



**Review of the effectiveness  
of the Governance Assurance Committee including its Terms of  
Reference and Programme of Work – 2020/21**

**1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The Trust Board established a Governance Assurance Committee which held its inaugural meeting in March 2010. As part of its annual Programme of Work the Committee is required to review its Terms of Reference and the effectiveness of the Committee, this also includes reviewing the operation of its Programme of Work. This paper provides a narrative report on the outcome of this work.
- 1.2 The paper will be presented to the Committee at its meeting on 10 March 2021 in draft form for consideration and amendment, as required.

**2.0 Membership of Committee**

- 2.1 Membership of the Committee comprises all Executive Management Team members (9 in total), the Chairman of the Trust Board and ordinarily five Non-Executive Directors including the Chairs of the Audit, Finance & Performance and Governance Assurance Committee. The nominated lead Non-Executive Director for Safeguarding is also a Member, a role currently held by Mr J Patton, the Chairman (Acting) of Trust Board. Mrs J O'Hagan, Non-Executive Director, joined the Committee on 16 September 2020 leaving one Non-Executive Director vacancy currently.
- 2.2 The Board Secretary is in attendance at all meetings and the Head of Internal Audit attends meetings twice per year (September and March). Meetings are held on a quarterly basis – June, September, December and March. Appendix 1 details the current members of the Committee and their attendance at the meetings during the year. 75% attendance (3 out of 4 meetings) is expected of all members (as per the Governance Controls Assurance KPI).
- 2.3 During the past year, the Covid-19 pandemic has presented unprecedented challenges not just to health and social care locally, nationally and internationally but also society as a whole. In the face of significant pressures on service provision across the organisation, the work of the Governance Assurance Committee has been progressed. Attendance by Members (both Executive and Non-Executive Directors) has remained consistently high. The Committee said farewell to Mr D Bradley, Ms B Mongan and Mr P Morgan and wished them well on their respective retirements and welcomed Mrs M O'Kane, Ms W Thompson, Ms B Campbell and Mrs M McNally. The Committee also placed on record their thanks to Mrs V Walker who served as Interim Assistant Director, Risk Management & Governance during much of 2020/21 for her efforts in ensuring the work of the Committee continues

and for facilitating Members moving to a virtual meeting set-up to ensuring work continued despite the challenges of social distancing and increasing community transition. All members are committed to attending meetings on a regular basis and in their absence provide any required briefings to the Assistant Director, Risk Management & Governance. Deputies also attend meetings, as and when required.

### 3.0 Frequency of Meetings

3.1 Meetings are held on a quarterly basis – June, September, December and March. During 2020/21, four meetings were held (May, June, September and March). The meeting scheduled for March 2020 was postponed until 13 May 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the meeting scheduled for 16 December 2020 cancelled due to the third surge of Covid-19 activity.

### 4.0 Remit of Committee

4.1 The remit of the Committee was agreed at the Committee’s inaugural meeting held on 31 March 2010 having been previously approved by the Trust Board on 24 March 2010 and subsequently amended and reapproved on 26 May 2010. It is reviewed and updated on an annual basis and was last presented to the Trust Board on 30 September 2020.

4.2 In order to discharge this remit, the Committee developed a Programme of Work on 31 March 2010 which was subsequently revised and updated on 15 March 2011 and approved by the Trust Board on 2 June 2011. It is also updated on an annual basis and was last presented to Trust Board on 27 May 2020. A copy of the extant Programme of Work is attached at Appendix 2, for information purposes.

