

COUNTY DURHAM & DARLINGTON NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust
(CDDFT) held virtually on Wednesday 29th September 2021

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Prof Paul Keane OBE	Chairman
Mr Michael Bretherick	Non-Executive Director
Mr Steve Crosland	Non-Executive Director
Ms Jenny Flynn MBE	Non-Executive Director
Dr Richard Scothorn	Non-Executive Director
Ms Sue Jacques	Chief Executive
Mr Noel Scanlon	Executive Director of Nursing
Mr Jeremy Cundall	Executive Medical Director

COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS PRESENT

Ms Kathryn Featherstone	Lead Governor & Public Governor (Chester le Street)
Ms Patricia Gordon	Public Governor (Darlington)
Mr Alan Cartwright	Public Governor (Wear Valley & Teesdale)
Mr Neil Williams	Staff Governor (Admin, Clerical, Managers)
Ms Kath Fawcett	Public Governor (Darlington)
Cllr Lorraine Tostevin	Appointed Governor (Darlington Borough Council)
Mr David Taylor	Public Governor (Sedgefield)
Mr Christopher Cunnington-Shore	Appointed Governor (HealthWatch Durham)
Ms Nancye Carr	Public Governor (Derwentside)
Mr Robert Upshall	Appointed Governor (HealthWatch Darlington)
Ms Anne French	Appointed Governor (Teesside University)
Cllr Brain Fergusson	Public Governor (Sedgefield)

IN ATTENDANCE FOR THE TRUST

Ms Morven Smith	Director of Workforce & Organisation Development
Mr Warren Edge	Senior Associate Director of Assurance & Compliance
Ms Helen Liddell	Committee Administrator (Minute Taker)

TRUST FACILITATORS

Mr Peter Dixon	Corporate Affairs Lead
Ms Gillian Curry	Head of Communications and Charity
Ms Jill Foggin	Communications Team
Ms Joanna Tyrrell	Freedom Of Information and Corporate Records Facilitator

Apologies for absence had been received from:

Ms Paul Forster-Jones	Non-Executive Director
Mr David Brown	Executive Director of Finance
Ms Carole Langrick	Executive Director of Operations
Ms Marian French	Public Governor (Darlington)
Ms Valerie Johnston	Appointed Governor (HealthWatch Darlington) – shared post
Mr Frank White	Public Governor (Tees Valley, Hambleton and Richmondshire)

01 Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone and thanked those participating in the County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust's Annual General Meeting for 2020/21, which was being held virtually, using Microsoft Live Event.

02 Declarations Of Interest

Any attendee who was aware of a private or personal conflict of interest relating to any item on the agenda was required to disclose it at this stage or when the conflict arose during consideration of the item.

No declarations of interest were made.

03 Minutes and Matters Arising from the Annual General Meeting.

a) Accuracy

The Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday 23rd September 2020 were accepted as an accurate record with one amendment raised:

Attendees list: Page 1, the list required an update as Michael Bretherick was in attendance at the meeting.

b) Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the previous meeting.

04 Chairman's Opening Remarks

The Chairman explained that the meeting was being held virtually in line with the infection control and Covid-19 safety measures required of NHS Trusts by NHS England and Improvement.

The Chairman introduced his colleagues on the Board: Sue Jacques, Chief Executive, the Executive Directors and Non-Executive Directors, some of whom would be joining the meeting virtually. The Trust's Lead Governor of the Council of Governors would also be present. There had been one change to the Board since the last meeting, with the appointment of Dr Richard Scothorn as a Non-Executive Director, to replace Simon Gerry who had become the Chairman of Synchronicity Care Ltd.

The Chairman paid his respects to Cate Woolley-Brown, the Trust's Freedom to Speak Up (FTSU) Guardian, who had recently passed away. The Chairman acknowledged Cate's achievements and tireless commitment to the NHS during her working life and in her retirement, firstly as a public governor and, over the last two years, as the FTSU Guardian. The Chairman extended his condolences to Cate's family, friends and colleagues.

The Chairman praised all staff members, noting that the Board was exceptionally proud of all staff across the whole of the organisation for their commitment, compassion, resilience in providing dedicated care during very difficult times, and offered his sincere thanks to everyone for the services provided and continue to provide.

