Ashford and St. Peter's Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS
2nd December 2020

TITLE	**Assurance Report**
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	The Assurance report gives an overview of some of the key areas of internal focus for the Trust and areas of performance in terms of its five strategic objectives: 1. Quality of Care 2. People 3. Modern Healthcare 4. Digital 5. Collaborate The report also aims to provide assurance to the Governors that the Chief Executive is effectively leading the organisation in the delivery of the response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Trust operating plan and strategy.
The Council is asked to:	Note and review the report
Submitted by:	Suzanne Rankin, Chief Executive
Date:	December 2020
Decision	For assurance

Leadership Update

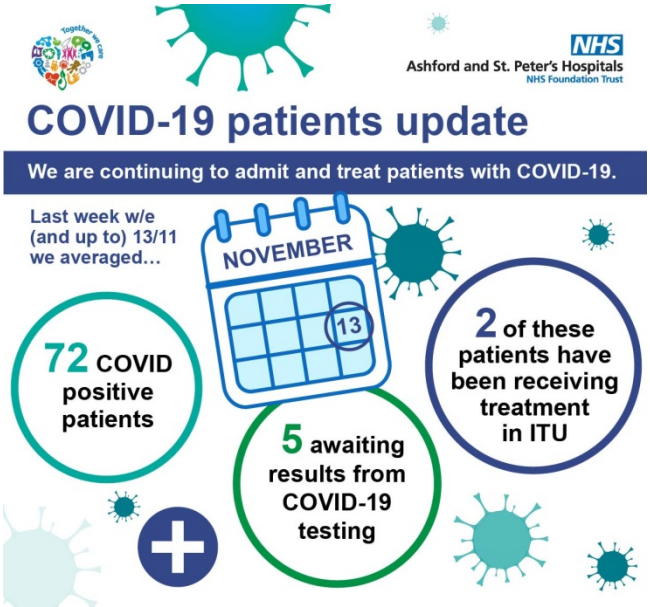
I was delighted to return to ASPH at the start of October following a four month secondment to NHS Test and Trace. I really missed Team ASPH during my time away and have enjoyed catching up with colleagues and hearing all the news and developments from what has been a very busy period of time. I would like to thank Dr David Fluck, Medical Director, for stepping into the Chief Executive role and doing such a fantastic job whilst I was away. David was of course ably supported by the executive team and the whole ASPH team, so thank you to everyone for your unwavering support and commitment.

In other news I would like to congratulate Andrea Lewis on her substantive appointment as Chief Nurse. This followed a thorough and competitive recruitment process. I am really pleased for Andrea and look forward to continuing to work closely with her as she continues to lead and inspire Team ASPH in the delivery and innovation of clinical, nursing and midwifery practice alongside her wider areas of focus as an executive director.

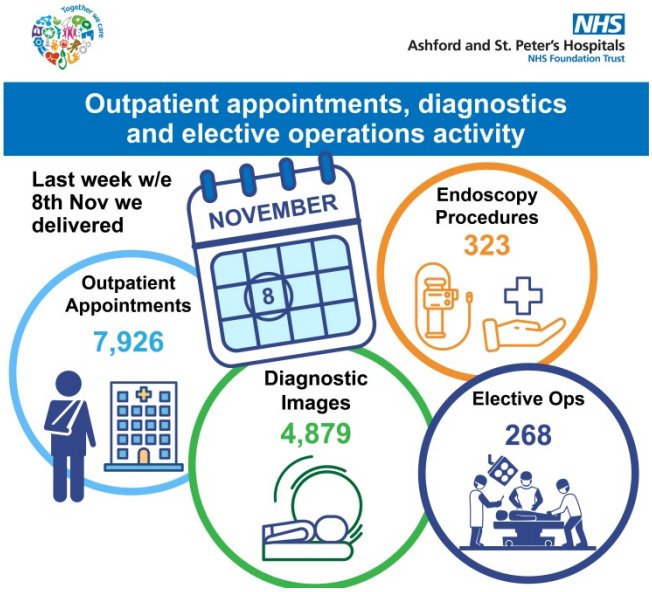
Covid-19

Since the last Chief Executive report in June the Covid-19 situation has evolved significantly. Recently, national infection numbers have risen steeply and we are currently in the midst of a second national lockdown.

At ASPH we have seen a rise in the number of patients with suspected or confirmed Covid-19. Fortunately, at the time of writing this report, the numbers of Covid-19 patient in critical care are relatively low.



Of course, this time of year we are also facing the additional pressures that winter brings and we have seen a rise in emergency attendances. We also continue to provide other diagnostic, outpatient and elective services, working hard to restore and recover services that were suspended or reduced during the first wave of the pandemic.



