

Agenda Item 1v

Report to:	Board of Directors	Date: 4 February 2021
Report from:	Chief Executive	
Principal Objective/ Strategy and Title	Chief Executive Report	
Board Assurance Framework Entries	Governance	
Regulatory Requirement	N/A	
Equality Considerations	None believed to apply	
Key Risks	N/A	
For:	Information	

1. Purpose/Background/Summary

This report provides the Trust Board with a monthly update from the Chief Executive.

2. Introduction

2.1 The last month has been an exceptionally challenging period for our staff at Royal Papworth Hospital, as it has been for staff across the NHS. We saw a significant increase in Covid-19-related hospital admissions at the end of December and are now caring for more patients with the virus than at the first peak of the pandemic in the spring of last year. Our extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) service continues to experience huge demand and is now caring for more than 20 patients, compared to our more usual maximum capacity of five. We have also received a significant number of Covid patients from other hospitals who are benefitting from the care of our specialist respiratory team. The way that our staff have responded to these challenges is nothing short of outstanding; many have shown extraordinary flexibility and commitment in working in different areas of the hospital or volunteering to work additional shifts at nights and weekends. On behalf of the Board of Directors and our patients I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all our staff for their hard work during this very challenging start to 2021.

3 Operational update

3.1 The Trust has continued to respond to the second wave of the pandemic by accepting the very sickest patients from across the region, including patients needing our ECMO service and those from other critical care units which are at capacity. Early in January, we set up a respiratory surge response for patients from other hospitals in the region who may otherwise have ended up in a critical care unit. Our respiratory surge is being delivered through two quadrants on the third and fourth

floors of the hospital and has proved very successful so far, with a significant number of patients having already been discharged.

We are currently scheduling a very limited amount of elective activity as so many of our staff from different professional groups have been deployed to the Covid response. However, all of our emergency and cancer pathways are being maintained. Our cardiology service in particular has been experiencing a much higher level of emergency demand over the past six months. Our primary percutaneous coronary intervention (PPCI) activity has increased by 24.4% in this period alone but the team has managed to deliver this service with a reduced bed base through changes in practice at ward level to enhance patient flow. We are regularly reviewing patients on our waiting lists across all specialties and prioritising patients in most urgent need of treatment.

3.2 Reducing burden and releasing capacity to manage the Covid-19 pandemic

In response to the unprecedented levels of pressure facing the NHS arising from the Covid-19 pandemic, Amanda Pritchard, Chief Operating Officer, NHS England & NHS Improvement wrote to all Trusts on 26 January 2021 to outline their continued support to the freeing up NHS management capacity and resources to focus on these challenges. This letter reconfirmed the NHSE/I position on regulatory and reporting requirements for NHS trusts and foundation trusts, including: pausing all non-essential oversight meetings; streamlining assurance and reporting requirements; providing greater flexibility on various year-end submissions; focussing improvement resources on Covid-19 and recovery priorities; only maintaining those existing development workstreams that support recovery.

The Trust continues to work within this framework and measures to streamline non-essential business have been agreed through our governance and committee structures. This allows us to focus on the operational response to Covid-19 and on supporting our staff in the delivery of this response.

4 Financial update

4.1 Finance update

The Trust continues to operate under the financial framework set out by NHS England on 15 September 2020. This provides the Trust with revenue in the form of monthly block payments, a top-up payment, Covid-19 funding and system growth funding. In order to respond to the current wave of the pandemic, the Trust has been forced to prioritise patients based on clinical need. The financial implication of this is that lower cost treatment of patients with Covid-19 has been prioritised over higher cost, but less urgent, surgery. As a result month 9 saw the Trust report an in month surplus of £1.1m, bringing the year to date position of the trust to a £1.0m surplus (excluding the proceeds from the sale of our former site).

Planning for 2021/22 remains relatively fluid. The current wave of the pandemic, the impact of lockdown and the impact from the mass vaccination programme provide both a challenging immediate focus for Trust management and a relatively fluid backdrop on which to plan for next financial year. NHS England has recognised this and therefore postponed the publication of formal planning guidance, with the expectation that the current financial framework will roll forward into quarter one of next financial year, and formal planning will take place during quarter one with an implementation date of the start of quarter two. Here at Royal Papworth we are taking a pragmatic approach to 2021/22. Where we can progress planning and

budget setting, we are doing so, but where planning is constrained due to operational pressures or too much uncertainty we are putting this on hold.

5 Clinical update

5.1 Clinical Decision Cell

Our Clinical Decision Cell (CDC) – a team of senior clinicians responsible for our clinical response to Covid-19 – continues to meet daily to coordinate referrals from other hospitals and provide guidance on the treatment of Covid-19 patients and other urgent patients at Royal Papworth Hospital. We are currently seeing unprecedented numbers of referrals for our extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) service and are working closely with the other national ECMO centres to ensure patients who would benefit from ECMO are either transferred here or to another centre. We are also supporting other hospitals in the East of England who are experiencing exceptionally high numbers of admissions by receiving ward-level patients who need the care of our expert respiratory team. The work of our CDC, their contribution and support to our partners and their coordination of patient transfers to Royal Papworth has been the subject of a series of messages of thanks from our partner hospitals across the East of England and beyond.

