

QEH Public Board of Directors' Meeting – 2 June 2020 – a summary

As part of the Trust's robust plan to keep patients and staff safe, QEH's Public Board of Directors' meetings are not being held in public at the moment, consistent with arrangements across the wider NHS.

During this period where we are not having face-to-face meetings, it is important that we continue to keep the public and our local community well-informed through open and transparent communications.

The QEH Board of Directors had a virtual public meeting on Tuesday 2 June 2020 (10-11.30am). The purpose of this document is to summarise the main discussion points, actions and decisions from the meeting, and to keep our patients and local community updated, in the absence of a face-to-face meeting. Board Papers have been published in advance of the meeting, as usual, and are available in full on our website [here](#).

Below is a summary of the discussions and decisions. The main focus of this meeting was the Trust's response to the next phase of COVID-19, our performance and the approval of our new five-year Corporate Strategy.

STP update

Rt Hon Patricia Hewitt, Independent Chair of Norfolk and Waveney Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP) and Melanie Craig, Chief Officer for NHS Norfolk and Waveney CCG, joined the meeting to give an update on the strengthened partnership working across the system during COVID-19.

Both wanted to express their thanks to QEH staff for their hard work and dedication during COVID-19 and hoped that our new ways of working together would continue. Patricia Hewitt applauded the three acute Trusts for working more closely together and all system partners for doing what had to be done quickly, saying the system's response to COVID-19 has been impressive. Patricia highlighted that COVID-19 has shone a light on the importance of prevention and health inequalities, both of which are features of the Norfolk and Waveney five-year plan for the health and care system.

Melanie Craig updated the Board on the merger of the five Norfolk CCGs into one which has taken place during the COVID-19 pandemic. She went on to describe how her vision of commissioner colleagues working more closely with acute colleagues to deliver transformation had become a reality during COVID-19 and talked about the increased operational support that has been put in place during the pandemic in parts of the system.

Melanie praised the work of QEH, including how the Trust has worked with GP colleagues during the pandemic to manage referrals safely. Melanie told the Board how 100% of GP surgeries in the CCG footprint are now using online booking and

virtual consultations. She also described the improved approach to support for care homes during COVID-19 which includes weekly check-ins with each care home.

Finally, Melanie provided an update on COVID-protect, a Norfolk-wide scheme which has seen shielding, vulnerable individuals get a weekly check-in to see how they are doing. West Norfolk and King's Lynn has the highest uptake with 80% of those eligible taking-up the offer of support.

Chairman's Report

In his paper, our Chairman, Professor Steve Barnett, acknowledged the amazing support and generosity from the local community during the Trust's response to COVID-19. He thanked Norfolk-based and Michelin-starred chef Galton Blackiston for preparing a special meal for patients and staff from QEH and also the Mayor of the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk and his wife for making QEH such a central part of the local community's VE Day celebrations.

CEO update

Our CEO, Caroline Shaw, talked the Board through the recent Oversight and Assurance Group (AOG) meeting referenced in her report. She explained that in the future at AOG we will be presenting our improvements against the Trust's six new strategic objectives and would focus more on outcomes to more clearly demonstrate our progress.

Finally, Caroline said a huge thank you to our staff for their hard work and dedication during COVID-19. She said each day she is amazed by the hard work and dedication of the team at QEH and their tenacity during these challenging circumstances to continue with our improvement programme.

COVID-19 update

Our Chief Operating Officer, Denise Smith, updated the Board about the antibody testing the Trust had been asked to introduce quickly on Friday 29 May. Since the test was introduced, four days ago, nearly 800 staff have had the test. We have introduced a booking system for staff and all inpatients already having blood tests are being offered the test; with results being returned within 24-hours. Denise expressed her thanks to the teams for getting this in place so quickly.