We continue to operate our phase two command and control structure, with a series of regular cell meetings focussing on key issues such as estates, workforce, testing and patient flow and capacity. These report into a weekly silver meeting from where issues can be escalated for oversight and intervention at a weekly Gold meeting attended by the senior leadership and executive team.

We continue to focus on implementing the new Infection Prevention and Control Strategy and encouraging best practice at every opportunity.

Detailed planning work is underway to implement regular asymptomatic staff testing and establish a staff mass vaccination programme when a Covid-19 vaccine becomes available.

So, as has been the case since the start of the pandemic, it's a busy time with multiple different projects and priorities to manage. Team ASPH continues to rise to that challenge and work together to provide the best possible care to patients and look after each other.

1 INTERNAL FOCUS

1.1 Quality of Care

Extended Use of Face Masks

We have extended the use of face masks across the hospital sites to further reduce the risk of transmission of Covid-19. We are now asking all inpatients in high or medium risk pathways to wear a surgical face mask during the day, if it can be tolerated by the patient and does not compromise their clinical care. We have also introduced the use of eye / face protection visors or goggles for all staff who are working in clinical and ward areas. For other clinical, non-clinical and administrative support staff we are asking them to wear a surgical face mask in their office and rest areas unless their work space has been assessed as completely 'Covid-19-safe'. Alongside other infection and prevention control protocols, these additional measures will provide us with the best chance of reducing the transmission of the virus and will help us keep patients and Team ASPH as safe as possible.

NHS Test and Trace App and QR Codes

We are promoting use of the NHS Test and Trace app for both patients and staff across the hospitals and QR code posters have been put up in required areas. To encourage use of the app

we have created a range of posters and banners for the main entrance check points.

Visit by Professor Jacqueline Dunkley-Bent OBE

We were delighted to receive a visit from Professor Jacqueline Dunkley-Bent OBE, the first Chief Midwifery Officer for England, earlier in November. Professor Dunkley-Bent OBE was able to see first-hand how the Trust is working to provide better care for mothers and babies and celebrate the outstanding contribution of the midwifery and obstetric teams. We highlighted our work to drive improvements in maternity care, and how we are working towards our vision of 'one team, working together, delivering safe and outstanding care for every woman and her family'.

Professor Dunkley-Bent also presented a prestigious Chief Midwifery Officer Award to Gemma Puckett, Acting Head of Midwifery. These awards are designed to recognise and reward the significant and outstanding contribution made by midwives in England.

Gemma received this award as a result of her commitment to excellence, and her exceptional leadership skills, particularly over the past year during Covid-19. Congratulations to Gemma on this prestigious and worthy achievement.

1.2 People

Reflections and Achievements through Covid-19

I wanted to share a very special video (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y1oAbwZ9kUMput) together by James Thomas, Chief Operating Officer and the Communications team. This reflects the incredible number of transformational changes Team ASPH made during the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic and the way everyone came together to adapt the way we work at pace. It's a great film – well done to James and colleagues for putting it together and highlighting the huge volume of amazing things we did over the course of just a few weeks. It makes me incredibly proud to be part of such an innovative and adaptable team. This video also featured in our first ever virtual Annual Members' Meeting which took place on 14th October 2020 which many of you will have attended

Flu Vaccination Campaign

The annual flu vaccination campaign is well underway at ASPH and we have now vaccinated around more than 60% of staff. With Covid-19 in circulation this year it is more important than ever that we protect as many colleagues as possible. As the flu virus is quickly transmitted, even amongst those not showing symptoms, it also provides protection to patients and loved ones. Some recent research has highlighted that people with dual infection of flu and Covid-19 are more than twice as likely to die as someone with Covid-19 alone – a daunting statistic but helpful to understand the importance of having the vaccination.

As is the case every year, Peer Vaccinators have done a fantastic job in vaccinating teams across the Trust in their areas of work and the Occupational Health team have been working incredibly hard operating a system of booked clinic appointments.

At the time of writing this report we've not received any definitive information about the Covid-19 vaccine, but as mentioned earlier in the report, we are in the process of planning the implementation of a potential vaccine if regulatory approval is given. This will be a huge operational and logistical task so we are keen to complete our flu vaccination programme as quickly as possible in preparation for this potential roll-out.

Health and Wellbeing Update

As part of our support to Team ASPH we recently undertook a Wellbeing Survey to understand the impact of Covid-19 on staff and what we could do more or less off as we move through the pandemic.

