

**JOINT SCRUTINY PANEL FOR PENNINE CARE (MENTAL HEALTH)  
TRUST**

**MINUTES OF MEETING  
Tuesday, 22 March 2022**

**PRESENT:** Councillor McLaren ((Oldham MBC) in the Chair); Councillors Dale (Rochdale MBC), Davies (Stockport MBC), Grimshaw (Bury MBC), Hamblett (Oldham MBC), Patrick (Tameside MBC) and Wright (Stockport MBC).

**OFFICERS:** N. Littler (Executive Director of Workforce - Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust), N. Tamanis (Executive Director of Finance - Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust) and J. Jenkinson (Senior Governance and Committee Services Officer)

**22 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Sullivan (Rochdale MBC) and Councillor Whitby (Bury MBC).

**23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**24 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED –** That the minutes of the Joint Scrutiny Panel for Pennine Care (Mental Health) Trust meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022 be approved as a correct record.

**25 PENNINE CARE NHS FOUNDATION TRUST PRESENTATION**

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and invited Nicola Littler (Executive Director of Workforce) and Nicola Tamanis (Executive Director of Finance) to introduce the presentation.

Workforce Update

The Executive Director of Workforce provided an update to the Panel that outlined the key workforce challenges faced by the Trust.

Members were provided with information regarding the sickness absence rate over the last 12 months. It was noted that the main reasons for absence were: anxiety, stress, depression, and other psychiatric illnesses.

The Panel noted that the Trust currently had a 20% vacancy rate. The Executive Director explained that the attrition rate was stable and vacant posts were often internally filled. However, the Trust was making concerted

efforts to recruit external candidates into vacant posts. It was reported that the main reason for the use of bank and agency staff was to cover for establishment vacancies. It was explained that during the peak of the pandemic the Trust had struggled to fill vacant posts due to illness and this had challenged the Trust's day-to-day business continuity.

The Executive Director of Workforce reported that to address workforce challenges the Trust had put in place recruitment campaigns, new roles/trainee programmes and retention initiatives. Health and social care career opportunities were promoted across schools, colleges, communities and joint recruitment events.

In collaboration with other sector partners, the Trust was committed to reducing barriers to employment often faced by those with experience of homelessness, looked after children, former military service employees, and people with learning disabilities and autism. In addition, cross sector working and volunteering opportunities were promoted.

The Chair then invited comments and questions from Panel Members.

During the course of the discussion the following points were raised:

- Members noted that a high vacancy rate created additional pressures on existing staff and could result in higher sickness levels. The Executive Director explained that recruitment to the sector was a national challenge and the Trust recognised the importance of staff retention.
- With regard to sickness absence, it was reported that the Trust's levels were comparable to peer organisations within Greater Manchester and those nationally. Bank and agency staff tended to be used to fill front line rather than back office staff vacancies. However, it was explained that during the pandemic sickness rates in back office and front line staff were similar.
- In relation to training opportunities, the Executive Director listed a range of apprenticeships (trainee nursing associates/ top-up degree nurse apprenticeships) and training roles (trainee: healthcare support worker, assistant psychological practitioners and mental health wellbeing practitioners) that had been developed to encourage staff recruitment and retention.
- It was explained that the healthcare support role would be the first cohort of trainees to undertake the programme and therefore attrition rates and appropriate wraparound support for students would be monitored and assessed.
- The Executive Director explained that further work would be undertaken with schools and colleges to promote careers in the healthcare sector.
- In relation to pay within the sector, it was noted that NHS grading appeared complicated and opaque to those not familiar with the tier system. It was suggested that the Trust displayed pay grading in a

straightforward format on its website to ensure remuneration was clear to prospective candidates.

- It was noted that some universities students were offered casual social worker/carer placements during holiday periods which provided work experience and meant students established relationships with potential employers whilst they studied for a degree.

### Draft Revenue and Capital Budget Plans 2022/23

Ahead of providing a presentation to the Panel, the Executive Director of Finance reported that the national NHS planning guidance for 2022/23 had been published on the 24th December 2021. At the time of publication, the immediate operational focus for the NHS was on delivering the objectives set out in the letter 'Preparing the NHS for the potential impact of the Omicron variant'. The planning timetable and submission deadline had been extended to the end of April 2022 with draft plans due in mid-March 2022.

The Executive Director therefore explained that she was able to provide an update on the financial planning framework and progress to date, but was not in a position to present the final capital and revenue budgets to the Panel.

It was explained that the Trust was part of an Integrated Care System across Greater Manchester and the capital allocation and a proportion of revenue allocation were determined through negotiation with Greater Manchester partner organisations; and presently these discussions had not yet concluded.

In relation to finance and contracting arrangements 2022/23, it was reported that the settlement assumed that the NHS would deliver significant efficiencies to address the excess costs driven by the pandemic response from the current system envelopes to fair share allocations via a 'convergence' adjustment. It was anticipated that one-year revenue and three-year capital allocations would be issued with increased clarity and certainty over capital allocations.

Following the conclusion of the presentation the Chair invited comments and questions from Panel Members.

During the course of the discussion the following points were raised:

- In relation to the 5% efficiency saving target, it was asked how likely it was that the target would be delivered. In response, it was explained that historically 1% or 2% saving targets had been achieved. It was anticipated that a 3% saving target could be delivered, however, there 'was a long way to go' to reach this target. The Trust recognised that savings programmes could be negatively felt by employees, particularly given the strains of the pandemic, and therefore ongoing engagement with the clinical workforce to monitor the savings programme would be undertaken.

- In response to a question regarding inflation costs and energy prices, the Executive Director reported that rising costs had been built into the savings programme. Gross inflation had been funded at 2.8% with a 1.1% efficiency factor.
- It was noted that there had been a reduction in system support funding in the 2022/23 draft Revenue Plan, which included a reduction in Covid-19 funding and a 0.6% convergence adjustment.
- With regards to the Capital Plan and proposals to address the budget deficit, it was explained that a range of efficiencies would be utilised, including investment in green energy, a digital strategy programme and capital investment.

### Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) / Stopford House Refurbishment Update

Panel Members noted:

- That the male PICU was due to complete in June 2022 and open in July 2022.
- The design sign off had been reached for the female PICU (located in Stockport), which met the revised PICU business case benefits criteria. The project was now progressing to tender stage.
- Stopford House refurbishment – successful collaboration with Stockport Council had been undertaken to deliver a new Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service in Stockport. Stopford House was due to open in June 2022.

### **RESOLVED –**

- I. That the presentation be noted.
- II. That a visit to Stopford House be arranged in the new municipal year for Panel Members.
- III. That the following items be scheduled for future meetings in June / July 2022:
  - Revenue and Capital Budget Plans 2022/23 update
  - Building replacement programme update
  - Workforce update – staffing vacancies and impact on the budget

## **26 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**RESOLVED –** That the next meeting of the Joint Scrutiny Panel for Pennine Care (Mental Health) Trust be held on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2022.