

# Governor Focus

July 1, 2024



Welcome to Bridgewater's **Governor Focus**.

In this edition we highlight the fantastic work being done in our communities to support patients and their families and the work of the finance team in delivering a highly rated set of annual accounts. Special mention to our new admin apprentices who are supporting teams in Warrington – Thank You.

This newsletter provides an overview of the issues discussed at the most recent meeting of the Council of Governors on Wednesday, June 19.

A copy of the agenda and minutes of the previous meeting can be downloaded from the Bridgewater website at; [www.bridgewater.nhs.uk/ft](http://www.bridgewater.nhs.uk/ft)

Warrington governor Andrew Mortimer has stood down from his role as a public governor. Andrew was elected a public governor in 2022 and served as an observer on the Audit Committee. Trust Chair, Karen Bliss, thanked Andrew for his services to the Trust and wished him every success in the future.

### **SALFORD 0-19:**

In the last edition we reported on Bridgewater being selected to deliver the 0-19 years' service in Salford. Following a process of due diligence the Board has agreed NOT to pursue the contract.

Trust Chair, Karen Bliss, thanked everyone for all their hard work and efforts in submitting an extremely impressive bid but cited the challenges – financially and operationally – as reasons for not pursuing the opportunity.

### **Date for your diary:**

Trust Chair, Karen Bliss, reminded governors, staff, and members about the forthcoming Trust Board meeting on Thursday, August 8 in the Main Boardroom on the Ground Floor of Spencer House, Warrington.

The meetings are open to all.

“We are a public body, and our meetings are open to everyone – patients, staff, governors, and our Trust members. We have trialled a hybrid approach to our Council meetings, this has been very well received and we shall do the same with our Board meetings.”

For further information, visit:

<https://bridgewater.nhs.uk/aboutus/theboard/boardmeetings/>

### **Operational Update:**

Significant focus on the integration work between Bridgewater and Warrington & Halton Hospitals NHS FT. The challenge has been set to reduce 1,435 avoidable admissions – equivalent to 37 acute beds and achieve £3.7m annualised savings.

Focus on redesigning the Urgent care Response service in Warrington and reviewing the Same day Emergency care and Frailty Assessment unit at Warrington Hospital.

Looking to increase capacity of the virtual ward from five to nine beds. Currently two vacancies in the service.

Work is focusing on the quality agenda within Padgate House with focus on falls, medicines management and patient incidents.

Bridgewater and Warrington & Halton Hospitals sharing phlebotomy E booking scheduling system- this will allow patients to book and manage their own appointments – go live July 11.

Delighted to announce four new apprentices are supporting teams across Warrington- all are making a great contribution to the teams work- Thank You . In Halton significant progress has been made within podiatry to tackle long waiting times. No patients waiting, more than 52 weeks. Many thanks to everyone for their support and contributions.

Halton District Nursing teams and Community Matrons working together to support some of the most frail/vulnerable. Great success on the recruitment front.

The Virtual Ward continues to deliver the 12 planned virtual beds. Fantastic feedback from patients and families. Work continues to further develop the service. In dental the second phase of the Dentally migration has been completed. Delighted Trafford and Manchester Foundation Trusts are working with Bridgewater to take some of our long waiting- general anaesthesia-patients.

A mobilisation group has been established to support the Altrincham Hub move in Trafford.

Within children's services there is significant focus on the neurodevelopmental and community paediatrics service- Halton. An Improvement Board has been established the first meeting scheduled for June 24.

Significant focus within the Quality & Safety Committee on the challenges facing the services and staff. There has been an unprecedented increase in the number of referrals into services. Bridgewater is working with partners to address the challenges it faces. These services locally, regionally and nationally are experiencing significant pressures.

The Trust has launched a Flexible Working campaign to better support staff with their work/life balance and continues to invest in its apprentices.

The Drive Ability service is set to move to new premises in St Helens. All local police services have now signed up to the Fitness to Drive programme.

