Ashford and St. Peter's Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Report title:	Group Chief Executive's Update		
Report to:	**Public Council of Governors**		
Date of meeting:	Tuesday, 02 June 2026	**Agenda item:**	4
Report summary:	This report highlights the key areas that Governors may be asked about by their constituent members. It covers the formation of the new NHS Surrey and Sussex Integrated Care Board and wider NHS system transformation focused on neighbourhood health, prevention and strategic commissioning. It also highlights national leadership developments and the trust's involvement in national improvement work, including the Maternity and Neonatal Taskforce. Internally, the report highlights a number of significant achievements and developments across the trust, including GIRFT accreditation for the Surrey Surgical Centre, expansion of paediatric critical care services, progress on the new Macmillan Cancer Support Centre, and a range of staff recognition, wellbeing and community initiatives.		
Recommendation:	The Council of Governors is asked to note this update		
Report lead:	James Thomas, Chief Operating Officer/Deputy Chief Executive on behalf of Louise Stead, Group Chief Executive		
Report author:	Becky Fairbairn, Director of Communications and Engagement		

Purpose of report:	**For Noting** ☒	**For Decision** ☐	**For Assurance** ☐

Assurance level:	**Significant** ☐ High level of confidence / evidence in delivery	**Acceptable** ☒ General confidence / evidence in delivery	**Partial** ☐ Some confidence / evidence in delivery	**No Assurance** ☐ No confidence / evidence in delivery

Link to Strategic Objectives:	All strategic objectives
Link to CQC Domains:	WELL LED
Link to BAF risk:	Not applicable
Potential impact on stakeholders:	Report highlights areas collaborative working across Surrey Heartlands
Next steps	n/a
Appendices:	n/a

Ashford and St. Peter's Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

CEO Report to the Governors

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To update Governors on key activities and key issues of relevance within the Trust.

2 INTERNAL UPDATES

2.1 Industrial Action

A further period of industrial action by Resident Doctors took place from Tuesday 7 April to Monday 13 April 2026. We extend our sincere thanks to colleagues for their commitment and flexibility in the lead up to and throughout the action, particularly following the Easter bank holiday.

We also received a letter from Jim Mackie, Chief Executive of NHS England, recognising the dedicated efforts of all colleagues during this period. You can read the letter here.

2.2 Arts and Crafts Club in the Bradley Unit

Former patient Ian Clark has generously returned to volunteer in the Bradley Unit in Woking, where he is leading a new arts and crafts club. Ian chose to give his time following his own rehabilitation in the unit after being diagnosed with Guillain Barré syndrome (GBS).

He spent twelve weeks receiving intensive neurological rehabilitation and, by the end of his stay, was able to walk out of the unit with the support of a walking stick. Grateful for the care he received, Ian was keen to give something back and is now running craft sessions for current patients, drawing on his own experience of how valuable creative activities can be in supporting recovery.

2.3 Pilot to Fill Short Notice Cancellations to Clinic Slots

We are working with Deep Medical Ltd, a healthcare technology partner, to enhance outpatient services. Deep Medical's platform supports teams by reducing missed appointments through tailored reminders and by helping fill clinic slots cancelled at short notice, improving efficiency and reducing patient waiting times.

The pilot is currently running in selected clinics only. During this period, some patients may be contacted by Deep Medical, acting on behalf of ASPH, to offer an earlier appointment. Deep Medical is part of an NHS England-supported pilot aimed at improving patient access and experience. If successful, the programme is expected to increase productivity and shorten waiting times.

2.4 Trust Leads Surrey's First Paediatric Critical Care Expansion Pilot

We have participated in a pioneering NHS England pilot to expand paediatric critical care, becoming the first trust in Surrey to provide Level 2 paediatric high dependency care locally.

The four month pilot introduced a dedicated Level 2 high dependency bed, significantly strengthening the trust's ability to care for acutely unwell children and those with complex needs. Previously, patients requiring this level of support were routinely transferred to tertiary centres outside the county.

The pilot has been especially impactful for families of children who rely on long term ventilation at home, who would otherwise have needed to travel to specialist hospitals in London. Delivering this care closer to home has reduced travel time, minimised disruption, and provided greater stability for families during challenging periods.

The service was delivered by the existing paediatric team, who undertook additional specialist training - creating valuable opportunities for professional development.

Following the pilot's clear clinical and operational benefits, the trust is now working to establish the service permanently. Plans include expanding capacity to two dedicated Level 2 paediatric critical care beds, supported by a detailed review of estates, equipment, and clinical space requirements.

2.5 Macmillan Cancer Support Centre at Ashford Hospital

Progress continues on the development of the new Macmillan Cancer Support Centre at Ashford Hospital, with construction moving steadily forward. Frames for the skylights have now been installed on the roof, insulation has arrived and will be fitted shortly, and preparatory work for the flooring is underway.

We have recruited 10 volunteers who will provide holistic support and guidance to patients and their families. In addition, a complementary therapist has joined the team and will offer therapeutic treatments to help patients throughout their cancer journey.

We look forward to completing the centre and providing this much needed resource for cancer patients and their families.

3 VISITS, EVENTS, AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

3.1 GIRFT Accreditation Achieved for The Surrey Surgical Centre at Ashford Hospital

The Surrey Surgical Centre at Ashford Hospital has now achieved GIRFT accreditation. This is a significant accomplishment and a testament to the dedication, expertise and teamwork of colleagues across our surgical services. GIRFT accreditation is a nationally recognised mark of excellence, recognising high standards in quality, productivity and patient care, and reflects the trust's continued commitment to delivering outstanding elective care services for our patients and communities. This achievement will further support ongoing improvement in clinical outcomes, operational efficiency and patient experience across our surgical pathways.

