

SOUTH EASTERN HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE TRUST

Minutes of a Public Meeting of the South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust Board held on Wednesday 26 February 2025 at 2.03pm in the QIIC Hub, Trust Headquarters, Ulster Hospital, Dundonald

PRESENT: Mr J Patton, Chairman of Trust Board

Ms R Coulter, Chief Executive

Mr K Donaghy, Non-Executive Director
Mrs R Gibbs, Director of Adult Services & Healthcare in Prison
Mr R Havlin, Non-Executive Director
Mr C Martyn, Medical Director
Mrs S Henderson, Non-Executive Director
Mrs H Moore, Director of Planning, Performance & Informatics
Mr N McKinley, Non-Executive Director
Mr K McMahan, Non-Executive Director
Ms M Parks, Director of Surgery, Elective Care, Maternity & Paediatrics
Mr M Neil, Director of Unscheduled Care, Medicine & Cancer
Dr D Robinson, Deputy Chief Executive, Executive Director of Nursing, Midwifery & AHPs and Director of Support Services
Mrs C Smyth, Director of People & Organisational Development
Ms W Thompson, Deputy Chief Executive, Director of Finance & Estates
Mrs A Quirk, Non-Executive Director

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs M McNally, Assistant Director, Risk Management & Governance (Board Secretary)
Mr J Caldwell, Assistant Director, Safeguarding & Family Support (obo Mrs Preece)
Ms J Davidson, Assistant Director, Primary & Integrated Care (obo Mrs Dickson)
Ms S Hamilton, Assistant Director, Maternity & Gynaecology (for presentation)
Ms J Dorrian, Bereavement Midwife, Maternity Services (for presentation)
Ms S Stitt, Bereavement Midwife, Maternity Services (for presentation)
Members of the Forget Me Not Group (for presentation)

Executive Support Manager, Chief Executive's Office (minutes)

OPENING REMARKS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting particularly Bereavement Midwifery colleagues and the Forget Me Not Group who would be presenting. **The Chairman** noted Mr Caldwell and Ms Davidson were attending for their respective Directors before covering house-keeping matters.

PRESENTATION: BEREAVEMENT SERVICES – MATERNITY & GYNAECOLOGY

Ms Parks introduced the presentation (**SET/17/25**) with **Ms Hamilton, Ms Dorrian and Ms Stitt** providing an overview of the current support offered to families impacted by bereavement. **Ms Stitt** then introduced Kelly, Grace and Susie from the Forget Me Not Group to present on their work to improve bereavement support.

Drawing on their own personal experiences, the Group provided insight on how they were engaged with during such a challenging time for them and their families. The Group explained how they provide peer support to bereaved parents through events such as an Annual Remembrance Service, signposting to key services and raising awareness as well as highlighting their partnership with Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council in establishing the Forget Me Not Woodland at the Billy Neill MBE Country Park. The Group made a number of requests including the recruitment of a specialist bereavement counsellor, mandatory staff training on the importance of appropriate language, peer-to-peer support, assistance with expanding of a 'memory box' initiative and with launching a website.

Ms Coulter explained how the bereavement midwifery service had been established before adding this had been one of the best Board presentations she had heard and thanking the Group for sharing their experiences. **The Chairman** also thanked the Group and commended their dedication.

1.0 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received for Ms McCauley (Non-Executive Director), Mrs Preece (Director of Children's Services & Executive Director of Social Work) and Mrs Dickson (Director of Primary Care & Older People's Services).

2.0 DECLARATION OF POTENTIAL CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest made at this juncture or during the meeting.

3.0 CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

Members noted **SET/18/25 Chairman's Report**.

4.0 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS

Ms Coulter advised she had no items to raise not already listed on the agenda.

5.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 29 JANUARY 2025

The Chairman deferred consideration of the draft minutes due to their late availability.

6.0 MATTERS ARISING

Members noted **SET/19/25 Matters Arising Sheet** of which four were completed and one updated by **Ms Thompson** who stated the NI Executive released £17m for repairs following Storm Eowyn with £4m earmarked for DoH.

7.0 ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

7.1 INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT: JANUARY 2025

Members received the Report (**SET/20/25**) and the **NME Assurance Report Q3 2024/25 (SET/21/25)** noting performance against SDP as follows:

- 41% of trajectories between 0% and 5% (down from 61% on last month)
- 13% between -5% and -1% (up from 7%)
- 46% less than -5% (up from 32%)

Mrs Moore outlined hospital activity and cancer performance highlighting Healthcare Acquired Infections, Unallocated Cases as well as Adult Services data. **Mrs Moore** stated core day case activity reached its highest since encompass Go-Live and average length of stay was 9.5 days - an improvement from last year.

Mr McKinley wished to understand how to reconcile the 8% figure attributed to the Cancer 14 day metric against the 100% target and asked how demand had changed since the target was originally set. **Mrs Moore** advised there had been circa 12% growth in cancer referrals year on year since the pandemic with notable increases arising from public awareness campaigns. **Mrs Moore** noted Mr Neil closely monitors the conversion rate because not all referrals will lead to a cancer diagnosis. **Mr Neil** advised the 14 day target was a pass or fail matrix and applied only to breast cancer which typically sees circa 3% of referrals resulting in diagnosis. **Mr Neil** added last year the longest wait was 75 days which today stood at 20 so the 8% figure paints a picture which was not the full lived patient experience. **Mr McKinley** stated it was important to understand the whole patient journey and what lay behind the 8% figure was significant improvement work. **Mr Martyn** added the conversion rate had not shifted during his medical career noting a limiting factor was staff shortages within breast radiology.

