

Trust Board Meeting in Public: Wednesday 13 May 2020

TB2020.45

<b>Title</b>	<b>Integrated Assurance Committee Report</b>
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<b>Status</b>	For information
<b>History</b>	The Integrated Assurance Committee provides a regular report to the Board.

<b>Board Lead(s)</b>	<b>Prof Sir Jonathan Montgomery, Integrated Assurance Committee Chair</b>			
<b>Key purpose</b>	Strategy	<b>Assurance</b>	Policy	<b>Performance</b>

## Executive Summary

1. The Integrated Assurance Committee is a sub-committee of the Trust Board, and as such provides a regular report to the Board on the main issues raised and discussed at its meetings.

2. Under its terms of reference, the Committee is responsible for providing a report to the Trust Board detailing items discussed, actions agreed and issues to be referred to the Board, indicating the extent to which the Committee was able to take assurance from the evidence provided and where additional information was required.

### Recommendations

3. The Board is asked to:

- **Note** the Integrated Assurance Committee's report to the Board from its meeting held on 8 April 2020.

## **Introduction**

The Integrated Assurance Committee [“the Committee”] held its first formal meeting on 8 April 2020. This took place via video conference in line with the revised mode of operation for the Board and Committees during the Covid-19 response.

Under its terms of reference, the Committee is responsible for reporting to the Board items discussed, actions agreed and issues to be referred to the Board, indicating the extent to which the Committee was able to take assurance from the evidence provided and where additional information was required. This report aims to contribute to the fulfilment of that purpose.

## **Interim Working Arrangements for the Integrated Assurance Committee**

The Committee considered this item which outlined interim arrangements for the Committee during the Covid-19 response phase, noting that these were consistent with those that had been considered by the Board. The need to re-prioritise activities, deferring some where appropriate, was recognised.

Revisions to the functioning of the Committee during this period were noted and the Committee supported the deferral and re-prioritisation of items as outlined.

## **Review of Covid-19 and Corporate Risk Registers**

The Committee received an initial draft of the Covid-19 Risk Register and noted the risk descriptions and scores presented. It recognised that this was a live document which was subject to continual review and update and that the position was current a rapidly changing one. The Committee took significant assurance from this process, noting that it represented the start of an iterative process.

Particular consideration was given to risks to quality and patient experience. The impact of changes to arrangements for visitors and the mitigations that were in place were discussed. It was recognised that the impact of arrangements to accommodate the treatment of Covid-19 patients on non-Covid-19 patients and pathways was a risk that would need to be closely monitored.

The Committee also received an updated Corporate Risk Register. It was noted that work had been due to commence to reorganise this in line with the Trust’s new strategic objectives but that timescales for this would need to be revised. It was agreed that the Register should continue to be maintained rather than significantly reshaped at this stage.

It was recognised that this Risk Register should continue to be monitored but that some actions to address risks might need to be consciously deferred for a short period in the context of the interim pressures created by Covid-19.

The Committee noted the year end position of the Corporate Risk Register and Board Assurance Framework and the proposed approach to management of the CRR and its content during the outbreak period

## **Staff Wellbeing during Covid-19 Outbreak**

The Chief People Officer provided a summary of the support that was being offered to staff as part of the Covid-19 response.

The Committee heard that the testing programme currently had capacity for 60 people per day with the intention to increase this. It was noted that the number of individuals absent had reduced.

Parking for staff had been made free of charge, accommodation had been provided for self-isolating staff and key worker childcare was being offered. It had been noted that new starters were disadvantaged in relation to absence pay and this had been addressed. A home working policy was in place for those staff for whom this was possible and daily communications went out to all staff via email to convey key messages. An assistance programme and self-help apps were also available to staff and the need to offer particular support to self-isolating staff to assist them in returning to work was discussed.

The need to ensure that there was an effective cascade system to ensure that key messages reached all staff was recognised and the initiatives that were being put in place to strengthen these mechanisms were outlined.

