



**Minutes of Trust Board**

**Thursday 1 February 2018, 2.00pm in the Boardroom, Northern Ireland  
Ambulance Service Headquarters, Knockbracken Healthcare Park, Belfast BT8  
8BH**

**Present:**

Mr P Archer	Chairman
Mr W Abraham	Non-Executive Director
Mr T Haslett	Non-Executive Director
Mr A Cardwell	Non-Executive Director
Mr S Devlin	Chief Executive
Mrs S McCue	Director of Finance & ICT
Ms M Lemon	Interim Director of HR & Corporate Services
Dr N Ruddell	Interim Medical Director
Mr B McNeill	Director of Operations

**In Attendance:**

Ms H Coard	Senior Secretary
Miss K Magee	Senior Secretary

**1.0 Apologies:**

The following apologies were noted:

Dr J Livingstone Non-Executive Director

**2.0 Procedure: Declaration of potential Conflict of Interest / Pecuniary Interest / Quorum**

The Board was confirmed as quorate.

**3.0 Minutes of the previous meeting of Trust Board held on 7 December 2017**

Trust Board members requested that the relationship of The Chair being a Trustee of St John's Ambulance is noted at each meeting.

Due to competing pressures, some late changes have been made to the last Trust Board minutes so a new set of minutes were distributed. Following an explanation of the changes, Mr T Haslett proposed the minutes and seconded by Mr W Abraham.

#### **4.0 Matters Arising:**

The Chair sought clarification if the HEMs Management Desk had been moved to NIAS Control Room. Dr N Ruddell confirmed that at present the desk was within NIAS Control and running as a pilot and it would be hoped to be imbedded further following the pilot.

#### **5.0 Chairman's Business**

##### **5.1 Chairman's Update**

The Chairman gave an outline of his activities and meetings attended since his last report, highlighting the following:

- Visit to Purdysburn Station today outlining some problems with the upkeep of an old building which could present difficulties if looked into by RQIA
- Has had a lot of activity with HR in the recruitment of a new Chief Executive, shortlisting took place for this post on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2018
- Attended the Assurance Committee as an observer on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2018
- Attended a seminar on HSC involvement with Brexit on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2018
- Regular meetings have taken place between the Chairman and the Chief Executive

#### **6.0 Chief Executive's Business**

##### **6.1 Chief Executive's Update**

Mr S Devlin outlined his activities and meetings attended since the last Trust Board, highlighting the following:

- It was acknowledged the extreme pressures of the winter months and the engagements of each of the Trusts throughout scrutiny in the press.
- Radio broadcast regarding the recent attacks on paramedics
- Attended Accountability Meeting with the Department of Health which focused on Infection Prevention Control
- Attended Trust's Chiefs meeting regarding HSC Reform

Mr T Haslett stated he had seen and heard Mr S Devlin on Television and Radio and commended him on his interviews.

#### **7.0 Performance Report as at 1 February 2018:**

##### **7.1 Operations Directorate:**

Mr B McNeill, Director of Operations provided an update to Trust Board, highlighting the following:

- Mr B McNeill gave a presentation regarding the Winter Pressures faced by NIAS, he commended the Control Team in dealing with these over the last few months and also thanked the Scottish Ambulance Service Control in Glasgow who NIAS buddy with. A capacity chart showed how difficult it was to manage over the

Christmas period with significant growth in demand between December 2017 and January 2018.

- Discussion around the flows of the main Emergency Departments during the winter period and patients being sent to hospitals outside of their catchment area as capacity in places run out with NIAS being caught in the middle. Mr W Abraham asked if it was the role of NIAS to manage these flows and Mr B McNeill explained the only other option would be to end up queuing in an over capacitated Emergency Dept.
- Mrs S McCue asked whether capacity in the hospitals was on a par with last year. Mr S Devlin stated there were issues with hospital discharge packages hence a build-up. The Chair remarked that the Ulster Hospital figures are extremely high and a general discussion took place around these figures. NIAS work closely with all Trust in regards to space in Emergency Depts.
- Mr B McNeill explained he had spent time in the Control Room and tensions were high and moral with staff was low.
- A Discussion took place around winter pressure funds. Mrs S McCue explained this funding was non recurrent so NIAS could not depend on this until it was confirmed and advised not to recruit if funding is non recurrent. Mr S Devlin said the Board set aside £7-9 million of winter monies that this should be made recurrent so NIAS could invest in planned resources.
- Mr B McNeill suggested NIAS would need collaborative funding and plans for all Trusts, Mr S Devlin suggested that more staff could be employed in the Ulster as there is a ward with 20 beds empty however they need recurrent funds to do this.
- Mr T Haslett asked if there was any way NIAS could recognise staff efforts during this winter period, Mr S Devlin explained it had been discussed perhaps an extra day's annual leave may be given to staff. Ms M Lemon acknowledged that Mr B McNeill had written a letter to all staff thanking them.
- Mr B McNeill presented the comparison chart from December 2017.
- The Chair and Trust Board commended Mr B McNeill's hard work and dedication over winter pressures including the Christmas period and asked that this thanks be passed onto his team.