We know that some colleagues feel tired and worried and I am aware of, and feel, the pressures of the second wave and those more familiar associated with winter that we are now experiencing and appreciate the understandable concern felt by the team. The Wellbeing Survey gave an opportunity for staff to feedback in a structured way and will inform our approach going forward and of course we also glean a lot of informal feedback through the other mechanisms we had in place to support colleagues. This included staff feeding back directly through the health & wellbeing team, through facilitated conversations with individuals and groups, which staff can access by appointment or drop-in, and via CareFirst (our Employee Assistance Programme provider). The Data shows us the demand from staff for support has not diminished, and appears to be increasing, for example, in the last two weeks:

- 55 colleagues have taken part in wellbeing conversations individually or in groups. This includes proactive contact to 14 newly-arrived overseas staff.
- 35 colleagues have taken part in sessions with the new Psychological Incident Support Team.
- CareFirst also reports that 'contacts' to their service have almost doubled this year, recording 219 people accessing the service between January and September 2020.

In addition to the structured support available, guidance for staff and managers is available on the intranet, as well as regular on Aspire and Ryalto. Some divisions also have active Wellbeing Ambassadors who provide information and guidance to their teams where appropriate.

British Empire Medal for Maciel Vinagre

I would like to wholeheartedly congratulate Maciel Vinagre, Assistant Manager Hotel Services, who has been acknowledged in the Queen's Birthday Honours List 2020 for services to the NHS during Covid-19 with a British Empire Medal (BEM). Maciel has an essential role within the Trust and leads the housekeeping team, but during the pandemic, he worked closely with the senior team and brought innovative ideas and solutions to new problems faced during this time. In

particular, he worked closely with the Infection Prevention Control team to enhance the cleaning regimes by introducing new technologies to his current team, and by employing external teams made up of ex-soldiers. Maciel is a very worthy recipient of this special award and we are all extremely proud of his achievement.

1.3 Modern Healthcare

New Operating Model

In support of the North Star Objective we have created a new operating model for the Trust, focusing on the delivery of the Trust's mission to 'ensure the provision of high quality, sustainable healthcare services to the community we serve'.

The model centres around some key strategic objectives, including the provision of remote and virtual services in order to reduce footfall on the hospital sites, the creation of more services in the community closer to home for patients and enabling patients to manage their own care through the greater use of technology.

Each division has a number of 'priority projects' that adhere to the principles of the model and I was really interested to learn of the progress of some of these at the recent Trust Executive Committee meeting. For example work is underway to move more ophthalmology and audiology services into the community, to transform specialist palliative care provision into an integrated and collaborative provision with local hospice and community partners and to provide specialist clinics for children and young people in partnership with GPs.

Urgent and Emergency Care Development Project

Following the announcement in the last report that we have received £15 million capital funding (over this year and next) from the Government to expand and improve our emergency department and urgent treatment centre, alongside the funds raised through the sale of West Site for capital works, we have now begun the Urgent and Emergency Care Development Project.

The goal is to transform urgent emergency care capacity and capability to meet current and future needs, be infection and prevention control compliant and provide an excellent experience for patients and the team.

The three key areas we are looking at are a new assessment block, the redevelopment of the emergency department and the relocation of the Urgent Treatment Centre to improved accommodation.

Alongside the estates work we will look to introduce new ways of working and patient pathways and execute a communications and engagement campaign to include colleagues, patients, other stakeholders and members of the community in this very exciting project.

1.4 Digital

The Surrey Safe Care programme is now in full swing and tracking to its programme plan, so this report is focused on another very important aspect of our work; cyber security. We take our data protection responsibilities very seriously, and over the past two years we have been working on improving our cyber resilience.

We have come to realise that it requires an organisational approach, led by the Board, and that it is our collective behaviour that can make the difference. The Board has undertaken cyber security training and from that we have further developed our approach. We see data protection and cyber security as integral to our patient safety agenda, and as a result we are gaining in our understanding of and giving increased attention to our cyber key performance indicators.

October was Cyber Awareness Month so we took the opportunity to raise our teams' awareness through a campaign that combined humour and enticement. I wrote a message on this that you may like to read here (http://www.ashfordstpeters.nhs.uk/suzanne-s-message/2592-stay-cyber-secure).

1.5 Collaborate

The IMAGINE Project

The IMAGINE Project is an EU funded project led and coordinated by Surrey County Council. The goal is to provide support and skills training/development for unemployed young people (aged 17 – 25 in particular) so they can gain employment with their new skills. I am delighted that ASPH is a partner in this fantastic initiative and the Imagine team now have a team of young people working with carpenters to build stylish wooden planters that will be brought to the St Peter's site soon, both around the new front entrance for winter planting and greening, and also to the new staff outdoor area by the education centre. The Imagine team will also then help to maintain the shrubs and plants in the planters so they also learn horticultural skills.