3.2 Staff Achievement Awards 2026

Nominations for our 2026 Staff Achievement Awards opened on 15 May, earlier than ever before, giving staff, patients, volunteers and our wider community more time to recognise the outstanding individuals and teams across Ashford and St Peter's. The awards ceremony will take place on Thursday 1 October 2026 and remains one of the highlights of the trust's calendar, a celebration of excellence, compassion, innovation and teamwork.

This year, we have introduced several enhancements following staff feedback, including a simplified nomination process and strengthened judging framework. We have also expanded opportunities for public involvement through two key external nomination categories: the Patients First Awards, which will separately recognise individuals and teams and are open exclusively to public nominations, and the Volunteer of the Year Award, which is now open to nominations from patients and the wider community as well as staff. These changes further strengthen our commitment to recognising the impact our people and volunteers make every day across our services and communities.

3.3 Celebrating International Nurses Day 2026

We commemorated International Nurses Day with the annual Pride in Nursing and Midwifery event on Friday 8 May. The theme, Our nurses. Our future. Empowered nurses save lives, highlighted the profession's central role in delivering safe, high quality care.

Speakers shared insights into their professional journeys and the impact of their work. The keynote address by Acosia Nyanin, Deputy Chief Nursing Officer for NHS England, offered an inspiring reflection on her progression from healthcare assistant to national leadership. The event served as a valuable opportunity to acknowledge the dedication and excellence of our teams.

3.4 Celebrating International Day of the Midwife 2026

We also marked International Day of the Midwife on Tuesday 5 May 2026, reflecting this year's theme, 'One million more midwives', which highlights the global shortfall of nearly 980,000 midwives.

Clinical practice educators, midwives, and Royal College of Midwives representatives hosted an interactive stand at St Peter's Hospital, inviting staff and visitors to guess a baby's gestation size using fruit comparisons, practise delivery techniques with models, and write thank you notes to midwives.

The Royal College of Midwives also held a shared lunch featuring dishes representing the diverse heritage of maternity staff. Later in the day, the Director of Midwifery delivered food and gifts to colleagues at the Ashford Hub, ensuring teams across all sites were included in the celebrations.

4 SYSTEM AND PARTNERSHIP UPDATES

4.1 Surrey and Sussex ICB Chair visit Trust Provider Committee in Commons

Ian Smith, Chair of Surrey and Sussex Integrated Care Board, attended the recent Provider Collaborative Committees in Commons meeting, where partners received an update on the newly formed Surrey and Sussex ICB and development of its emerging Five Year Plan following the establishment of the new ICB in April 2026.

Discussions focused on the significant challenges facing the Surrey and Sussex health and care system, including rising demand, increasing health inequalities, growing levels of multimorbidity and ongoing financial pressures. The ICB emphasised that "do nothing is not an option" and highlighted the need for a deliberate "left shift" towards neighbourhood health, prevention and pathway transformation to improve outcomes and deliver greater value across the system.

The session also explored the transition of the ICB towards a more strategic commissioning role, with a stronger focus on population health, shared delivery and collective accountability across partners. Roundtable discussions on the future healthcare model in Surrey and Sussex were led by acute Chief Executives from across the region, including myself, and considered opportunities for greater collaboration, pathway redesign and system-wide approaches to risk and delivery.

4.2 NHS England appointed new South East Regional Chair

In March 2026, NHS England announced the appointment of seven new Regional Chairs as part of its new operating model designed to strengthen governance, leadership and accountability across regional health systems.

For the South East region, Professor Sir Jonathan Montgomery was appointed as Regional Chair with effect from 1 April 2026.

The Regional Chair role was created to provide visible, independent non-executive leadership across the region, working with NHS England regional leaders, provider Chairs and Integrated Care Boards to support delivery of the NHS 10-Year Health Plan, improve governance, drive system improvement and reduce health inequalities.

Professor Sir Jonathan Montgomery joined the role from Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, where he had served as Chair since 2019. He is Professor of Health Care Law at University College London and is nationally recognised for his leadership in healthcare ethics, governance and regulation. His previous national roles have included Chair of the Health Research Authority, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Clinical Excellence Awards, and co-chair of the Government's Moral and Ethical Advisory Group during the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.3 National Maternity Task Force

As referenced verbally in my update at the last Council of Governors meeting, I was honoured to I have been asked to join the national Maternity and Neonatal Taskforce, which has been established to deliver urgent actions and improvements in response to the recommendations of Baroness Amos' intendent review into maternity and neonatal services in England and is chaired by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care.

I have joined 16 other members of the taskforce, including families, senior NHS leaders, royal college representatives, campaigners and academics, and we all share a joint desire to drive meaningful improvements in maternity care, share best practice nationally and ensure the best possible outcomes for women, babies and families.

Despite the recent change in leadership, this work remains a clear national priority, and I have already attended two meetings of the taskforce, including the most recent chaired by the new Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, James Murray.

4.4 Learning Improvement Networks

The latest regional Learning Improvement Network (LIN) meeting took place on 18 May, bringing together representatives from across the South East to share learning and align on how to accelerate improvement across elective care, urgent and emergency care, and mental health services. I attended in my role as Elective Lead for the South East within this forum.

It was positive to see strong representation from Ashford and St Peter's Hospitals and Royal Surrey, alongside colleagues from across the region.

Within elective care, partners shared progress on improving ear nose and throat, gastroenterology and gynaecology services. The group identified practical opportunities for local action, including accelerating the adoption of new technology to implement single points of referral across specialties and improve patient access to care.

5 CONCLUSION

I welcome any feedback or questions from the Council of Governors and look forward to discussing these key areas further.