Work being done across the organisation to interrogate waiting lists, refine/revise patient pathways and promote a more blended approach to support patients being cared for within community settings. Imperative that Bridgewater continues to support and champion the integration of services to better support patients within Place.

## **Governor Development**

A programme of development for 2024 has been proposed and agreed upon. Will focus on the key principles supporting the CQC inspection framework. The next session will focus on the domain of Effective with a presentation from the Trust's performance lead Anita Buckley. The session will be held on Wednesday, July 17 at 1pm. Invites and details will be circulated.

There are several vacancies on the Council:

- Public Governors – Halton – 3 vacancies.
- Warrington – 1 vacancy.
- Rest of England – 2 vacancies.
- Staff Governors – Clinical Support Staff -1 vacancy.

The Council agreed to retain its current staffing constituencies which are aligned to the professional bodies within the organisation i.e. allied health professionals, nurses, clinical support staff, non-clinical support staff and dental / medical practitioners.

The Trust's staff governors are Jilly Wallis – Allied Health Professionals, Claire Barton – Community Dental/Medical Practitioners, Suzanne Mackie and Nicola Wilson – Nursing, Sarah Power – Non-Clinical Support Staff.

The Trust has a vacancy for a clinical support staff governor.

The Trust has established a working group to look at how it might engender interest in the current vacancies. Elections for public/staff governors will be held in 2025. Further details will be made available nearer to the date.

For further information about our public / staff governors please visit the Bridgewater website at; [www.bridgewater.nhs.uk](http://www.bridgewater.nhs.uk)

## **Committee Corner:**

Reports from each of the main committees were received and an overview of the main issues/highlights were described by the respective Non-Executive Director Chairs.

The most recent report from Audit Committee highlighted the work done within the finance team. In its review of the annual accounts – the finance team has completed and submitted the draft accounts in line with the submission deadline. It has also

provided early to KPMG – the Trust’s external auditors-. This was noted as excellent performance and was commended by the Trust Chair who highlighted the “substantive assurance” the Trust has received for 2023-24 on the draft annual internal audit report.

The Trust has governor observers on each of the main committees i.e. Audit, Quality & Safety, Finance & Performance & People as well as the Board.

One of the main duties/responsibilities of governors is to hold their Non-Executive Directors colleagues to account and provide assurance that as NEDs they are holding the Executive Directors of the Trust to account. Governors submit their opinion on the performance of their NED colleagues and these comments are routinely shared and discussed at the Council of Governors.

Details of the committee meetings can be found in the Council of Governors papers. If any governor has any questions/queries regarding any element of the meeting they are welcome to contact the respective NED Chair or the governor observer of the committee.

For further information about our public / staff governors please visit the Bridgewater website at; [www.bridgewater.nhs.uk](http://www.bridgewater.nhs.uk)

## **Strategic Update**

Chief Executive Colin Scales reiterated the messages contained in the stakeholder update circulated in April this year and described the systems and processes to ensure due diligence underpins the work to support the integration of services across Bridgewater and Warrington & Halton Hospitals.

The integration agenda nationally, regionally and locally is being clinically driven to provide improved patient pathways and new models of care – particularly in emergency and acute care.

Below the stakeholder update shared in April this year:

“Our organisations have a shared overriding aim of delivering a sustainable healthcare system for patients and staff. The challenges facing the NHS are well-documented and are reflected locally here in Warrington and Halton, as they are elsewhere regionally and nationally. Our urgent care system is not working optimally, we are currently unsustainable financially and we have identified significant opportunities to improve care for our patients. It is clear there are opportunities for further integration between our two organisations. With that in mind, and working with system colleagues across Warrington and Halton, we are developing plans to bring our two organisations together, along with local system partners, to integrate our teams and maximise the benefit of our collective expertise. This will help us to jointly make best use of resources, but more importantly to improve care for our patients. We are currently in the earliest stages of discussions, with the full backing and support of NHS Cheshire and Merseyside. Over the coming weeks and months, our plan is to engage further with our respective Boards, staff and system partners, whose contributions will be key. Due to these developments, Warrington and Halton

Teaching Hospitals is replacing chief executive Simon Constable's role on an interim basis for a period of up to two years. The role will be advertised imminently, and it is hoped that a strong successor will be in place by the time Simon leaves for pastures new at the end of August. We will communicate further developments in due course. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to get in touch with the leadership team of either Trust should you have any questions or comments."

