

Report from the Trust Chair on the activity of the Boards of Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust and Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, which met in common on 30 April 2020

Introduction

Given the rules on social distancing, each Board took the decision to suspend public board meetings during the COVID-19 emergency. They also agreed that, in recognition of current demands on the Trusts and Executive Management, their meetings should focus on receiving updates on key matters and taking key decisions that cannot be delayed.

Whilst the meetings have become private, receiving in the main verbal updates and presentations, both Trusts are keen to keep the public informed of matters discussed by their Boards and report the key decisions taken (recognising that some elements of any contractual decisions would not be disclosed). The Boards of BSUH and WSHFT met at the same time to help streamline governance through this challenging time, so commentary below refers to both Trusts unless otherwise stated.

Activity of the Boards

Both Boards approved the minutes of their January public meetings and these have been placed on our websites.

Both Boards received an update from the Executive Team, led by the Chief Executive and covering the Trust's response to COVID-19, the plans developed, performance against those plans and the management of risks, along with an understanding of the next stage as each Trust and the country move to the next phase of responding to the virus and managing non-COVID-19 patients, making sure that innovative ways of working which have been developed through the crisis are captured for the future (the new normal). Both Boards were assured over the development of robust plans, that each Trust was able to operate within them and that these plans and the actions taken were positively impacting on the identified risks to patients and the staff.

Each Board received information from the meeting of their Finance and Performance Committee that confirmed

- each Trust had met its control total and in so doing had substantively delivered its set efficiency programme.
- the funding mechanism for each Trust until July, this being substantively based on a block contract with top-up payments for extra costs incurred as result of COVID-19.
- each Trust has been fully reimbursed for extra COVID-19 costs incurred in February and March 2020.

Each Board received information on the recent performance of each Trust and were assured that had COVID-19 not brought about the significant changes it did in the latter part of the year, the Trusts would have delivered their agreed performance aims.

Key Decision

The Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust Board approved the purchase of equipment for the Breast Unit from the Trust charitable funds.

Next meeting

The next Board meeting for each Trust is scheduled for the 4th June. At this time we are working on the assumption this will be conducted under the same social distancing constraints and as such a short summary of the business of the meeting will be made available after the meeting. Governance arrangements are being kept under constant review and any changes to these temporary arrangements will be given on our website.

Alan McCarthy

Trust Chairman