

Report to:	Board of Directors	Agenda item:	6
Date of Meeting:	6 July 2022		

Title of Report:	Governor log of assurance questions and responses
Status:	For Information
Board Sponsor:	Alison Ryan, Chair
Author:	Roxy Milbourne, Deputy Head of Corporate Governance
Appendices	Appendix 1 - Governor log of assurance questions

1. Executive Summary of the Report
<p>The purpose of this report is to provide the Board of Directors with an update on all questions on the “Governors’ log of assurance questions” and subsequent responses.</p> <p>The Governors’ log of assurance questions is a means of challenging the communication between the Governors and the Non-Executive Directors.</p>

2. Recommendations (Note, Approve, Discuss)
The report is presented for information.

3. Legal / Regulatory Implications
None

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

5. Resources Implications (Financial / staffing)
N/A

6. Equality and Diversity
N/A

7. References to previous reports
This is the first time that this report is being presented to the Board of Directors and so the log of questions dating back to September 2021 are provided for information.

8. Freedom of Information
Public

Appendix 1: Governor Log of Assurance Questions

Date	March 2022
Source Channel	Council of Governors Informal Chat
Date Sent & Responder	Sent to all NEDS 4th April 2022, chased 21/04/22, escalated to Alison 10/05/22, AR forwarded to NEDs on 10/05/22 confirming that last Board meeting answered this Q.
Question	Following the completion of the establishment review by the Chief Nurse, what assurance do the NEDs have that staffing numbers are adequate for all clinical areas and going forward what is the financial strategy to cope with any shortfall?
Process / Action	Update provided by Alison Ryan, Chair and Anna Mealings, Non-Executive Director at Council of Governors on 09/06/22.
Answer	<p>Our Chief Nurse, Toni Lynch has worked with her team and other internal and external stakeholders to understand the optimal nursing ratios for the Trust. The current nurse ratios are not optimal however, as our data demonstrates, in the broad context our outcomes are generally good and no worse than the Trusts we are benchmarked against. With the investment in more nurses over a period of a number of years we are confident we will see even better outcomes for patients and staff generally. For example, in infection control and staff well-being.</p> <p>The Trust does not undertake full scale in-depth review of other clinical areas/professions at this point in time. However, where our experience and data indicates this would be prudent we will do so. Two recent examples include cleaning and junior doctors. However, both Toni and Bernie Marden (Medical Director) are working with the Acute Hospital Alliance to develop a methodology to assess other groups which include medical staff and Allied Health Professionals.</p> <p>The executive team are very conscious of costs and the nursing review recommended a phased approach to increasing the nursing staffing levels over a number of financial years. They were also able to clearly demonstrate the expected financial benefits of increasing staffing levels, such as less nurse absenteeism, and the opportunity costs of not doing so. The same thoughtful consideration will be given to any other reviews and in the case of cleaning, mentioned above, where we have new minimum standards to comply with we will work with the broader management team to find savings to fund this through such things as productivity improvement programmes (QIPP).</p>
Closed?	Yes at Council of Governors on 09/06/22

Date	March 2022
Source Channel	Council of Governors Informal Chat
Date Sent & Responder	Sent to all NEDS 4th April 2022, chased 21/04/22, escalated to Alison 10/05/22, AR forwarded to NEDs on 10/05/22, SH response 11/05 confirming meeting with DMcC on 06/06.
Question	<p>Digital Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the NEDs assured that the timeline for each of the 8 priority areas outlined for action, have been identified clearly? • Has risk analysis been conducted for each of these 8 priorities? • Additionally is the budget for the majority of the priorities ringfenced? We are aware that some budget is yet to be confirmed. • Lastly, has the Board considered the impact on future organisational operation for those areas which may not receive ringfenced budgetary support?
Process / Action	Sumita meeting with Dave McClay - 6th June 2022
Answer	Update provided by Sumita Hutchison, Non-Executive Director at Council of Governors on 09/06/22. Awaiting minutes of the meeting.
Closed?	Yes at Council of Governors on 09/06/22

Date	September-November 2021
Source Channel	Council of Governors Informal Chat
Date Sent & Responder	Nigel Stevens, Non-Executive Director
Question	Are NEDS assured that the initial prioritisation of patients affected by the elective backlog is being re-reviewed in sufficient clinical detail? Also Is the root cause analysis (RCA) sufficient as a tool to audit for continuing risk of patients being pushed back, regarding their deterioration of condition, and does anyone re-visit the RCAs?
Process / Action	Response provided by Nigel Stevens at Council of Governors on 2 December 2021
Answer	This issue has repeatedly been reviewed by the Quality Committee with the mindset of reducing risk that patients may 'fall in the cracks'. At the last review, in mid-2021, we received a detailed briefing on the processes in place to track and regularly review the patient waiting list. We were assured that processes were both robust and effective. This topic is due for a further review, as a high-risk issue, and it will be included in the next QGC agenda.
Closed?	Yes, at Council of Governors on 2nd December 2021