The two trusts have committed to deliver programme of dedicated and comprehensive communications.

## **Engagement Update**

The Bridgewater Communities Matter Public and Community Engagement (PACE) Group is steering the Trust's programme to better engage with its patients/service users. Work being done within teams to identify resource to support engagement and various initiatives are being worked on with partners to better understand how we might capture and share the experience of those who use our services. The Patient Experience Report contains a wealth of information about the patient experience. Workstreams have been established to support the development of the agenda and outcomes will be shared internally and externally.

A workshop led by Rob Foster on Wednesday, June 26 from 9.30am was supported by several governors. The outcomes will be shared at future governor meetings. Thanks to all for supporting.

Lead Governor Christine Stankus thanked Rob - the Programme Director – Collaboration & Integration – for all his work and support in developing the PACE agenda within Bridgewater. Rob will be leaving the Trust at the end of June to pursue a career outside the NHS.

Several public governors serve on the PACE group, and they will support and contribute to the organisation's ambitions to strengthen its engagements with its patients, partners, members, and local communities.

## **Estates Update:**

John Morris, Deputy Director of Estates /EPRR provided an overview of the Trust estate and the strategy to support and manage it in a safe, effective and sustained way.

The Trust occupies 66 buildings across its geographic footprint. It owns five of the buildings.

An integral part of the team's approach to managing the buildings it occupies is to ensure its approach is as environmentally friendly as possible, given the financial constraints facing the NHS.

Work is ongoing to replace old, gas guzzling boilers and convert its transport fleet to electric.

Ensuring its waste, recycling and cleaning contracts are monitored and managed appropriately is an essential and integral part of the work. Recent monies have been used to install LED lights into the Wolves facility in Warrington.

The team is working with the Drive Ability service to move into new premises in St Helens. With a budget totalling £10.5 million – the majority is spent on rents. There are several contractors and tradespeople it deals with. The trust does not employ tradespeople. Close working with Infection Prevention and Control colleagues has resulted in several significant improvements to buildings across the Trust. Working closely with local authority partners to support the development of Living Well hubs and provide the required clinical support.

Lead governor Christine Stankus thanked John for the presentation he gave and commended the work of the team which works extremely hard to ensure staff are working in buildings that are fit for purpose and provide patients with safe, secure environments in which to receive treatment.

### **Good news:**

Bridgewater is once again supporting the Disability Awareness Day at Walton Hall Gardens, Warrington on Sunday, July 14.

Governors will be in attendance to chat to attendees, stakeholders and staff. The Drive Ability team and Children's Services will also be in attendance. If you and your family are planning to attend, please visit the Bridgewater stand and offer your support to your colleagues.

The day is one of the flagship events in the Warrington calendar and is extremely popular locally, regionally and nationally. This year there are more than 200 stalls and exhibitors in attendance.

A wide and varied programme of entertainment has been confirmed. For further information visit; [www.disabilityawarenessday.org.uk](http://www.disabilityawarenessday.org.uk)

Lead Governor Christine Stankus, said: "We are delighted to be joining our colleagues at this event. We hope to generate interest in the role of a governor and our elections next year. This is a great opportunity for us to engage with our patients, partners and the public."

### **Dates for your diary**

NHSP Annual Governor Conference via Teams – Tuesday, July 9.

Bridgewater Annual Members Meeting & Staff Awards – Wednesday, September 18 at Haydock Park Racecourse. Timings to be confirmed.