

Cover Sheet

Council of Governors Meeting: Wednesday 27 May 2026

CoG2026.04

Title: Performance, Workforce and Finance Committee Report

Status: For Information

History: Report from PWF to Council

Lead: Committee Chair

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Confidential: No

Key Purpose: Assurance

Performance, Workforce and Finance Committee Report

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This paper forms part of the Performance, Workforce and Finance Committee's regular reporting to Council of Governors, providing Council with a summarised report highlighting key Committee business and issues arising from its meetings.

2. Background

- 2.1. The remit of the Committee is to consider, for the Council of Governors, matters concerning the performance of the Trust against key standards and how the Trust Board obtains assurance about this; matters concerning the planning and development of the Trust's workforce and how the Trust Board obtains assurance about this; and matters concerning the Trust's financial position and planning and how the Trust Board obtains assurance about this.
- 2.2. Since the last meeting of the Council of Governors the Committee held a meeting on 18 March 2026. The meeting considered updates on delivery of the People Plan, operational performance standards, the annual planning process and the Trust's year-end financial forecast, together with matters relating to the future development of the Committee.

3. Updated People Plan Progress

- 3.1. The Committee received an update on delivery of the Trust's People Plan for 2025–2028. The Committee heard that the current year's priorities continued to focus on creating a culture of belonging, supporting leaders and managers to succeed, and improving workforce planning, recruitment and onboarding. The update highlighted work to improve staff wellbeing, address burnout, strengthen digital capability, improve HR systems and processes, and support managers to lead organisational change effectively.
- 3.2. The Committee discussed feedback from the National Staff Survey, including concerns relating to bullying, harassment and sexual safety. It was noted that there had been some improvement in these metrics, but that performance remained below the level the Trust would wish to see and that further action was required. The Committee heard about work underway to address these issues, including active bystander training, action through the violence and aggression workstream, and further efforts to make it easier and safer for staff to raise concerns without fear of detriment.

- 3.3. Governors explored wider questions about organisational culture, the pace of improvement and how progress is communicated to staff. The Committee heard that leadership behaviour, stronger staff voice at Board level and support for managers to take difficult decisions were all important to sustaining improvement. The Committee also discussed practical issues affecting staff experience, including teamworking, digital tools, estates and environment, and travel. The discussion provided assurance that these themes are reflected in the People Plan and remain an active focus for the executive team.

4. Operational Performance Standards

- 4.1. The Committee received an overview of the Trust's performance against operational standards using the same performance pack considered internally by the Trust, which members welcomed as a transparent approach.
- 4.2. The Committee heard that urgent and emergency care performance remained above plan despite continued demand pressures, and that elective performance had improved compared with the previous year, although some patients continued to experience very long waits. The Committee noted the importance of elective capacity, including the role of the new Surgical Elective Centre, in improving performance over time.
- 4.3. On cancer performance, the Committee heard that the Trust continued to meet the 28-day faster diagnosis standard consistently, but that 62-day performance remains below the required level. Reduction of the cancer backlog, particularly for the longest-waiting patients, remained a priority and was subject to regular senior review. The Committee also noted ongoing challenges in diagnostics, particularly in Audiology and Endoscopy, and heard that recent investment is expected to support capacity and productivity improvements in these areas.
- 4.4. The Committee discussed how performance was measured and prioritised, including the use of a core metrics page to maintain focus on the most critical issues. It also explored how stronger planning discipline and cross-organisational learning could support improvement more widely across the Trust. In discussion of the Trust's period at OPEL 4 (the highest operational pressure escalation level) earlier in the year, the Committee heard that a formal lessons-learned exercise had already been undertaken and that actions, including strengthened senior operational cover during periods of pressure, were being taken forward. Governors were advised that a report on preparation for next winter would be presented to the Board later in the year.

5. Annual Planning Process

- 5.1. The Committee received a brief update on the annual planning process following its detailed discussion of the annual plan in January. The Committee was advised that the Trust had resubmitted its operational, workforce and finance plans on the day of the meeting in response to a further request from the national team, and that a further update would be provided to the Board and Governors in due course.

6. 2025/26 Financial Forecast Update

- 6.1. The Committee received an update on the Trust's year-end financial forecast. The Committee heard that the Trust remained on track to deliver its planned year-end surplus, with performance to date broadly in line with plan and a more controlled in-year trajectory than in previous years. The Committee noted that this represented an improved overall position compared with the previous year and supported the Trust's credibility with national teams.
- 6.2. The Committee also heard that progress in reducing the underlying deficit had been more limited. While agency expenditure had been reduced and workforce controls continued, non-pay expenditure remained a more significant challenge, particularly in relation to consumables and stock management. The Committee noted that further work was underway to strengthen grip in these areas, including increased use of electronic stock management systems across the Trust.
- 6.3. The Committee discussed how productivity was measured in both clinical and corporate services. It heard that national productivity measures were complex and had limitations, particularly where estates costs distorted comparisons between services. The Committee noted further consideration would be given to how more meaningful productivity measures for non-clinical functions might be developed through the Trust's governance arrangements.

7. Other Matters

- 7.1. The Committee noted that no Non-Executive Directors had been able to attend the meeting on this occasion owing to circumstances on the day. The Chair emphasised the importance of regular triangulation between governors, executive directors and non-executive directors and indicated that future meeting arrangements would seek to support this.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1. The Council is asked to note this report and the assurance provided that the Committee has considered key matters relating to workforce, operational performance, annual planning and finance, and has continued to explore how it can most effectively support the Council's oversight role.