Collaborative Project to Improve the Health and Wellbeing of our Local Communities

ASPH is working closely with partners in North West Surrey on a project to improve the health and wellbeing of our local communities. In particular, we are contributing to the establishment of six new 'action groups' to work with voluntary sector partners and local community groups on issues such as lifestyle education, to reduce the risk of illness and potentially Covid-19 severity. Another project underway is around mental health and 'Reaching our Community in Woking' and we are looking at ways we can support with mental health and associated issues, such as loneliness. Some of the work has been hindered with the Covid-19 pandemic and social distancing etc, but we are still linking together, planning and making progress where possible.

2 PERFORMANCE

2.1 Details of our operational performance are included in Paper 6.2.

3.1 2020/21 Financial Position - Month 7

The financial plans for 2020/21 have been set on two different bases due to the Covid-19 impact on the NHS financial framework. The plan figures presented in this report reflect:

(i) the NHSI emergency plan set for the Trust for months 1-6; and

(ii) the Trust's own plan submission for months 7-12.

For the first six months this included Top-Up funding under the initial financial arrangements implemented by NHSI to ensure organisations could cover their costs in that period. That arrangement ended on 30th September 2020 when the updated framework was implemented. For month 7 onwards the Surrey Heartlands system has been set a financial envelope, within which the Trust has agreed its own second half plan which is a deficit of £1.4m (or breakeven before accounting for £1.4m of unused holiday entitlements the treatment of which has yet to be agreed across the wider NHS).

As at 31st October 2020 the Trust reported a position that was slightly better than the NHSI Control Total. This is summarised as follows:

	Annual Plan	Mth 7 YTD Plan	Mth 7 YTD Actual	Mth 7 YTD Variance	Forecast to 31 March 2021
Income	341,599	189,365	188,557	(808)	340,926
Income - 2020/21 Top up	14,578	14,578	16,689	2,111	16,689
Pay	(224,265)	(126,385)	(129,507)	(3,122)	(228,387)
Non-Pay	(117,910)	(68,503)	(66,623)	1,879	(115,203)
EBITDA	14,002	9,055	9,115	60	14,026
EBITDA %	*4.1%*	*4.8%*	*4.8%*		*4.1%*
Below the Line	(15,402)	(8,856)	(8,897)	(41)	(15,425)
NHSI Control Total Surplus	**(1,400)**	**199**	**218**	**19**	**(1,400)**
Excluded from Control Total					
Impairments	(0)	0	(3,000)	(3,000)	(3,000)
Net Donated Assets	132	79	159	80	150
Overall Surplus/(Deficit)	**(1,268)**	**277**	**(2,623)**	**(2,901)**	**(4,250)**

The reported YTD variances are:

(i) pay costs are £3.1m adverse to plan;

(ii) non-pay budgets are £1.9m underspent due to an adverse variance on Premises (£3.3m) which is predominantly Covid-19 related, offset by favourable variances against Purchase of Healthcare (£2.3m), Drugs (£1.2m) and Clinical Supplies (£2.1m); and

(iii) operational income is £0.8m adverse to plan which is offset by the £2.1m favourable variance in Top-up funding. Operational income is down across a number of streams such as car parking, private patients, overseas visitors and other income generating areas; and

(iv) below the line costs are £0.04m adverse to plan.

The variances in categories are in part impacted by Covid-19 expenditure. Operational expenditure has been increasing month on month as services start ramping up again.

The Finance Score is reported as a 1 year to date, however it is impacted by the receipt of Top-Up income and doesn't necessarily reflect the Trust's underlying financial position.

For the full year the Trust is forecasting that it will meet its plan, but there are significant risks, not least Covid-19 impacts.

The Trust has an agreed capital plan with NHSI of £33.2m for 2020/21, and at 31st October 2020

had spent £17.2m which was £6.8m under plan. There was a significant underspend on Ashford Theatres project for the year to date (£2.1m) but spend is now expected to increase. Other programme risks are being managed within the capital envelope. The Trust has successfully bid nationally for central funding for a number of schemes such as Critical Infrastructure Risk (£1.0m), Urgent Emergency Care IT (£0.5m), Endoscopy (£1.0m) and A&E/Priority Admission Unit (£9.0m). As a result the full year forecast for the capital programme is £43.9m.

Cash balances were £30.8m above plan, predominantly due to commissioners paying November's block contract early.