Mr McKinley referred to the HAI update which read '*review of data shows an increase in CDI and MRSA cases sampled less than 48 hours from admission suggesting they are not hospital acquired infections*' before asking what this meant for community services. **Dr Robinson** stated if the infection was acquired less than 48 hours from admission it was likely it occurred in the community so the split helped denote the distinction. **Dr Robinson** advised community staff take universal precautions to prevent infection spread adding HCAI over 48 hours remained similar to last year which was added by regular post-infection reviews.

Mr McKinley noted a target of 86 Unallocated Cases more than 20 days against which SET had 118 before asking who had set the target and how achievable it was. **Mr Caldwell** replied SPPG set the target in September 2022 against Trusts' advice that it was unachievable with high staff vacancy rates, a lack of a review of the Children's Social Workforce and a 49% increase in LAC numbers since 2012.

7.2 FINANCIAL REPORT: MONTH 10 2024/25

Members received the Report (**SET/22/25**) with **Ms Thompson** stating SET continued to report a breakeven position year to date as well as forecasting breakeven at year end adding underlying expenditure trends and ongoing efforts to achieve 2024/25 savings had produced £16.4m or 60% of required savings.

Ms Thompson stated substantive salaries & wages had increased primarily across Nursing & Midwifery as well as Medical & Dental due to winter pressures. **Ms Thompson** advised reporting on high cost drugs had been challenging since implementation of Encompass with work continuing with Pharmacy to ensure SET attracts all possible funding. **Ms Thompson** summarised the in-year capital spending position with SET having received an additional allocation in December of £1m with a bid made in January for £1.8m for projects achievable by year end.

Mrs Henderson asked for an update on the January budgetary monitoring round and **Ms Thompson** replied the additional £1.8m capital had been awarded as part

of that process. **Mrs Henderson** asked if there had been any feedback on the draft 2025/26 contingency plan from DoH and **Ms Thompson** advised Trusts were engaging with DoH on 2025/26 contingency planning with meetings scheduled over the next number of weeks. **Mr McKinley** referred to Page 6 which read ‘a review of savings in Month 10 identified a further £1,252k of savings as unachievable. Total unachievable is now £5.9m of the original plans.’ **Mr McKinley** noted the Report advised SET might hold its position by way of slippage on investment and asked if any of the slippage related to Invest to Save type initiatives. **Ms Thompson** replied the majority of slippage related to estimates of when a particular cost pressure would arise such as revenue consequences of a capital project or placement of an individual with complex care needs.

7.3 REGIONAL MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE COLLABORATIVE BOARD

Members received the Report (**SET/23/25**) with **Mrs Gibbs** explaining the new initiative to progress recommendations in the Regional Mental Health Strategy.

Mr McKinley stated the Board appeared to be an interesting development with an intent to demonstrate an inclusive approach and asked had consideration been given to engaging NIPS and DoJ. **Mr McKinley** added he would welcome drawing on the lived experience of prisoners within such a process and asked was this something PCCC had experience of. **Mrs Gibbs** replied she would welcome further engagement with one of the agreed actions from the first meeting being to reach out to the Healthcare in Prison team to become involved. **Mrs Gibbs** added PCCC had significant experience engaging within a prison setting in partnership with SET which could be drawn upon as part of this process.

Mr McMahon asked if clinicians were supportive of the new Board. **Mrs Gibbs** replied that the Royal College of Psychiatrists had been engaged and there was a willingness to see what might be achieved. **The Chairman** asked if Professor O’Neill – NI’s Mental Health Champion – was supportive in the arrangements with **Mrs Gibbs** advising she was due to attend a workshop later this week.

7.4 REGIONAL BREAST ASSESSMENT SERVICE

Members received the Report (**SET/24/25**) with **Mr Neil** explaining Minister Nesbitt had announced a single waiting list relating to red flag breast cancer assessment to provide greater equity regionally in waiting times. **Mr Neil** advised SET would lead on the booking of all red flag appointments regionally for initial assessment as part of the breast cancer pathway.

Mr McKinley noted the 14 day target might be replaced with a regional target focussed on diagnostic times as well as treatment commencement and asked what impact this might have on waiting times. **Mr Neil** explained it should equalise the position. **Mr McKinley** asked if there was a baseline and **Mr Neil** stated this was unknown at yet since currently all Trusts reported individually.

Mr McMahon sought clarity on SET’s role envisaged as being post triage which **Mr Neil** confirmed was the case. **Ms Coulter** stated SET would have a key role in this new model and recorded thanks to everyone involved in achieving this.

8.0 COMMITTEE BUSINESS

8.1 APPROVED MINUTES: AUDIT COMMITTEE

Members noted minutes from 24 September 2024 (**SET/25/25**) with no escalations.

8.2 APPROVED MINUTES: PEOPLE & CULTURE COMMITTEE

Members noted minutes from 23 October 2024 (**SET/26/25**) with no escalations.

8.3 APPROVED MINUTES: FINANCE & PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

Members noted minutes from 27 November 2024 (**SET/27/25**) with no escalations. **Mr Havlin** added he would be the NED representative for the forthcoming meetings with SPPG where performance against the Support & Intervention Framework and progress made on escalations would be discussed.

9.0 ITEMS FOR NOTING

9.1 TRUST BOARD DEVELOPMENT DAY: 20 MARCH 2025

Members noted an update from **the Chairman** on preparations for the next Development Day. **The Chairman** also advised of plans for an engagement session with Mike Farrar, the new interim DoH Permanent Secretary.

10.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no further items of business.

11.0 DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chairman advised the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 26 March 2025 commencing at 2.30pm in the QIIC Hub, Trust Headquarters, Ulster Hospital, Dundonald before closing the meeting at 3.27pm.