

Approved Minutes of the Extraordinary Board meeting held on 27 January 2021 (Video conference)

Chair:

Rob Behrens CBE, the Ombudsman

Non-Executive members:

Sir Alex Allan KCB

Elisabeth Davies

Linda Farrant

Dean Fathers

Balram Gidoomal CBE

Alan Graham MBE

Carolyn Hirst

Anu Singh

Apologies

Mick King

In attendance:

Karl Banister, Director of Legal, Quality
and Clinical

Bipon Bhakri, Director of Resources

James Hand, Assistant Director of
Business Management

Abigail Howarth, Director of Operations

Maria Mansfeld, Chief of Staff

Warren Seddon, Director of Strategy and
Communications

Andrew Dawson, Governance Officer
(minutes)

Executive Members:

Amanda Amroliwala CBE, Chief Executive

Gill Kilpatrick, Chief Operating Officer

Observers:

Grace Egbewole-Adereti, Executive and
Committee Administration Officer

Faye Glover, Assistant Private Secretary

1. Chair's Introduction and Welcome

- 1.1 Rob Behrens introduced the meeting and welcomed members and others attending. He welcomed Bipun Bhakri to his first meeting of the Board.

2. Declarations of Interest

- 2.1 Linda Farrant reported that she had a potential conflict of interest in respect of a case mentioned in the Ombudsman's weekly update, in that she is the Lay Member for Governance and Audit at East and North Hertfordshire CCG. The CCG commissions services from East and North Herts Trust, which operates the Lister Hospital referred to in the update. Rob Behrens confirmed that the case would not be discussed at the meeting.

3. PHSO Draft Business Plan 2021/22

- 3.1 Amanda Amroliwala outlined the proposals in the draft business plan for 2021/22. She referred members to Table 1, which set out the organisation's confidence levels in the delivery of the business plan objectives
- 3.2 Amanda Amroliwala informed the Board about the pressures faced by the organisation and the current casework position, following the worsening of the COVID-19 situation and the imposition of a further lockdown at the beginning of January. She set out that the Executive were considering whether we focus on cases which raise more serious issues and not routinely progress health complaints we determine to be at level 1 or 2 on our Severity of Injustice scale. This would allow us to manage the queue with the aim of reducing it to an acceptable level by the end of the 2021/22 business year.
- 3.3 Following discussion, Board members indicated that they wanted further information to better understand the proposal and its implications. In particular:
- The Board wished to be sure that all other options had been considered, including improving efficiency without restricting intake of casework.
 - To understand the composition of the queue of unallocated cases.
 - Whether there were any legal implications if we were to restrict intake.
- 3.4 The Board also emphasised that it was essential that our messaging to complainants and stakeholders about any decision to restrict intake of complaints was effective.
- 3.5 Rob Behrens proposed that the Board should meet again following the distribution of a further paper setting out the proposal in more detail and including the information requested by Board members. This was **agreed**.

Action: The Chief Executive to prepare a further paper for the Board, addressing the points raised by the Board.

Action: Governance team to arrange ad-hoc Board meeting in next 2-3 weeks to consider the proposal.

- 3.6 Rob Behrens invited Board members to submit comments on the draft budget and business plan in writing. These would be taken into account, with a full discussion on the revised and finalised plan to take place at the March Board meeting.

4. Appointment/re-appointment of non-executive Board members and Committee Chairs

- 4.1 Rob Behrens outlined his proposals regarding the appointment of new Committee Chairs, and the appointment of a new Non-Executive Board Member. All changes would come into effect on 1 March 2021

4.2 The Board noted:

i) the appointment of new Board Committee Chairs and other changes to the responsibilities of the Non-Executive Board Members:

- Linda Farrant will succeed Alan Graham as Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, effective from 1 March 2021.
- Dean Fathers will succeed Elisabeth Davies as Chair of the Quality Committee, effective from 1 March 2021.
- Alex Allan will succeed Elisabeth Davies as Senior Non-Executive Board member following a transition and handover period.
- Ram Gidoomal will succeed Alex Allan as Chair of the Remuneration and Nominations Committee when Alex becomes Senior Non-Executive Board Member.
- Anu Singh will succeed Dean Fathers as Board Diversity Champion from 1 March 2021.
- Carolyn Hirst will act as special adviser to the Complaints Standards Framework project from 1 March 2021.

ii) the indicative timetable for the skills audit and the non-executive Board member recruitment.

5. Any other Business

- 5.1 Rob Behrens noted that it was Alan Graham's final attendance at a scheduled Board meeting before his term of office as a non-executive Board member comes to an end. Rob Behrens thanked Alan for the outstanding contribution he had made to PHSO.

- 5.2 Alan Graham thanked the Board and the Executive for their support during his time as a non-executive member.

6. Review of meeting

- 6.1 Rob Behrens said that he was grateful for the constructive way views had been aired. He asked Grace Egbewole-Adereti to provide a review of the meeting.

- 6.2 Grace Egbewole-Adereti said that the meeting had been challenging and had covered some difficult issues. The Board dynamic during the discussions had

been constructive throughout. All discussions had been open and transparent, and members had felt able to say what they thought.

The meeting ended at 12:08