Remit	How is this discharged by the Committee	When last performed
<p>The Committee will review the development and maintenance of an effective system of integrated governance (risk management, finance and clinical and social care) and internal control, across the whole of the organisation’s activities (both clinical and non-clinical) that supports the achievement of the organisation’s objectives.</p> <p>In particular the Committee will review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The adequacy of the underlying assurance processes that indicate the</li> </ul>	<p>Implementation of Annual Programme of Work</p> <p>Preparation of an Annual Report on Governance</p> <p>Via review of Corporate Risk Register Reports - quarterly basis – June,</p>	<p>Both the PoW and Annual Governance Report are revised in March each year.</p> <p>The 2019/20 review took place on 13 May 2020 and the 2020/21 review on 10 March 2021.</p> <p>The CRR reports are reviewed on a quarterly basis with</p>

<p>degree of the achievement of corporate objectives, the effectiveness of the management of principal risks and the appropriateness of the disclosure statements. This will also include the adequacy of the Board Assurance Framework, the control and assurance mechanism in place, and additional action taken to address gaps in controls and gaps in assurance.</p>	<p>September, December and March</p> <p>Board Assurance Framework 2018/21</p>	<p>the last review being 10 March 2021.</p> <p>The Committee considered the Board Assurance Framework on 16 September 2020 and updated accordingly.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The adequacy of all governance and risk management and control related disclosure statements (in particular the Statement of Internal Control).</li> </ul>	<p>Input to the Mid-Year Assurance Statement and Governance Statement</p>	<p>Circa April October each year</p> <p>Both items were stood down temporarily by DoH as a response to the Covid-19 pandemic.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The adequacy of the policies for ensuring compliance with the relevant regulatory, legal and code of conduct requirements, including the Trust's Standing Orders.</li> <li>The adequacy of strategies for integrated governance for eg, integrated governance and risk management etc.</li> </ul>	<p>Review/amendments to Standing Orders and Standing Financial Instructions</p> <p>Board Assurance Framework 2018/21 Risk Management Strategy 2018/21</p> <p>Governance Strategy 2012-2015</p>	<p>Annual basis Circa March</p> <p>This was reviewed at the Committee's meeting on 13 May 2020.</p> <p>The Committee considered the Board Assurance Framework on 16 September 2020 and updated accordingly.</p> <p>The BAF, Risk Management Strategy and Governance Strategy are currently being reviewed by the new Assistant Director, Risk</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The annual work plans of the Corporate Control and Safety and Quality Committees.</li> </ul>	<p>Approval of annual work plans – Corporate Control and Safety &amp; Quality Committee</p>	<p>Management &amp; Governance.</p> <p>The Corporate Control Committee Action Plan was reviewed on 13 May 2020 for 2020/21 and on 10 March 2021 for 2021/22.</p> <p>The Safety, Quality Improvement &amp; Innovation Committee does not operate an annual work plan.</p>
<p>In carrying out its work, the Committee will primarily utilise the work of Internal Audit. It will also seek reports and assurances from other Trust Committees, Directors and Assistant Directors, as appropriate, concentrating on the overarching systems of integrated governance, risk management and internal control, together with indicators of their effectiveness.</p>	<p>Receipt and review of relevant Internal Audit Reports on Governance &amp; Risk Management issues</p> <p>Via Chairman of Governance Assurance Committee (Dr Briscoe) and Chairman of Audit Committee (Mr Brady) sitting on both Governance Assurance and Audit Committees.</p> <p>Dr Briscoe's membership of SQIIC</p>	<p>Attendance at Governance Assurance meetings – 2020/21</p> <p>Attendance at Audit Committees – 2020/21</p> <p>Attendance at Safety, Quality Improvement &amp; Innovation Committee (SQIIC) – 2020/21</p>
<p>This will be evidenced through the Committee's use of an effective Board Assurance Framework to guide its work. The Committee shall have the flexibility to scrutinise in depth particular high risk areas identified through the Board Assurance Framework or other assurance functions.</p>	<p>Board Assurance Framework – 2018/21 Risk Management Strategy 2018/2021</p> <p>Governance Strategy 2012-2015</p>	<p>The Committee considered the Board Assurance Framework on 16 September 2020 and updated accordingly.</p> <p>The BAF, Risk Management Strategy and Governance Strategy are</p>