The Chairman explained that the main purpose of the Annual General Meeting was to reflect on the Trust's quality, performance and finance over the past financial year 2020/21. He then briefly summarised the contents of the agenda, which would be shared. In addition the look back at 2020/21, these included the current pandemic Covid-19 and predicted plans for the coming year 2022/23, including plans for winter pressures. The North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care System (ICS) was fostering collaborative models of working, in local systems, wider localities and across the region as a whole, with the NHS, local councils, private and voluntary sector working together. The ICS was set to be fully operational on 1st April 2022, and the Trust was actively supporting the development work. The developing ICS operational model encouraged place-based working, in which local

communities will work together to ensure best patient care and best services provide maximising resources collectively.

The Chairman advised that a key part of the meeting would be the question and answer section which would comprise of questions received from Governors and public members prior to the meeting, and responses from the Board of Directors. The questions would be collated and read out by Mr Edge, the Trust Secretary, and answered by the relevant Executive. Participants were advised questions could be received via a telephone number provided and that there was a question and comment box linked to the screen for the meeting, which would be responded to during the course of the meeting.

The Chairman provided assurance that responses to any unanswered questions due to time constraints would be posted on the AGM webpage and answered in due course. He reminded members of the public that, due to the format this year, any questions received which related to episodes of care or specific individual circumstances would be directed to the Trust's Patient Experience team.

05 Chief Executive's Presentation: Review of 2020/21

Presentation of the Annual Report and Accounts 2020/21

Ms Jacques greeted everyone attending the meeting and introduced the presentation which comprised of slides reviewing the Trust's performance during 2020/21. Ms Jacques described the Trust as being one of the largest in the country, serving a population of over 650,000 with over 2 million patient contacts every year and – taking account of its community services - providing more healthcare to the North East and North Cumbria than any other Trust. The Trust provided acute, emergency and planned hospital care, community-based care and health and well-being services, working closely with local authority partners to provide support to the local population to stay as healthy and well as possible. Community services included a number of out-reach services such as Community Matrons who supported care homes and District Nurses providing care to people in their own homes. In County Durham and Darlington, all partners were committed to integrate working to secure best value for all finances spent within the patch.

Ms Jacques reflected on the position at the start of April 2020, when the Trust was already facing head on the challenges of the Covid-19 global pandemic. That pandemic was now within its fourth wave locally, seeing increasing infection rates in our communities, and leading to growing numbers of hospital admissions. Whilst it was not an experience the Trust would wish to repeat, the way staff, colleagues, communities and local business collaboratively worked together in and out of the Trust had risen to the challenges of Covid-19, including modifying ways of working at a pace not seen before, was a credit to all involved, and in particular to the Trust's staff. She was proud of the creativity courage, determination, commitment and hard work shown by every member of the team – across all Trust sites and in the community - to support strong focus around patient care.

Ms Jacques summarised some highlights with respect to the Trust during 2020/21 alongside the handling of the Covid-19 pandemic

- Inspiring messages setting out how staff felt in responding to the virus were shared.
- Maternity services saw increased activity across the country, and the Trust delivered a higher volume of new born babies in its Maternity suites
- The Red Carpet Star Awards took place virtually.
- The Trust's Sustainability plan has provided pioneering innovating changes.
- Community virtual events supported International Nurses Day and the International Day of the Midwife.
- The Trust received a wide variety of donations, and inspiring artwork was received from local schools, thank you cards and letters of appreciation, specifically from the Local MPs and Lord Lieutenant.

- Local bakeries provided cakes and supported the provision of gifts to staff across the whole organisation.
- Diversity groups met regularly and helped to take forward developments for staff with protected characteristics.
- Research to support enhanced patient care during the pandemic was undertaken.
- Teams were rapidly deployed to set up testing centres and run vaccination programmes.
- Staff were redeployed to support required services.
- Robust arrangements were implemented to ensure that the supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) was reliable and that staff were never without PPE.