The Committee noted this outline of the arrangements in place to support staff during the period of the Covid-19 response. It took confidence and assurance from the actions that were being taken and those that were being scoped.

The tremendous contribution by staff across the Trust was acknowledged and the Committee recognised how well staff had adapted and expressed its thanks for their flexibility.

### **Integrated Performance Reporting**

The Committee received this regular report on performance across operational, quality, workforce and financial metrics.

Recent performance against key operational standards was reviewed. The Committee noted that attendances at the Trust's Emergency Departments had currently reduced. Rapid changes were being made to complex, integrated pathways to accommodate Covid-19 the response and work was underway with system partners to discharge all medically fit patients.

The Committee heard that a huge effort had been made to train staff and it was felt that wards had adapted well in facilitating patient cohorting. It was noted that currently the level of staff absence was not as high as elsewhere but that this still represented a significant risk and that an agile working policy would allow staff working remotely to return to support clinical teams in non-clinical roles where appropriate.

It was confirmed that service pathways for hyper acute pathways remained in place with their usual protocols. It was noted, however, that a reduction in presentations had been seen nationally and that public messaging was needed to ensure that patients presented as normal with the relevant symptoms.

The Committee heard that harm reviews for long-waiting patients continued and that SIRI (Serious Incidents Requiring Investigation) investigations were being undertaken where appropriate. The Committee also noted that the HSMR mortality metric was below expected and the SHMI was as expected. Safety messages were continuing and that the Patient Safety Response Team continued to operate virtually.

The Committee noted that this provided assurance that key safety and quality monitoring continued despite Covid-19 and that this would allow the Trust to assess the risk of harm being created for non-Covid-19 patients and pathways.

It was reported that vacancy rates had reduced and that levels of mandatory training and appraisal had improved. However it was recognised that mandatory training had been reduced to minimal levels during the Covid-19 response and that these figures were therefore expected to fall again.

Interim reporting on the year-end position was received but the Committee heard that the final year-end position was yet to be closed down.

## **Other Activities**

### Estates Health and Safety Update

The Committee received an update on work that was underway to provide assurance regarding continued compliance with health and safety requirements across the Trust estate and to identify any outstanding work that was required.

Assurance was taken from the progress that was being made and the focus that was taking place on prioritisation. It was recognised that some work would be affected by the need to prioritise the Covid-19 response and that interim mitigations would be required.

The opportunity was also taken to commend the work of the Estates team in contributing to the Covid-19 response, noting that they had been highly responsive and that their efforts had enabled important reconfigurations to take place.

The Committee noted this update on progress achieved and work planned.

### Infection Prevention and Control Committee Report

The Committee received this regular update on infection prevention and control matters.

The Committee noted that some of the work being undertaken to respond to Covid-19 was supporting infection control more generally and continuation of this good practice should be encouraged.

### SIRI and Never Events Report

The Committee received this regular overview of Serious Incidents Requiring Investigation (SIRI), including Never Events.

It was noted that there had been eleven Never Events in the 2018/19 year and seven in the 2019/20 year. It was recognised that a figure of seven remained too high but that the improvement had been based on significant hard work across the Trust.

Presentations were provided to the Chief Executive in relation to each Never Event including contributions from the staff involved outlining action plans for improvement. The emphasis had remained on ensuring that staff involved in these incidents felt supported and not blamed but this approach emphasised the seriousness with which these issues were treated.

The Committee heard that there had been 72 SIRIs in the 2018/19 year and 109 in the 2019/20 year. Graphical data showed that the proportion of actions completed had risen from around 50% to over 80% in recent months.

The Committee noted that this was a helpful summary of the progress that had been made in embedding a safety culture.

**Recommendation**

The Trust Board is asked to **note** the contents of this report.

**Professor Sir Jonathan Montgomery**

**Integrated Assurance Committee Chair**

**May 2020**