5.2 Critical care transfer service

Last month we launched our critical care patient transfer service, provided by Royal Papworth on behalf of the East of England region. This service has been extremely busy, playing a vital role in the Covid-19 response by transferring critically ill patients between hospitals. I would like to thank Dr Alain Vuylsteke, Jo-Ann Fowles and the whole team involved in setting up this important service.

6 Workforce and employee engagement

6.1 Vaccinating staff against Covid-19

On 18 January we launched our own Covid-19 vaccination hub at Royal Papworth Hospital to vaccinate our staff as well as other healthcare staff in the region, including those working for partners such as Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust and East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust. At the time of writing we had vaccinated more than 2,500 healthcare workers using the AstraZeneca vaccine. I am extremely grateful to the team involved in setting up and operating our vaccination hub, which is fulfilling an incredibly important role in the local response to Covid-19. Feedback received to date has been excellent.

6.2 Support for staff health and wellbeing

The Covid-19 pandemic has placed huge demands on our staff and the latest surge in hospital admissions has made us even more concerned about the long-term effects on their health and wellbeing. As reported in previous CEO updates, we have introduced a number of physical and mental wellbeing initiatives for staff, including recruiting a psychological wellbeing practitioner to provide counselling support for staff. In the last month we also have set up “wellbeing rooms” across the hospital, giving staff a calm place to take a break during their demanding shifts. We have introduced some practical initiatives, such as half price food and drink in the hospital restaurant, to support staff through this second wave of the pandemic. Staff wellbeing will continue to be a core focus for the executive team in the months ahead as we look towards the next phase of recovery, where we will need to carefully balance the need to restore services for patients while giving staff adequate time to recover from the pressures of the past year.

6.3 Staff self-testing programme

In November 2020 we introduced a self-testing programme which allows our staff to test themselves for Covid-19 at home, twice weekly, using lateral flow testing kits. The scheme is open to all of our staff who work in the hospital and has so far been extremely helpful in identifying around 35 asymptomatic cases of Covid-19, allowing us to isolate these cases and minimise the spread of infection within the hospital.

7 Research and development

- 7.1** Last month our research and development team enrolled our 100th participant into the national RECOVERY trial, which tests the effectiveness of different treatments for Covid-19. So far the team has recruited 38 per cent of eligible participants to the trial, the highest percentage of any NHS trust.

Royal Papworth Hospital is also the sponsor for an Urgent Health Priority study to establish the humoral immune correlates of protection to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19. This study is being run through a consortium of clinicians and scientists in Cambridge and further afield (<https://www.hicc-consortium.com/>). More than 500 NHS staff from Royal Papworth Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and many of our patients are recruited in to the study, which aims to establish the critical components of the antibody response that protect against SARS-CoV-2 infection and severe disease.

We are also participating in a range of other studies looking at the genetic profile of patients with Covid-19 (Genomicc) and how patients are recovering following hospitalisation (PHOSP-COVID and C-MORE). Data from all of our eligible patients is being shared with the International Severe Acute Respiratory and emerging Infection Consortium (ISARIC) Clinical Characterisation Protocol (CCP), which supports the UK to collect Covid-19 data and samples in a way that enables the international research required to tackle this global pandemic.

8 Digital update

8.1 HTN Now Awards

In January, our digital team, led by Andrew Raynes, received an award for 'Rapid response to Covid-19' in Heath Tech Now's HTN Awards 2021. This award recognises the team's excellent work with DXC Technology to accelerate our use of technology during the pandemic, for example by introducing video consultations and a virtual private network that enables radiographers to work and receive images remotely.

9 News and updates

9.1 New Year honours for Royal Papworth colleagues

Two members of staff at Royal Papworth Hospital received honours in the New Year Honours List for 2021. Our Medical Director Dr Roger Hall received an OBE and Nurse Consultant Judith Machiwenyika received an MBE in recognition of their outstanding commitment to the NHS, in particular during the COVID-19 pandemic. On behalf of all of us at Royal Papworth Hospital I would like to offer both Roger and Judy my sincere congratulations and thank them for everything they do for our patients and colleagues.

9.2 **BBC News ECMO coverage**

On 9 January, BBC News ran a piece about our extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) service and its role in caring for patients experiencing severe respiratory failure due to Covid-19. The piece included an interview with our consultant Dr Alain Vuylsteke and Lead ECMO nurse Jo-Ann Fowles, explaining how the specialist intensive care life support machines pump oxygen into the patient's blood, allowing the lungs to rest.

9.3 **Cystic fibrosis patient shares her story of becoming seriously ill with Covid-19**

Last month, one of our cystic fibrosis patients, Erica Donnelly, developed Covid-19 and was transferred to Royal Papworth Hospital in an emergency from her home in Southend. Fortunately, Erica has responded well to treatment and decided to share her story in the media to remind the public of the seriousness of the disease. Erica's story was picked up by national and regional ITV News, BBC Radio Cambridgeshire, the Cambridgeshire Independent and Southend Echo.

9.4 **ECMO patient sees baby for the first time**

Last month, one of our ECMO patients whose baby had been delivered by caesarean section while she was seriously ill was discharged from hospital to meet her baby for the first time. Aged 30, Eva Gucaïn is one of the youngest patients to receive ECMO treatment for Covid-19 here at Royal Papworth. Eva's inspiring story was featured widely in the media including on the BBC News homepage, on the front page of the Metro newspaper, on BBC Look East and on ITV's Good Morning Britain.