In conclusion, Ms Jacques echoed the Chairman's opening remarks, noting, again, her pride in the fortitude, response and commitment of Trust staff during the response to the pandemic. Ms Jacques felt that the Trust had served the population and patients well and thanked everyone for their contribution to that performance. Ms Jacques thanked all colleagues within CDDFT, including Governors, Foundation Trust members, volunteers, local communities and health and social care colleagues across the system who had worked constructively and closely with the Trust. Patients continued to provide a valuable source of views and feedback to enable the Trust to seek to improve services to provide the safest, most compassionate and joined to care to everyone.

06 Presentation of the Annual Report and Accounts 2020/21

Quality

Mr Scanlon presented and summarised the Trust's performance against key quality objectives, underpinning its Quality Strategy and the achievement of its vision 'Right First Time, Every Time'. Quality priorities had been set out to improve patient safety, clinical outcomes and the experience of those who used the Trust's care. These quality priorities were reviewed and refreshed annually and reported on through the Trust's Quality Accounts. The priorities covered by the Quality Accounts for 2020/21 had been set in March 2020 before the pandemic begun. Mr Scanlon summarised the key infection control and quality measures in place regarding Covid-19, before moving on to summarise performance against the agreed priorities, with key as follows:

- The Trust saw improved performance against targets for providing harm free care, particularly with respect to pressure ulcers and infections. The number of patient falls per 1,000 bed days increased, reflecting reductions in planned and elective care and, therefore, the relatively poorer health of the patient population served during the year. Targets set with respect to the management of sepsis were fully met.
- Electronic Discharge Letters were issued to GPs to support continuity of with care in the community. However, the Trust fell slightly short of the agreed, stretching target.
- Mortality reviews take place during the year and lessons learned from themes continued to support training, improvement and innovation.
- Care pathways for children continued to be strengthened, particularly for those attending A&E, through the Paediatric Assessment Area at UHND.
- The Trust had achieved two out of three Maternity Standards and had improved, year on year, with respect to the third. A great deal of work was taking place to respond to the recommendations of the Ockendon review and the national Continuity of Carer initiative.
- A&E waiting times had improved earlier in the year, when elective services were suspended, beds available to support the Covid-19 response and fewer patients came to A&E. In the second half of the year, Covid-19 demand had to be managed alongside high volumes of non-elective demand for other reasons, which involved considerable complexity, and there was a drive to recover elective activity. As a result of the complexities involved waiting times deteriorated in the last six months of 2019/20.
- Patient experience measures, relating to end of life care and nutrition were achieved. The Trust's end of life care was rated as 'Outstanding' by CQC.

Financial Accounts 2021/21

Ms Jacques summarised the financial performance of the CDDFT Group, comprising the Trust and its wholly owned subsidiary, Synchronicity Care Limited.

- The external auditors – Mazars LLP - had issued an unmodified opinion on the Group's annual accounts, subject to a qualification relating to the inventory balance, as Mazars' team were unable to attend and observe the stock-take at 31st March 2020 (and therefore verify the opening stock balance) because of Covid-19 safety restrictions. There was no criticism of the Trust's accounting or stock management procedures, simply recognition that the existence of the stock could not be verified by the auditors.
- Consolidation schedules were consistent with the audited financial statements.
- No issues were identified with the Trust's value for money arrangements.
- After taking into account technical, non-cash adjustments, the Trust had met its regulatory target, delivering a small surplus.
- Service changes during the pandemic increased the level of capital investments.
- The closing cash balance was healthy, but included some prepayments for the year ahead.
- Income and expenditure during 2020/21 was higher than 2019/20, with most additional costs incurred as a result of the pandemic. An independent review of the Trust's Covid-19 expenditure over two months found no issues with expenditure for which funding had been claimed back.

Performance in 2021/21

Ms Jacques outlined the Trust's operational performance in 2020/21.