		currently being reviewed by the new Assistant Director, Risk Management & Governance.
<p><b>Other Assurance Functions</b></p> <p>The Governance Assurance Committee shall review the findings of other significant assurance functions, both internal and external to the organisation and consider the implications for the governance of the organisation.</p>	<p>Receipt and review of relevant Internal Audit Reports on Governance &amp; Risk Management issues</p> <p>Via Chairman of Governance Assurance Committee (Dr Briscoe) and Chairman of Audit Committee (Mr Brady) sitting on both Governance Assurance and Audit Committees.</p> <p>Dr Briscoe's membership of Safety &amp; Quality Committee</p> <p>Review of the Third Party Report Register</p>	<p>Attendance at Governance Assurance Committee – 2020/21</p> <p>Attendance at Audit Committee – 2020/21</p> <p>Attendance at SQIC – 2020/21</p> <p>In accordance with the Committee's agreed annual Programme of Work</p>
<p>These will include, but will not be limited to, any reviews by DHSS&amp;PS commissioned bodies, the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) or professional bodies with responsibility for the performance of staff or functions (e.g. Royal Colleges, Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC), other accreditation bodies, etc.).</p>	<p>As above</p>	<p>As above</p>
<p>In addition the Committee will review the work of other committees within the organisation, whose work can provide relevant assurance to the Governance Assurance Committee's own scope of work.</p>	<p>Corporate Control Committee – minutes/action plans</p> <p>Safety &amp; Quality Committee – Minutes/action plans</p>	<p>Quarterly basis June, Sept, Dec and March (last review the Committee's meeting on 10 March 2021)</p>

## 5.0 Reporting Arrangements

Reporting Arrangements	How Discharged
Formally recorded by Board Secretary and submitted to Board.	Minutes documented by the Board Secretary. Minutes and formal report submitted to Trust Board following each meeting (4 times per year)
<p>Annual Report submitted to Trust Board, commenting on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The fitness for purpose of the Assurance Framework.</li> <li>• The completeness and embeddedness of risk management in the organisation.</li> <li>• The integration of governance arrangements.</li> </ul>	<p>Yes. Item included in Committee's programme of work and was submitted to its meeting on 13 May 2020 for approval prior to submission to Trust Board on 27 May 2020 for the period 2019/20. The Committee considered the draft Annual Report for 2020/21 on 10 March 2021 for submission to Trust Board on 24 March 2021.</p> <p>All bullet point items in section 5.0 of this report included in the draft Annual Report of the Governance Assurance Committee</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The appropriateness of the self assessment of the Controls Assurance Standards and other relevant standards.</li> </ul>	Yes

## 6.0 Other Matters

<p>Committee should be supported by the Board Secretary</p>	Yes – Board Secretary in attendance at all meetings.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Papers and agenda issued one week in advance of meeting.</li> </ul>	Yes – papers issued the Wednesday prior to the meeting date.

## **7.0 Conclusion**

Following discussion at the Governance Assurance Committee meeting on 10 March 2021, and based on the information presented in this paper, members concluded that they were satisfied that the Committee had carried out its duties appropriately during the year – 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

Also, following discussion at the meeting held on 10 March 2021, the Terms of Reference and Programme of Work for the Committee were approved subject to the tracked changes listed in the documents circulated with the papers for the meeting. These were minor in nature.

## **8.0 Recommendations**

There were no recommendations for action made by the Committee as a result of this paper or discussion at the meeting on 10 March 2021.

**Mrs Martine McNally**  
**Assistant Director, Risk Management & Governance**

18 March 2021.

Table 1 – Summary of members attending Governance Assurance Committee Meetings – 2020/21

