

SOUTH EASTERN HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE TRUST

Minutes of a Meeting of the Charitable Funds Committee
held on Wednesday 18 June 2025 at 10.30am
in the Meeting Room, Trust Headquarters, Ulster Hospital, Dundonald

- PRESENT:** Ms S McCauley, Non-Executive Director (Chair)
- Mr N McKinley, Non-Executive Director
Dr D Robinson, Deputy Chief Executive, Executive Director of Nursing, Midwifery & AHPs and Director of Support Services
Ms W Thompson, Deputy Chief Executive, Director of Finance, Contracts & Estates
Mr C Martyn, Medical Director
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Mrs M McNally, Assistant Director, RMG/Board Secretary
Ms L Benson, Head of Financial Management & Financial Governance
Mr S Martin, Personal Assistant, Office of Chief Executive (minutes)

OPENING REMARKS

Ms McCauley welcomed everyone before addressing a number of house-keeping matters.

1.0 APOLOGIES

None received.

2.0 DECLARATION OF POTENTIAL CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None declared.

3.0 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 31 JANUARY 2025

Approved without further amendment.

4.0 MATTERS ARISING

Noted (**SET/CF/07/25**).

5.0 ITEMS FOR DECISION

5.1 SEHSCT CHARITABLE FUNDS ACCOUNTS 2024/25

Members received, for decision, **SET/CF/08/24 SET Charitable Funds Accounts 2024/25**.

Ms Thompson highlighted key sections including the Statement of Financial Activities, income and expenditure during the 2024/25 financial year, the overall Balance Sheet together with a number of Key Notes. **Ms Thompson** advised there had been a £205k reduction in income equating to a total received of £377k – consisting of £174k in donations, £144k in investment income and £59k in NHS Charities Together grants.

Ms Thompson explained expenditure had significantly increased - by £587k - compared to 2023/24 representing a total spend of £1,143k before detailing the change in areas of expenditure as follows:

- Staff Education & Welfare increased by £33k
- Specific Projects including the refurbishment of the Maternity ward increased by £264k
- Administration Costs reduced by £40k
- Medical Equipment increased by £150k
- Patient Education & Welfare increased by £100k

Ms Thompson confirmed that, at the end of 2024/25, CIF fund balances totalled £8.0m – a decrease of £0.7m in year due to needing to draw down money to meet increased expenditure. **Ms Thompson** added the CIF continued to produce a steady return before advising NIAO had not raised any issues with the Accounts as part of their external audit work and an unqualified opinion was anticipated.

Ms McCauley acknowledged the work of the previous Chair, Mrs Minford, for her leadership of the Committee during most of this reporting period and welcomed progress made to ensure funds were being used for their intended purposes while balancing the need for sustainability. **Ms McCauley** asked for detail on how the £110k budgeted for Charity Commission registration would be utilised and **Ms Benson** explained how this was being progressed in partnership with DLS. **Ms McCauley** highlighted CIF growth during the past financial year had lagged significantly behind the CIPFA and FTSE averages with **Ms Thompson** explaining this was partly due to the very low risk strategy agreed by the investing organisations. **Ms McCauley** stated she would have anticipated the return to be much closer to the circa 11.9% FTSE average rather than the 2.4% return achieved so it should be a matter to keep under review moving forward.

Mr McKinley referred to the administration costs noted on Page 7 of the briefing paper and his experience of similar spend within the VCS before asking if there was scope to revise the figure for the administration support provided in the local management of funds given the financial constraints currently facing SET. **Ms Thompson** replied this had been reviewed recently and was linked to her team's time spent not only on proposals brought to the Committee but numerous others with values not exceeding £50k before adding she would keep this under review. Members agreed a proposal by **Mr McKinley** that the Specific Projects terminology be revised to Special or Improvement Projects to more accurately convey their impact.

Ms McCauley thanked Ms Thompson and her team for their efforts in preparing the Annual Accounts before seeking and obtaining approval. **Ms McCauley** stated the Accounts would be tabled at the Special Confidential Board meeting on 19 June 2025 with a recommendation to approve.

5.2 NEW PROPOSALS FOR CONSIDERATION

Members received three tabled proposals for consideration and decision with **Ms Thompson** confirming all three related to the Unscheduled Care, Medicine & Cancer Directorate.

SET/CF/10/25 Outpatient Reform and Improvement Admin Lead

Ms Benson outlined a request for a dedicated 1.0 WTE Band 7 Admin Lead to assist with Outpatient Reform & Improvement by supporting the modernisation of services and development of efficiency pathways. **Ms Benson** explained the aim was to support 46,000 additional outpatient appointments and 11,000 additional treatments annually by 2027 adding further detail provided by the relevant Assistant Director. **Ms Benson** stated £138k was sought from the Trust-wide Bangor General Hospital Fund (20B00) leaving a balance of £88,462 adding the figures did not include an amount for a 2026/27 pay award given it was not yet agreed.

Mr McKinley welcomed the additional information provided as it had brought greater clarity to the proposal which he felt was too vaguely written. **Mr McKinley** stated the Director responsible should ensure the additional information is included in the written proposal. Members agreed this should be actioned and the proposal re-tabled for noting.

Mr Martyn asked if the proposal was for a two year period and **Ms Benson** confirmed this was the case. **Dr Robinson** asked how Members could monitor progress made given an end of project evaluation would be more than two years away. **Ms Benson** suggested she could provide project updates for this and other initiatives if it was considered beneficial. **Mr McKinley** asked if this might create additional work for the Finance team and **Ms Thompson** replied it would be manageable. **Ms McCauley** stated there were clear merits in establishing such a feedback loop and arrangements could be revised if necessary to ensure effectiveness. **Ms McCauley** noted the pay award element had not been included in the proposal and asked how this would work in practice with **Ms Thompson** confirming the post-holder would receive their award and the proposal's budget reviewed to account for this at that stage.