- The peaks of Covid-19 figures were represented within a chart, with information in regards to age ranges and mortality.
- Incident management arrangements were in place 24/7, when required, in line with national guidance.
- A number of changes were made to strengthen services when restarting activities which had been suspended during Covid and a key priority was to support the workforce.
- An Operational Deliver Group was set up to oversee the implementation of changes to enhance services and the recovery of operational activity, including the relevant patient pathways, and operational performance.
- Virtual appointments were implemented to support care pathways; some members of the public chose to postpone elective surgeries, and all health services were currently experiencing higher attendances in A&E Departments at present.
- Escalation beds had been opened in the Trust to help manage current pressures.
- The Trust had seen the highest uptake of the flu vaccination in the North East and Yorkshire among front-line staff.
- Work was taking place to improve referral to treatment times, which was seeing more patients seen within 18 weeks and reductions in backlogs waiting over 52 weeks for operations.
- Working alliances forged during the pandemic, remained in place across North East and Cumbria to support a collaborative approach to the recovery of activity.
- Cancer pathways and urgent elective procedures were maintained throughout the pandemic, with access to those services protected from the impact of Covid-19 on activity levels as far as possible.

Council of Governors and Membership

Mr Edge, explained that it was members within public communities and staff members who were vital in representing the views of patients, the public and Trust staff, to help shape Trust and service plans. The role of Foundation Trust members was to hold the Board to account, through the Council of Governors and Non-Executive Directors with respect to planning and services. Mr Edge emphasised the importance of maintaining a healthy membership and recognised the contributions of Governors and members alike.

Mr Edge provided details of the Trust membership base, its public constituencies, membership goals and plans to achieve this.

Mr Edge described how the Foundation Trust office sought to recruit and engage members, noting that many membership events had, necessarily, been cancelled this year due to Covid-19. Virtual methods of recruitment had been used with some success. The number of younger members had doubled in recent years through work with higher education providers, which was maintained virtually throughout the pandemic. The Trust sought growth in real engagement alongside an increase in the number of members.

Mr Edge detailed the Governor elections which took place. All elected Governors played an active part on the Council of Governors. Governors meetings took place virtually and allowed the representatives of the members to scrutinise all plans during the pandemic. The Council of Governors recruited and supported the appraisal of the Chairman and Non-Executive Directors, and held them to account. Mr Edge encouraged participants within the meeting who may be interested in the roles to contact the foundation trust office.

Mr Edge invited Ms Featherstone, Lead Governor to talk about the way in which the Council of Governors sought to make a positive difference to the Trust. Ms Featherstone advised that Governors had supported the Trust through extremely difficult times and circumstances. Governors had engaged virtually to maintain the accountability of Non-Executive Directors and seek assurance that services provided were running safely and effectively throughout trying times. One recent example of the work of the Governors had been to inform the communication of issues with the water supply at Darlington Memorial Hospital to the public, and members and another area of close interest was the plans to re-provide services at Shotley Bridge, which had been the subject of public engagement led by County Durham CCG. Governors had also relayed how proud and impressed they were with all staff during the pandemic and with the support that the Executive Directors had provided. Ms Featherstone described the Council of Governors having a real voice and being able to influence change for services.

07 Public Question Time

The Chairman noted that 4 questions had been received from Governors. Mr Edge would read the questions and ask the relevant Executive Director to respond.

Questions from Governors and Public Members received prior to the meeting

Q1 Ms Featherstone queried how staff were being supported with a heavy workload, and helped to cope with changes in working patterns to avoid burn out.

Ms Smith advised that the health and wellbeing of staff was a top priority for the Executive team; she outlined programmes undertaken to support recruitment, retention and agile working. Staff were encouraged to take their annual leave, and a wide range of health and well-being support was provided to staff including coaching, counselling and psychology support provided by mental health trust partners. The Trust's Occupational Health service also provided psychological support and a number of Trauma Risk Management (TRiM) practitioners – embedded in teams – had been trained to support their colleagues. Risk assessments had been undertaken for all staff and mitigations put in place where staff were clinically extremely vulnerable or identified as needing other forms of support. Staff networks were in place for staff with protected characteristics, helping to raise relevant issues and support staff, as part of the Trust's equality and diversity agenda. In addition, a wide range of training support had been offered, and taken up by staff, to support mental health and manage stress, along with resilience training.

Q2 Ms Featherstone asked what plans were in place to support and improvement to the water supply at Darlington Memorial Hospital.