Date	September-November 2021
Source Channel	Council of Governors Informal Chat
Date Sent & Responder	Jeremy Boss, Non-Executive Director
Question	Orthopaedic lists being moved to Sulis and or deferred in favour of creating more capacity – it is understood that these electives are relatively safe to move or defer, but in the development of a strategy which encompasses this, is there a 'ceiling' to this before it is audited?
Process / Action	Response provided by Jeremy Boss at Council of Governors on 2 December 2021
Answer	The acuity level of patients treated at Sulis has been agreed and verified. A review is underway to ensure this is at the correct level and work is in progress to maximise the capacity and capability of the Trust and Sulis. Deferred patients will be included in waiting list follow ups. An RUH/Sulis elective strategy workshop is planned to consider medium term strategy to maximise use of both sites given their constraints.
Closed?	Yes, at Council of Governors on 2nd December 2021

Date	September-November 2021
Source Channel	Council of Governors Informal Chat
Date Sent & Responder	Jeremy Boss, Non-Executive Director
Question	Do NEDs have assurance over the details of the deficit, how this has accumulated and clarity over what is related to COVID pressures?
Process / Action	Response provided by Jeremy Boss at Council of Governors on 2 December 2021
Answer	Finance and Performance Committee receives regular reports on key performance indicators (KPIs) from the integrated performance report and collated COVID-19 costs and is aware of BSW work to understand drivers of system deficit. Governor Observers can provide additional assurance on these processes.
Closed?	Yes, at Council of Governors on 2nd December 2021

Date	September-November 2021
Source Channel	Council of Governors Informal Chat
Date Sent & Responder	Jeremy Boss, Non-Executive Director
Question	Do NEDs have assurance over the impact for quality and patient safety when making financial decisions. Can examples be provided where financial decisions have been made but quality and safety was scrutinised. Thus providing a joined up overview of finance with a quality lens. This is not apparent in the papers and quality and finance currently appear to be reported upon separately.
Process / Action	Response provided by Jeremy Boss at Council of Governors on 2 December 2021
Answer	The Trust is required to make quality impact statements if cost releasing savings are made. All decisions include an element of quality and safety and any business case for approval should cover these factors. NEDs could look at making this more explicit in reports to Board of Directors, QGC and FP&C. Cross membership on these committees ensure that work is not duplicated and Governors can seek assurance through observation.
Closed?	Yes, at Council of Governors on 2nd December 2021

Date	September-November 2021
Source Channel	Council of Governors Informal Chat
Date Sent & Responder	Anna Mealings & Jeremy Boss, Non-Executive Director
Question	Do the NEDS understand the voice of front line management staff and the issues they face in relation to finances/budget, resources, equipment and staffing. Are NEDs assured that the Trust is actively reviewing staffing establishments, has an action plan to fill gaps, a strategy to increase those establishments where indicated and what progress has been made
Process / Action	Response provided by Alison Ryan on behalf of Anna Mealings at Council of Governors on 2 December 2021
Answer	A key element of any organisation's success is understanding the views of front line staff. There is a huge amount of executive attention on this through direct staff contact, improving together, line management and Divisional Management. NEDs triangulate feedback from multiple sources such as meeting staff, go & see visits (when possible), ward accreditation, Staff Governors, survey feedback as well as the formal board papers. People Committee review staffing levels at each meeting and the Chief Nurse is in the process of reviewing establishment levels to ensure that enough staff were recruited with the correct skills mix. NEDs were assured that robust plans and processes were in place to address recruitment challenges and this was a priority for the Board as a whole.
Closed?	Yes, at Council of Governors on 2nd December 2021

Date	September-November 2021
Source Channel	Council of Governors Informal Chat
Date Sent & Responder	Simon Sethi, Chief Operating Officer & Jeremy Boss, Non-Executive Director
Question	Did the presentation on ED provide a balanced overview and also equally highlight what hasn't changed and what needs to change e.g. continued issues/challenges they face and what frontline staff would like to change.
Process / Action	Response provided by Jeremy Boss and Simon Sethi at Council of Governors on 2 December 2021
Answer	Yes. Finance and Performance Committee actively monitors the ED / Improving Patient Flow programme and has feedback direct from management and staff on this as well improving together progress. Governor observation of meeting should provide assurance of these processes. The Chief Operating Officer provided an update on the Emergency Department as part of the CEO Report during the Council of Governors meeting on 2 December 2021.
Closed?	Yes, at Council of Governors on 2nd December 2021