

Board of Directors' Meeting 10 June 2021

Agenda item	126/21			
Report	Report from the Chair			
Executive Lead	Director of Corporate Governance			
	Link to strategic pillar:		Link to CQC domain:	
	Our patients and community	√	Safe	
	Our people	√	Effective	
	Our service delivery	√	Caring	
	Our partners	√	Responsive	
	Our governance	√	Well Led	√
	Report recommendations:		Link to BAF / risk:	
	For assurance			
	For decision / approval		Link to risk register:	
	For review / discussion			
	For noting	√		
	For information			
	For consent			
Presented to:	N/A			
Dependent upon (if applicable):	N/A			
Executive summary:	<p>As part of my report this month, we have considered how we might utilise the views of our stakeholders more richly and so, this report provides an updated approach to addressing the questions raised prior to Board of Directors' meetings.</p> <p>It sets out the requirements in terms of when questions must be submitted; the format to use; exception for rejecting a question; and clarifies that all questions and responses will be published on the website.</p>			
Appendices	None.			

Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS trust
June 2021
Chair's Report

Board Questions

1. Background

We want to be open and transparent about the way we do business so that the public can observe the decision-making process and give local people and groups the opportunity to ask questions about our Board meetings. With this in mind, members of the public and representatives of the press are welcome to attend and observe meetings of the Trust Board that are held in public. (During the Covid pandemic, Board meetings have been held virtually but we hope to resume normal meetings as soon as it is feasible to do so).

Some key points:

- 1.1 Meetings of the Board held in public are **not** public meetings and members of the public and representatives of the press observing such Board meetings do not have automatic speaking rights. However, the Trust has made arrangements to ensure that questions and comments by the public and press representatives may be put to the Board.
- 1.2 Any question or comment made by the public or representatives of the press should relate to an existing agenda item and/or relate to further clarification of an existing agenda item.

2. Process

Currently the Trust is receiving an unprecedented number of questions prior to Board of Directors' meetings, many of which are not necessarily related to the previous meeting agenda. To ensure that we manage the questions in as timely a way as possible, from June the following arrangements will apply;

- 2.1 Any questions **arising directly from the papers** presented to a Board of Directors' meeting, should be submitted to **by 17:00 on the second Friday following the meeting.**
- 2.2 A question form will be available on the Trust website <https://www.sath.nhs.uk/about-us/trust-information/questions/>. Please use one form per question and limit your questions to three questions per Board meeting; by sending us focused questions, we will be better placed to reply in a timely and meaningful manner. You will be required to include your name and relevant organisational details, which will be published with your questions on the Trust website.
- 2.3 The Trust will aim to publish responses before the next Board Meeting. If longer is required, an explanation and predicted timeline will be published. The questioner will be notified when the answer is posted.
- 2.4 The Chair will decide whether a question/response needs further discussion or clarification at a future meeting of the Board of Directors.

- 2.5 The questioner's name and question and the Trust's response will be published on the Trust's website.
- 2.6 The decision of the Chair on whether to accept a question and how it should be answered will be final.

3. **Exceptions**

A question may be rejected if it:

- is not about a matter relevant to the previous Board of Directors' meeting
- is about a matter for which the Trust is not responsible
- is defamatory, frivolous or offensive
- it would be too expensive or take too much staff resource to deal with the question (as per Freedom of Information guidelines)
- is substantially the same as a question asked within the last six months (in which case the questioner will be directed to the previous response)
- requests the disclosure of information which is confidential or exempt by virtue of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- names, or clearly identifies, a member of staff, patient or any other individual.
- is a question about an individual's patient care. Where appropriate the patient will be asked whether they are happy for this to be directed to the Trust's PALS team or Complaint's Procedure

4. **Looking Forward**

It is important that the questions we receive from our public are not only answered but are also used to inform the way we engage with our communities going forward. The Trust has engaged with the public on the development of a Public Participation Plan that will be coming to Trust Board in July.

Early indications are that a Public Assurance Group be established with public representative and Trust members and I intend that summaries and themes from public questions will be taken to this group to help shape future developments and strategies at SaTH. This will allow informed and engaged discussions between representatives of the public and senior leaders at SaTH in a truly meaningful way.

The work of this Group will also be reported back to the Board each quarter.

Julia Clarke,
On behalf of Dr Catriona McMahon