

Agenda Item 1v

Report to:	Board of Directors	Date: 2 April 2020
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. Our response to the COVID-19 pandemic

The coronavirus outbreak is the biggest public health emergency in a generation. In response, the government has taken decisive action of the kind not normally seen in peacetime. As an NHS hospital, we have a vital role to play in the national effort to protect the vulnerable and save lives.

2.1 Managing the incident at Royal Papworth Hospital

On Friday 13 March 2020 we set up a command and control centre in the hospital to manage our response to the COVID-19 outbreak. This reports directly into the regional and national incident management teams. Our command and control team is staffed by senior representatives from across the hospital on a rota basis and is open 0800-2200, 7 days a week. Meetings take place each day at 0900, 1300 and 1700.

2.2 Cancellation of elective activity

In line with other trusts across the country, we have now cancelled all elective, non-emergency activity in order to maximise our inpatient capacity for COVID-19 patients. Lung cancer surgery is still going ahead and some telephone clinics are running to help minimise hospital admissions.

2.3 Our COVID-19 Surge Plan

Now that we have cancelled elective activity across the hospital, we are preparing to open more capacity for patients with COVID-19 who require intensive care. Although our critical care department is currently open to approximately 30 beds each day, we believe that we could safely open up to 95 critical care beds if and

when we are required to do so. This would involve gradually opening additional critical care ‘zones’ in different areas of the hospital. The plan for how we do this has been shared with senior clinicians and is called our COVID-19 Surge Plan.

2.4 Redeploying staff to support our COVID-19 response

A key part of our response to the COVID-19 outbreak is to redeploy staff to essential roles. Nurses who currently work on wards are undergoing training to be able to care for critically-ill patients. Clinical nurse specialists, research nurses and other staff with clinical experience are currently receiving refresher training to back-fill ward staff who move to critical care. Allied health professionals, scientists, junior medics and other bedside care staff are also training to assist either on the wards or in critical care.

As part of our COVID-19 Surge Plan, medical staff will be redeployed to their individual skill sets – either to critical care or to the inpatient ward areas. Some clinicians will continue with outpatient activity (mainly telephone clinics), particularly in thoracic medicine, to help minimise hospital admissions.

Other administrative staff are being redeployed to support the COVID-19 response, helping with tasks such as cleaning and distributing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), helping with portering roles and running a telephone helpline for patients. We are incredibly grateful to all staff who have shown their willingness to take on these essential roles and I have no doubt they will play a vital role in our ability to save lives.

2.5 Support for staff at higher risk of complications from COVID-19

A proportion of our staff members are in groups that are either “extremely vulnerable” or at “higher risk” of complications from COVID-19. Staff identified as “extremely vulnerable” from COVID-19 have been advised to work from home for 12 weeks. Staff who are at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 have been advised to be especially stringent in following social distancing measures. Managers have been undertaking risk assessments and having discussions with staff who may be in this higher risk category about whether they can do their jobs from home, or whether they can carry on working in the hospital or at the house while following other social distancing guidelines. If staff members are staying at home due to increased risk but are unable to carry out their normal roles, they may be asked to undertake other suitable work from home. Line managers are currently working with the Workforce team to identify how we are rearranging work across teams and roles to ensure that we maximise the support the clinical teams delivering patient care.

2.6 Support for patients identified as “extremely vulnerable” from COVID-19

Many of our patients fall into the group identified as high risk of severe illness from coronavirus because of underlying health conditions. These patients are advised to stay at home for 12 weeks to minimise their risk of catching the virus. Our clinical teams have provided specific guidance to groups at higher risk – for example our cystic fibrosis, transplant and lung defence patients. Telephone clinics for these patients are being held where they can help reduce hospital admissions.

2.7 Implementing social distancing guidelines

We are following social distancing guidelines within the hospital and at Royal Papworth House (wherever possible given the demands of caring for patients). Staff members who can work remotely and aren’t needed in the Hospital or at the House to perform an essential role in our COVID-19 response have been asked to work from home.

2.8 Support for staff wellbeing

We recognise that working in the NHS during a national health emergency is exceptionally challenging and we want to provide as much support to staff as we possibly can at this time.

We have set up quiet rest areas across the hospital where staff can go to recharge. A chaplain will be available for staff to talk to in these areas at certain times. We are also providing a selection of free food and drink to staff on each floor of the hospital and at the House.

In addition to ongoing support available for staff – such as our employee assistance helpline and access to counselling services - we have also run a number of resilience sessions in the hospital to help staff manage their own resilience. More will be scheduled soon.

Many members of the public are keen to support NHS staff in any way they can during this public health emergency. Royal Papworth Hospital Charity has launched a staff appeal to raise funds to support staff health and wellbeing at this time. We have already received support from many local and national businesses wanting to help boost staff morale at this time.

2.9 Communications with staff and patients

Our Communications team is attending all command and control meetings and is providing a daily email bulletin to all staff and non-executive directors. The team is also providing regular updates to staff and patients through other communications channels, including posters in clinical areas, electronic screens throughout the hospital, our website and social media. Our Booking team has been contacting patients who are affected by the cancellation of elective activity and is setting up a telephone helpline to respond to patient queries.

2.10 Thank you to staff and supporters

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to our staff and all of our partners, patients and members of the public who are supporting us at this time. It was with great regret that we had to cancel our staff awards ceremony, due to take place in March, and we very much hope we will be able to provide recognition for the staff members who were nominated for awards – and many others – at a later date. For now, we are working around the clock to save lives during this national health emergency, and I know that I speak for all Royal Papworth Hospital staff in saying that we are proud to play our part.