Following discussion, **Ms McCauley** sought and obtained approval. Members also agreed a baseline update is provided for all such projects at their initial six month stage followed by a progress update at the twelve month mark with annual updates thereafter subject to the project's specific lifespan.

SET/CF/11/25 Pilot Project: Psychological Resource with Renal Service MDT

Ms Benson outlined a proposal to employ two psychologists for a pilot project within Renal Services which currently does not have a dedicated psychological service for patients. **Ms Benson** explained funding would be utilised for a 0.2 WTE Consultant Psychologist 8C and 0.4 WTE 8A Specialist Psychologist for two years period with a research evaluation to be conducted to secure permanent funding and an exit strategy in place if not continued. **Ms Benson** stated the request was for circa £109k sourced from two funds namely Renal Fund (06U01) at £64,690.08 resulting in that particular fund being reduced to a zero balance and Medical Specialities Superfund (SET12) at £44,573.92 leaving a balance of £123,588.56.

Mr McKinley welcomed the consideration given to an exit strategy and the focus within the proposal on sustainability. **Mr Martyn** asked for further detail on the costings and **Ms Thompson** provided additional information.

Mr McKinley asked how the proposal might offset the Chief Executive's recent Trust-wide request to all services to reduce spend by 5% as it related to this cost centre. **Ms Thompson** explained how the funding – if approved - would be aggregated with the cost code and accepted Mr McKinley's point that use of available resource had wider implications outwith a set financial figure in terms of efficiency gains, opportunity cost and absence cover.

Ms McCauley also welcomed how an exit strategy had been mapped out stating if a pilot had worked then there was a need to consider incorporating the practice rather than depending on Charitable Funds support thereafter. **Dr Robinson** highlighted SET was the only HSC Trust with a renal service without such a resource and there was a clear identifiable need.

On that basis, **Ms McCauley** sought and obtained approval.

SET/CF/12/25 Cancer Prehabilitation Therapy Assistant

Ms Benson advised funding had been requested for a dedicated 0.6 WTE Band 4 Therapy Assistant for cancer prehabilitation. **Ms Benson** explained the role would focus on cancer patients screened by clinical nurse specialists as requiring further assessments for physical activity and nutritional support needs as well as providing tailored interventions to meet patients' needs under the supervision of the AHP Specialist Team. **Ms Benson** outlined the exit strategy and costings as being circa £51k over two years drawing on circa £35.5k from the McDermott Fund (O2U61) and circa £15.56k from the Cancer Super Fund (SET11).

Mr McKinley stated he was unsure how to interpret Tables 1 and 2 therein adding the inclusion of clear descriptive narrative would have been of assistance. **Ms McCauley** agreed with Mr McKinley further detail would benefit the proposal and Members agreed this should be actioned. **Mr McKinley** asked what the current position was with the Northern Ireland Cancer Strategy – which covers the period from 2022 to 2032. **Ms Thompson** explained there was a dedicated annual budget for DoH priority initiatives for which Trusts can bid.

Following discussion, **Ms McCauley** sought and obtained approval to the additional detail being tabled retrospectively at the next meeting.

5.3 COMMITTEE PROGRAMME OF WORK 2025/26

Members received **SET/CF/13/25** for decision.

Mr McKinley proposed the updates agreed earlier in the meeting be included. **Ms McCauley** sought and obtained approval subject to the amendment with the revised document is tabled for noting at the next meeting.

6.0 ITEMS FOR NOTING

6.1 DRAFT REPORT TO THOSE CHARGED WITH GOVERNANCE 2024/25

Members received **SET/CF/14/25** for noting. **Ms Thompson** provided an overview stating that, following finalisation of the audit and consideration of management comments to the issues identified within the RTTCWG, NIAO

would then issue the report in final form. **Ms McCauley** welcomed confirmation that there were no significant issues raised within the Report.

6.2 COMMITTEE INVESTMENT FUND (CIF): ANNUAL ACCOUNTS & AUDIT REPORT 2024/25

Members received **SET/CF/15/25** for noting. **Ms McCauley** asked if the totality of the investment management expenses stated within the Accounts was due to the external advisory company managing the CIF. **Ms Thompson** explained there was an amount attributed to BHSCT as they prepare quarterly updates as well as the overall Annual Accounts.

Mr McKinley asked if the notional fee for auditing the Charitable Accounts was 'real money' and **Ms Thompson** replied NIAO provided the Trust with an overall figure for their work of which this was one part.

7.0 ITEMS FOR ESCALATION TO TRUST BOARD

There were no specific items for escalation.

Ms McCauley stated there would be benefit in highlighted to the Board how Charitable Funds had been well utilised in support of worthwhile projects throughout 2024/25. **Dr Robinson** added it would be worth considering how best to demonstrate impact as part of next year's annual Board reporting cycle.

8.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr McKinley asked how initiatives such as the annual Chairman's Awards were accounted for and specifically would this support be drawn from a general revenue account or Charitable Funds.

Ms Thompson stated ordinarily the Chairman's Awards would be charged to Charitable Funds with **Dr Robinson** adding overall spend usually fell under the threshold for reporting to the Committee. **Mr McKinley** stated he had hoped this was the case as a means of offsetting pressure on general resources. **Dr Robinson** highlighted a similar opportunity in support of a Staff Diversity Day this coming September.

9.0 DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

Ms McCauley advised the next meeting would take place on Wednesday 24 September 2025 at 11.30am in the Boardroom, Trust Headquarters, Ulster Hospital, Dundonald.

Ms McCauley thanked everyone for their participation and closed the meeting at 11.35am.