

Report to:	Public Board of Directors	Agenda item:	9
Date of Meeting:	31 March 2021		

Title of Report:	Closedown of the 2020/21 Board Assurance Framework
Status:	For Discussion
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Appendices	Appendix 1: BAF 2020/21 v10.7

1. Report

The Board Assurance Framework (BAF) is a key mechanism for ensuring that the Board is able to monitor those risks that could prevent the Trust from achieving its objectives.

This is the Board's seventh and final view of the 2020/21 BAF which is attached at Appendix A. The Board is asked to approve its final closedown in advance of the 2021/22 framework being formally presented for the first time at the public Board meeting on 5 May.

By way of reflection, while there is more work to be done to ensure that the BAF accurately and comprehensively represents the risks to the Trust achieving its strategic objectives, feedback from the Board throughout the year indicated that progress was being made. There was much greater engagement by the Board Committees both with the risks for which they are responsible, and the wider framework. The BAF is also beginning to drive Board and Committee agendas, and work is being done to better ensure effective and real time links with the corporate risk register.

The executive team are considering the format and content of the 2021/22 BAF, and this is being done with the expectation that there will be fewer overall level risks, but that these will be linked directly to each of the Trust's strategic objectives. In terms of the formatting of the new framework, the clear feedback from the Board about the need for clarity and succinctness in the description of risks, controls and sources of assurance has also been taken on board.

With regard to the current BAF, there has been no movement in any of the risk ratings since the Board last considered it at their meeting in January. There are two areas that the Board might wish to address in closing down this BAF:

- BAF 4 (failure to effectively manage the pressures of the COVID outbreak) ought to be reduced from its current (5x4) 20, perhaps to (4x4) 16. This is on the basis that the numbers of COVID patients in hospital is much less than it was at the peak of this current wave, and the capacity to manage other work is increasing.
- BAF 13 (protecting the health of staff considered to be at high risk as a result of COVID): the Board will recall that this was a risk that trusts were obliged to include on their BAFs in light of the emerging evidence of the disproportionately adverse effect that COVID was having on certain groups, particularly from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) background. The Trust's risk management processes in this regard have been largely

successful, and in addition, take up of the vaccination programme among members of staff from BAME backgrounds has been good.

Consideration of these, and other ratings, within the current BAF would be helpful as this final set of scores will inform initial ratings in the event that the same or similar risks are included on the new framework.

With regard to the new BAF, a short workshop will be scheduled to socialise it with the full Board in advance of its formal presentation at the May Board meeting.

2. Recommendations

The Board of Directors is asked to review the Board Assurance Framework and:

- Consider whether the ratings for BAF 4 and BAF 13 ought to be reduced;
- Determine if there are other risks whose scores should be reviewed;
- Provide any comment or feedback on the controls, assurances, and suggestions on gaps and actions;
- Agree to the closing down of the BAF for 2020/21.

3. Legal / Regulatory Implications

The Board of Directors is required to have a Board Assurance Framework in place for the year. In addition the Board Assurance Framework is one of the key sources of evidence to support the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement.

4. Risk (Threats or opportunities, link to a risk on the Risk Register, Board Assurance Framework etc)

The Board of Directors requires assurance that the Trust's priority objectives will be delivered, and must have regard to the key risks which may impact on this delivery. The Board Assurance Framework is the mechanism for monitoring the effectiveness of the controls that are in place to manage or mitigate these risks.

5. Resources Implications (Financial / staffing)

The production and maintenance of the Board Assurance Framework is the responsibility of the Head of Corporate Governance in conjunction with the relevant Executive Directors of the Trust.

6. Equality and Diversity

No issues have been identified in this report.

7. References to previous reports

This paper should be read in conjunction with the Strategic Framework for Risk Management, and quarterly update reports are presented to the Board.

8. Freedom of Information

Public.