## **7.2 Finance & ICT Directorate:**

Mrs S McCue, Director of Finance provided an update to Trust Board, highlighting the following:

- Mrs S McCue presented the Finance Report – NIAS are coming into the final quarter and are forecasting a break even position for the end of the month.
- NIAS have a Capital Spend Budget of £8.27m and have reviewed the programme of spend of £6.48m and have handed money back to the Department of Finance. Mr T Haslett asked if this was surrendered back to the Department can NIAS still avail of it next year. Mrs S McCue advised that any allocation which is considered to be unspent by the Trust should be returned to DOH for potential allocation to other Trusts within the current financial year. Mrs S McCue further explained this would not impact on funding for next years allocation.
- Finance and Operations are working on spend on vehicles and on MDT equipment which is going through a Tender Process at present.
- Cyber Security - Internal Audit are assessing at present how prepared we are for Cyber Attacks.
- Freedom of Information (FOI) requests – the number of Freedom of Information requests has decreased, however the number of FOI questions has increased and is putting pressure on the department. FOI response times are within 20 days for

only 62% of the time. Mr A Cardwell asked if the Commissioner has ever raised concerns, Mrs S McCue stated she has met with the Commissioner and they are aware of the issues and have been supportive of this.

### **7.3 Human Resources Directorate:**

Ms M Lemon, Acting Director of HR&CS provided an update to Trust Board, highlighting the following:

- HR and Operations are working together to develop a recruitment plan.
- Sickness Absence – an overview of sickness was provided and ongoing work is in place to address the high levels. Workshops with trade unions have been arranged and NIAS are investing in the health and wellbeing of staff. A peer support service has also been developed for staff after dealing with difficult events.
- Flu Vaccine – NIAS have nearly reached their target of getting 40% of frontline staff vaccinated, a number paramedics have been trained in giving the vaccine.
- Recruitment – Mr T Haslett raised that vacancies should be filled to replace high levels of overtime to help with the stress and low morale of staff. Mr B McNeill acknowledged this point and said Operations and HR would be holding a workshop and intended to fill baseline posts.
- Education, Learning and Development – NIAS have awarded a contract to Ulster University in delivering a foundation degree. The Chair requested a paper on this be brought to the next meeting.
- Media and Communication – 12 media interviews were conducted during this period in regards to assaults on crew, festive pressures and response delays. Mr A Cardwell enquired how seriously these assaults are taken by the Courts. Ms M Lemon said that the individual staff member must submit the case as it is not down to NIAS as an organisation, however NIAS would support the staff member throughout the process. Mr S Devlin updated Trust Board, NIAS do not currently have on record the number of people sentenced for these assaults.

### **7.4 Medical Directorate:**

Dr N Ruddell, Interim Medical Director provided an update to Trust Board, highlighting the following:

- Capital Funding equipment has been confirmed
- Incident Reporting is putting pressure on staff
- Infection Prevention & Control - follow up inspections and reports are awaited, however staff do state conditions have improved. Dr N Ruddell commended staff on completing IPC training by the end of January 2018. This has proven to have a positive impact on staff. The Chair queried how often this training took place, Dr N Ruddell conformed staff must update this training every three years.
- Defibrillator training had been postponed due to the urgency of IPC training however this has now begun, and there are over 10,000 registered community defibrillators.
- REACH Project - received support for capital from DoH for electronic Patient Report Form. The procurement process has commenced and NIAS hope to have a tender in place by June 2018.
- All GPs in Northern Ireland have been written to, detailing the process for Alternative Care Pathways and the role of the Clinical Support Desk. The Chair commended this and Dr N Ruddell acknowledged the hard work of the Clinical Support Desk.

- Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) – continues to be a success, the Chair suggested that the HEMS blog is a good way of keeping updated on its progress. HEMS workshop is planned for 01/03/ 2018 at Maze Long Kesh site. Mr T Haslett enquired if the funding was successful again this year for HEMS. Dr N Ruddell confirmed that the initial funding came from LIBOR funds and Mrs S McCue would be providing a report on this. The HEMS Management Board have given assurance the funds would be available.

### **7.5 Risk Register**

The Chair welcomed questions on the Risk Register, however nothing was raised. All agreed this will be discussed at next Assurance Committee meeting.

## **8.0 Items for Approval**

### **8.1 Briefing Note Charitable Funds**

Mrs S McCue presented a Brief Note on NIAS Charitable funds which are below £10,000. Discussions took place around the Allister Barr funds and the Chair asked why the money could not all just be moved into General Funds, Mrs S McCue explained these are made up of donations and people can be specific to which station or project they would like to donate to. Mrs S McCue requested that the £162 Omagh fund is added into general funds as there have been no significant donations made to this fund in 2017/18 and this balance would still be available to the Omagh station from the General fund. Mr W Abraham proposed this proposal and Mr T Haslett seconded.

## **9.0 Items for Information/Noting**

### **9.1 Mid-Year Assurance Statement**

Mrs S McCue stated the final version had been forwarded to the Department.

### **9.2 Audit Committee Minutes 15/06/2017**

### **9.3 Audit Committee Minutes 12/10/2017**

### **9.4 Assurance Committee Minutes 02/11/2017**

## **10.0 Forum for Questions**

None

## **11.0 Any Other Business**

Mrs S McCue updated Trust Board that the Trust Seal for Lisnaskea Community Enterprises Facility was signed for in December 2017 for a two year period with a possible one year extension thereafter.

The Chair acknowledged that this would more than likely be the Chief Executive Mr S Devlin's last Trust Board meeting before moving onto his new post as Chief Executive of SHSCT. He commended Mr S Devlin for his hard work over the past 15 months in NIAS.

## 12.0 Summary & Forward Agenda

The Chair reminded Trust Board the workshop for HEMS is on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2018 at Maze Long Kesh.

### Date, Time and Venue of Next Meeting

The next scheduled Trust Board meeting will be held on **Thursday 12 April 2018 @2pm in Southern Division. Location to be confirmed.**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

(Chairman)

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

12/04/2018