The Board asked how we were ensuring clinical quality during virtual consultations. Dr Frankie Swords, Medical Director, explained to the Board that we are following the British Medical Association (BMA) and the General Medical Council (GMC) detailed guidance on virtual consultations. She also told the Board about the positive feedback we have had from patients via Healthwatch on the virtual appointments. Finally, she explained that virtual appointments have the same rigour as a standard appointment and they still require a GP letter to be sent.

Denise Smith updated the Board on the introduction of the new Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Staff Forum and how the three sessions held so far, led by the Trust's Deputy Medical Director and Deputy Chief Nurse, had been well-attended with good feedback received.

Chairman, Professor Steve Barnett, asked for some work to be done around the Trust's preparations for a potential second spike of COVID-19, particularly if that were to happen during the flu season. This update will return to the Quality Committee in the months to come.

Integrated Quality Improvement Plan

Caroline Shaw told the Board that progress on the Integrated Quality Improvement Plan (IQIP) had continued at pace, despite the COVID-19 response. She told the Board that each Division had been asked to evaluate themselves against the CQC conditions imposed and work on plans for what it would take to get those conditions removed, which she said this will help focus the work of the Divisions. The Board were told that the Medicine Division is receiving additional support on their improvement plan.

Libby McManus, Chief Nurse, told the Board that her 'back to the floor Fridays' had gone down well with staff and allowed the senior nursing team to really show what good looks like and provide some objective observations on the wards. She explained that there is still more to do, particularly around customer service, end of life care and how we recognise and respond to deteriorating patients.

Integrated Performance Report

The Board discussed the C. Difficile levels, particularly noting that we should be aiming for zero cases and have a tolerance level instead of a target. The Board also sought reassurance that the recent increase in pressure ulcers would be reversed. Libby McManus explained that the increase in pressure ulcers at the Trust is down to the "proning" position many COVID-19 patients are put in to help them breathe.

The Board talked about the decline in Venous Thromboembolism (VTE) assessments. Dr Frankie Swords explained that the recent decline was due to four factors:

- The number of patients in ambulatory care is increasing
- The paperwork changed in December 2019
- Same-day emergency care opened in January 2020
- COVID-19 pandemic

She explained that remedial actions had been taken in March and April 2020 and further actions taken in May 2020. On this basis she would expect performance in this area to have returned to our previous good standard next month. Frankie also

explained that we have reviewed the patients affected by the decline in VTE standards to ensure there has been no harm to patients.

Professor Steve Barnett talked about the poor performance against the Trust's dementia finding target and asked if it is the correct target. He also asked the Trust to ensure that weekend mortality was kept under constant review following recent analysis that showed no lapses in care despite an increased level of patient mortality at the weekend.

The Board asked about the Trust's restoration of elective services as we ease out of lockdown. Caroline Shaw explained that we need to be realistic about the service we can provide with the level of social distancing we need to adhere to and the need for PPE. She said early analysis suggests we are looking at 50% of our pre-COVID capacity.

Denise Smith highlighted the recent improvement in Trust performance against the four-hour emergency access standard which has seen less than 10 people per day waiting over four-hours in our Emergency Department; which is a marked improvement. She also highlighted that 94% of ambulance handovers had happened within 30 minutes despite ambulances being back at pre-COVID levels.

Strategy

Deputy CEO, Laura Skaife-Knight, introduced the Trust's new five-year Corporate Strategy and sought its approval. She explained that the strategy been created after eight months of extensive engagement work with staff, Governors, volunteers, system partners, external stakeholders and Regulators. She said that the strategy overlays the priorities of five-year Norfolk and Waveney STP strategy and the narrative has been updated to reflect the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the Trust's response to the next phases.

Laura thanked the team for their hard work on getting the strategy to where it is today.

Laura also told that Board that we will be updating on 'how we're doing' against the KPIs in the strategy on a quarterly basis at the public Board.

The Board approved the new strategy; subject to some final minor amends, and the document will be launched by w/c 8 June 2020.

Board Assurance Framework

The Board noted and agreed the Board Assurance Framework.