Nottinghamshire.

And while these essential health checks and scans are available to every patient in the Mid Nottinghamshire area and beyond, that accelerated activity had previously been delivered from the Mansfield area until recently.

In November, we began offering up to 275 additional blood tests at Newark Hospital each week as part of a new drop-in service that makes it even more convenient for patients to access the vital tests they need – all without the need to book.

The tests are available at the Eastwood Centre at Newark Hospital every weekday between 11.30am and 3.30pm and we have been reaching-out to local General Practice teams to encourage them to refer in as many of their patients into the clinic as possible.

We are proud of the work that is going on to bring Nottinghamshire's first Community Diagnostics Centre (CDC) to Mansfield and we look forward to bringing you the latest developments about this exciting work over the coming months.

### **Praise for audiology services at Newark Hospital**

Newark resident Lynn Roulstone has praised the Audiology department at Newark



Hospital after being fitted with Bluetooth hearing aids which she felt gave her a new 'lease of life'.

Lynn, 70, has struggled with her hearing since contracting a nasty bout of measles as a child. Her hearing worsened as she got older and she began to wear hearing aids in her forties.

She moved to Newark from Kingston in 2021 at a time when she was struggling with hearing aids she'd had fitted at a previous hospital and, as a result, she was struggling to hear and communicate with people.

By the time Lynn booked an appointment to see the audiologist at Newark Hospital, she had stopped going out and become very withdrawn due to her inability to participate in conversations. Upon learning her situation, the audiology team booked her in for an emergency appointment where they immediately offered to fit her with Bluetooth hearing aids.

Bluetooth hearing aids come with a range of features and can be connected to a mobile phone so users can adjust the volume, connect to a hearing loop system and even select a restaurant setting which drowns out external noise, allowing them to focus on the conversation in front of them.

The hearing aids were introduced to the department in 2021 and the team have received really good feedback from patients about the Bluetooth hearing aids.

The state-of-the-art audiology facility at Newark Hospital became operational early in 2022 and was introduced as part of our Trust's continuing programme of works to expand and improve the range of services available at Newark Hospital.

The facility provides a service Monday to Friday between 8.30am and 5.30pm, offering appointments for hearing assessments, hearing aid fittings and follow-ups, tinnitus management, paediatric assessment and hearing rehabilitation. New patients will need a referral from their GP to access the service.

Patients are encouraged to 'Ask for Newark' and speak to their GP when being referred for any hospital treatment to see if they can benefit from the ever-increasing range of outpatient appointments, procedures and operations available at Newark Hospital.

## Trust risk ratings reviewed

The Board Assurance Framework (BAF) risks for which the Risk Committee is the lead committee have been scrutinised by the Trust's Risk Committee.

The Committee has confirmed that there are no changes to the risk scores affecting the following areas:

- Principal Risk 6: Working more closely with local health and care partners does not fully deliver the required benefits.
- Principal Risk 7: A major disruptive incident

The Trust's Partnerships and Communities Committee has become the Lead Committee for PR6, but will not receive the BAF report until its February 2024 meeting due to the meetings schedule.



Risk Committee maintains oversight of PR6 until this time, with any points raised during the new Board Committee meeting captured to ensure nothing is lost during the transition to the new Committee.