Mr Scanlon explained that water technicians were on site adding cleaning chemicals to the water systems to support cleansing progress, and that point of use filters had been added to taps to remove contaminants. The use of the filters reduced the water pressure in the Tower Block on the DMH site, as a result of which pressure pumps had been installed to support free flowing showers on the 6th floor. The site's water tanks were to be replaced and relocated and this work was currently subject to a tendering process. The borehole on the site had been recommissioned, allowing cooler water to be taken at source – compared to the mains supply – which was expected to be less susceptible to contaminants. Mr Scanlon emphasised that no staff or patient had come to any harm, because of the safety measures in place.

Q3 Ms Featherstone queried what the trust plans were to catch up with referrals for cancer treatments and elective care.

Ms Jacques responded that the Trust had appointed a senior manager to oversee a programme of elective recovery work, designed to reduce backlogs. There was a series of arrangements in the Trust to optimise the provision of elective procedures in the Trust, and reduce waiting lists as safely as possible. For the fourth consecutive week, the Trust was one of the best performing in the North East and North Cumbria based on levels of elective activity, including inpatient operations, day cases and diagnostics. A decision had been made at the beginning of the pandemic to utilise services to support capacity and create Covid-19 free pathways for elective surgeries. The Trust was utilising the independent sector to support its recovery programme and working collaboratively with other trusts on pressures and capacity. The Trust was pioneering a “waiting well” service across the region to support patients whilst they wait for surgery to provide optimal care and condition for surgery.

Q4 Ms Featherstone queried what the trust plans were to increase or restore visiting for patients.

Mr Scanlon responded the Trust was following national guidance, and visiting was currently suspended due to the high-levels of Covid-19 patients within the Trust, high community infection rates and several outbreaks. In combination, these factors made it more likely that visitors could inadvertently help to spread infection. Exemptions from the restrictions had been agreed to support visiting for patients with Autism, Dementia, Maternity, Children and End of Life Care. Visiting will be reintroduced at the earliest point as it is well documented that visiting benefits patient's care. These steps have been taken reluctantly and reviews are on-going.

Mr Edge explained that no comments had been received via the comment box, or via the manned telephone during the meeting therefore question time was concluded. Mr Edge also advised those present that, if any questions came to mind after the event, the Trust would be happy to respond to these through its general enquires email address: - cdda-tr.GeneralEnquiries@nhs.net.

8 Chairman's Closing Remarks

The Chairman acknowledged that 2020/21 had been a difficult year and his thoughts were with the community and those families affected by Covid-19. The Chairman thanked the Communications Team not only for their input in making today's meeting a success, but also for the way in which they had supported sharing of fundamental messages throughout the pandemic. The Chairman thanked the Council of Governors who had supported the Trust throughout the pandemic virtually, with very high attendance rates. Hybrid meetings, combining physical attendance and virtual options for those who preferred not to attend in person, would be looked into for future meetings, if feasible. The Chairman thanked the Trust's Charity which had supplemented the Trust's resources and also the public at large who had provided so much support, including generous gifts in kind and offers of help, to Trust staff. The pandemic had highlighted how working together collaboratively could support the public at large and the Trust endeavoured to support working partnerships across the region to enhance patient care. Through the resilience of its staff, and their commitment compassion and goodwill, the Trust would endeavour to keep staff and patients safe in the coming year; however it would be important for

everyone in the Community to remain vigilant, respectful and understanding through these challenging times.

The Chairman noted the Board's fundamental objective, of continually improving the quality of care is provided by the Trust. He encouraged Trust members, the public and service users to liaise with the Trust to help improve the patient's quality of care.

The Chairman wished everyone an enjoyable evening and looked forward to the time when meetings could take place face to face.

9 Any Other Business

There were no additional items for discussion.

10 Upcoming Meetings held in Public

Council of Governors:

6th October 2021

2nd February 2022

Trust Board:

24th November 2021

26th January 2022

30th March 2022

Due to ongoing Covid-19 safety needs, public attendance at meetings would be facilitated virtually until further notice; agendas and papers for public meetings would be available on the Trust website.

The meeting was formally declared concluded at 19.04hrs.