Members		Date of Meetings				Total	75% attendance (3/4 meetings)
		13 May 2020	17 June 2020	16 Sept 2020	10 Mar 2021		
<b>Non-Executive Directors</b>							
Jonathan Patton	Chairman (Acting) of Trust Board	Yes	Yes	Apology			
Dr Maura Briscoe	Non-Executive Director (Chairman)	Yes	Yes	Yes			
Noel Brady	Non-Executive Director (Chairman of Audit Committee)	Yes	Yes	Yes			
Maynard Mawhinney	Non-Executive Director (Chairman of Finance Committee)	Yes	Yes	Apology			
Joan O'Hagan	Non-Executive Director – wef 16 September 2020	N/A	N/A	Apology			
<b>Executive Management Team</b>							
Charlie Martyn	Medical Director	Yes	Yes	Apology			
Nicki Patterson	Director of Primary Care & Older People & Executive Director of Nursing	Yes	Yes	Yes			
Don Bradley	Interim Director of Adult Services & Prison Healthcare	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A		
Margaret O'Kane	Interim Director of Adult Services & Prison Healthcare	N/A	Yes	Yes			
Myra Weir	Director of Human Resources & Corporate Affairs	Yes	Yes	Yes			
Seamus McGoran	Interim Chief Executive	Yes	Yes	Yes			
Barbara Campbell	Director of Children's Services & Executive Director of Social Work	Yes	Apology	Yes			
Roisin Coulter	Director of Planning, Performance & Information Management	Yes	Yes	Yes			
Paul Morgan	Interim Director of Finance & Estates (until 31 August 2020)	Yes	Yes	N/A			
Wendy Thompson	Director of Finance & Estates (from 1 September 2020)	N/A	N/A	Yes			
David Robinson	Interim Director of Hospital Services	Yes	Yes	Yes			
<b>In attendance</b>							
Martine McNally	Assistant Director, Risk Management & Governance (until 02/11/20)	N/A	N/A	N/A		/4	
Valerie Walker	Interim Assistant Director, Risk Management & Governance (wef 1/3/20 until 1/11/20)	Yes	Yes	Apology	N/A	/4	
Catherine McKeown /or Jenny McCaw	Head of Internal Audit (attends 2 per year)	Yes	N/A	N/R		/2	
Bria Mongan	Outgoing Director Children's Services/Executive Director Social Work	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A	1/1	100%



## Governance Assurance Committee Programme of Work 2020/21

Month	Governance Assurance Meeting	Governance Committee Work – outside of meeting
January		Report to Trust Board (GAC December Meeting)
February		Consideration of Internal Audit Plan (in terms of Governance & Risk Management issues) with Internal Audit
March		<b>Internal Audit to attend meeting</b> Report to Trust Board (GAC March meeting)
April		Comment and input to the draft Governance Statement
May	<p>Corporate Risk Register – end of year position and preparation for incoming year</p> <p>Preparation of draft Annual Governance Assurance Committee Report</p> <p>Approval of the incoming annual work plans for 2 domains - Corporate Control, Safety &amp; Quality</p> <p>Consider the Committee's own effectiveness in its work</p> <p>Review and update, as required, Committee's Terms of Reference and Programme of work</p> <p>Update on Controls Assurance – end of year position</p> <p>Review of Standing Orders &amp; SFIs</p> <p>Presentation by Chairpersons of Corporate Control and Safety , Quality Improvement &amp; Innovation Committees – end of year position (including outcomes)</p>	<p>Comment on the draft Annual Report on Risk Management (via email prior to submission to Trust Board)</p>
June	<p>Corporate Risk Register – 1<sup>st</sup> quarter report</p> <p>Update on Controls Assurance – incoming year</p> <p>Annual Report on Risk Management</p> <p>Annual review – Board Assurance Framework (carry over from 2019/20)</p>	Report to Trust Board (GAC June Meeting)
July		
August		
September	<p>Corporate Risk Register – Update report</p> <p>Update on Controls Assurance (for Mid-Year Assurance Statement)</p> <p>Discuss case study for the Board Governance Self-Assessment Tool</p>	<p>Comment and input to the Mid-Year Assurance Statement</p> <p><b>Internal Audit to attend meeting</b></p> <p>Report to Trust Board (GAC September Meeting)</p>

<b>October</b>		
<b>November</b>		
<b>December</b>	Corporate Risk Register – Update report Annual review – Board Assurance Framework, Risk Management and Integrated Governance Strategies Bi-annual review – Independent Sector Governance	

Gov Ass Com – POW - 2020/21

DRAFT