

Cover Sheet

Council of Governors Meeting: Wednesday 14 May 2025

CoG2025.06

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's Board of Directors obtains assurance about this; matters concerning the planning and development of the Trust's workforce and how the Trust's Board of Directors obtains assurance about this; and matters concerning the Trust's financial position and planning and how its Board of Directors obtains assurance about this.
- 2.2. Since the last meeting of the Council of Governors the Committee held a meeting on 7 April 2025. Ms Kapernaros and Mr Dean, Non-Executive Directors (NEDs), attended the meeting, answered questions from Governors, and provided comments. This meeting focussed predominantly on discussion of Annual Planning for 2025/26.

3. Sexual Harassment

- 3.1. The Chief People Officer provided a brief update on the progress of this work and the Acting Chief Executive Officer reiterated the Trust's commitment to it.
- 3.2. Mr Roberts explained that the programme was being progressed under the leadership of the Workforce Team with cross-disciplinary support from across the Trust.
- 3.3. The Committee heard that an anonymous reporting system had now been implemented with the support of the Freedom to Speak Up team.

4. Annual Planning for 2025/26

- 4.1. The Acting Chief Executive Officer provided an overview of the annual planning process in the NHS, highlighting three key areas: operational access and performance standards, financial management, and safety and quality.
- 4.2. He explained that the national guidance was only released in January, making the turnaround time short.

- 4.3. The plan had been approved by the Board at the end of March but was still undergoing verification by NHS England. The importance of engaging and interpreting the plan for colleagues across the Trust was emphasised. The need for operational, financial, and workforce plans to be aligned was also stressed.
- 4.4. The financial plan aimed for break-even and a small surplus, with significant challenges recognised in achieving this.
- 4.5. The Chief Finance Officer explained to the Committee the financial plan bridge from the previous year's financial year to a £2m surplus. The plan included a 5.7% efficiency plan to achieve the surplus, which was slightly more ambitious than the previous year's plan.
- 4.6. The Chief People Officer commented on the workforce elements of the plan. The NHS had mandated a reduction in bank expenditure by 30% and agency expenditure by 10%. This was challenging as the organisation had already reduced over 400 whole-time equivalents in temporary staffing.
- 4.7. The Committee heard that the upcoming financial year would be challenging for OUH and the entire NHS, with significant changes expected, including the abolition of NHS England and a 50% reduction in ICB running costs.
- 4.8. There was to be a focus on reducing corporate and non-clinical costs, contributing to the overall CIP target of £99 million in savings.
- 4.9. The NHS has grown its workforce, but there was a push to reduce reliance on temporary staffing and potentially reduce the substantive workforce.
- 4.10. The Committee sought assurance regarding the deliverability of the Plan. This was recognised to be challenging but non-executive directors expressed the view that executives had worked hard to negotiate the best possible outcome.
- 4.11. Concerns were expressed regarding the impact on staff morale and the need for careful and realistic workforce changes was recognised, emphasising the importance of engaging with staff.
- 4.12. The organisation would work closely with divisions to detail how the plan would be delivered, ensuring quality and safety remain priorities.
- 4.13. Difficult decisions were expected to be necessary to achieve the plan, and these would be brought through appropriate governance processes.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1. The Council is asked to note this report.