



**MINUTES OF THE AUDIT AND RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE
(ARAC) HELD ON THURSDAY 23 JUNE 2022 AT 10AM IN THE
LAGAN ROOM, THE MOUNT CONFERENCE CENTRE, 2
WOODSTOCK LINK, BELFAST BT6 8DD**

PRESENT: Mr W Abraham Non-Executive Director (Chair)
Mr D Ashford Non-Executive Director

IN

ATTENDANCE: Mr M Bloomfield Chief Executive
Ms M Lemon Interim Director of Human Resources
(via Zoom)
Mr P Nicholson Interim Director of Finance
Ms M Paterson Director of Planning, Performance &
Corporate Services
Dr N Ruddell Medical Director
Ms K Keating Risk Manager
Mr I McCutcheon Financial Accounts Manager (temp)
(via Zoom)
Mr N Gray External Audit Northern Ireland Audit
Office (via Zoom)
Mr S Knox External Audit Northern Ireland Audit
Office
Ms C Hagan External Audit ASM
Ms C McKeown Head of Internal Audit, BSO
Mrs L Mitchell Independent Adviser to Committee
(via Zoom)
Mrs C Mooney NIAS Board Secretary

APOLOGIES: Mr A Phillips Assistant Director of Finance (temp)

Welcome, introduction and format of meeting

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1 Apologies

The apologies as stated were noted.

2 **Declaration of Potential Conflict of Interest & Confirmation of Quorum**

The Chair confirmed that the meeting was quorate and asked those present to declare any conflicts of interest now or as the meeting progressed.

The Chair noted the fact that, in accordance with the Trust Standing Orders, the Non-Executive Director (NED) membership of the Audit Committee 'shall consist of not less than three members'. He advised that he had drawn this requirement to the Trust Chair's attention in the context of appointing additional NEDs when this was possible.

The Chair also stressed the confidentiality of information presented.

3 **Previous Minutes (AC23/06/22/01)**

The draft minutes of the meeting on 12 May 2022 were **APPROVED** on a proposal from Mr Ashford and seconded by the Chair.

4 **Matters Arising (AC23/06/22/02)**

4.1 **Action List**

The Committee **NOTED** the Matters Arising.

The Chair referred to the Closed Meeting which formed a part of the agenda and sought views from External and Internal Audit colleagues.

Ms McKeown pointed out that, ordinarily, the Closed Meeting would take place on an annual basis but she was of the view that it was effective and worked well.

Ms Hagan indicated that External Audit believed the Closed sessions had proved valuable and said that the frequency of the Closed Meeting was an issue for the Trust to determine.

Mr Bloomfield suggested that it was more effective to have the Closed Meeting identified on the agenda and determine at each meeting whether it was required.

The Chair noted that an update would be developed for the October meeting around Committee's consideration of the interface between the ARAC and the People, Finance and Organisational Development (PFOD) Committee in terms of ensuring the effective management of Whistleblowing (Speaking Out).

With regard to the previous discussion on fuel price hedging, Mr Nicholson reported on his discussions with Department of Health (DoH) colleagues who had confirmed that fuel hedging was not available to the Trust as the HSC in effect 'self-insured' against such risks.

Ms Paterson advised on the work underway to update the Trust's website and advised that testing was currently being undertaken. She agreed to provide a further update to the October meeting.

With regard to the previous discussion on Risk 357, the Chair asked that a significant proportion of the October meeting would be set aside to discuss this.

Mr Ashford noted that this risk had been in existence for some time and welcomed the progress which had been made to date.

5 Committee Chair's Business

5.1 ARAC Annual Report (AC23/06/22/03)

The Chair noted that his annual report would be finalised following discussions relating to the accounting treatment of the holiday-pay issue and a copy would be forwarded to attendees.

5.2 ARAC Self-Assessments:

- National Audit Office (NAO)**
- The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) (AC23/06/22/04)**

The Committee **APPROVED** both self-assessments.

6. Standing Items

6.1 NIAS Direct Award Contract (DAC) Register (AC23/06/22/05)

Mr Nicholson reminded those present that there had been a significant increase in the reliance and use of DACs over the Covid-19 period with almost 100 DACs in place. He advised that, not only were the type and nature of DACs reported to the Committee, but expenditure against each DAC was also tracked.

Mr Nicholson drew the Committee's attention to the Register up to 31 March 2022 and provided an overview of the live DACs, the completed DACs and the DACs required.

Mr Nicholson advised that, due to the large volume, DACs had been identified within the Trust's Governance Statement as an internal control divergence for the year.

Mr Nicholson acknowledged that, for a number of DACs, it was difficult to identify for how long certain goods and services would be required and the ultimate cost. He explained that, due to this uncertainty, there had been occasions when the DAC had been exceeded either in terms of duration or value of the award. Mr Nicholson pointed out that there were also a number of DACs for which, due to staffing pressures, the necessary administrative work had not been completed and these were therefore outstanding at the end of the financial year.

Continuing, Mr Nicholson referred to the transparency of the processes involved with DACs and explained that this information was published by the Business Services Organisation (BSO) Procurement and Logistics Services (PaLS) and the DoH.

The Chair sought clarification on how many DACs related to Covid-19.

Responding, Mr Nicholson confirmed that DACs contained in the paper before the Committee related either directly to Covid-19 or related to the impact of Covid-19.

The Chair referred to the onset of the pandemic in early 2020 and said that Non-Executive Directors had met with the Trust's Chief Executive. He said that, at that time, Mr Bloomfield had advised that it was likely that the Trust would find itself in circumstances where it would have to avail of DACs more than would be normal. The Chair said that such measures were understood and accepted by members as a necessity in the extraordinary times. He added that it had been for this reason that he had asked for DACs to become a Standing Item on the Committee agenda.

Mr Bloomfield acknowledged that, moving forward, the Committee should see the number of DACs reducing. He said there was a need to ensure that processes were tightened around the use of DACs, both in terms of allowing DACs to run past their expiration date but also in terms of the volume of DACs. Mr Bloomfield recognised that the Trust had acted outside of the current DAC processes to enable it to respond to circumstances at that time and added that it was understood that such decisions would be examined at a later date.

Mr Bloomfield confirmed that, even with the benefit of hindsight, he would not have acted any differently and added that the responsibility lay with him as Chief Executive. He said it was important for him to reiterate the context in which the Trust had operated at that time and he acknowledged that the processes followed had not been satisfactory.

The Chair indicated that, in his view, the Trust should now revert to normal oversight procedures moving forward.

Mr Nicholson said that the Trust had been responsive in terms of the duration and volume of DACs required at that time. He acknowledged that a proportion of DACs would continue for some time as the Trust would likely experience a lesser impact from Covid-19 moving forward.

Ms Lemon alluded to the DACs required for the provision of Occupational Health Services (OHS) and explained that the

Trust had used OHS for additional work during the pandemic in terms of determining whether staff could return to work. This in turn had freed up NIAS managers and allowed them to manage the services. Ms Lemon said she accepted that it was not satisfactory that these DACs would have to be put in place retrospectively and she assured the Committee that work had already commenced to put the DACs in place. She reminded the Committee that an improvement plan was in place around OHS and reporting against that would be provided to the PFOD Committee.

Mr Ashford referred to DAC numbers 14 and 19 and noted that, while they were for the same supplier, there was a variation in the RAG status attributed.

Responding, Mr Nicholson explained that a red RAG status tended to focus on the value of the DAC and pointed out that the totals were cumulative. He added that any change in RAG status may be due to expenditure exceeding procurement levels.

Mr Ashford referred to DAC numbers 22 and 25 and sought clarification on why the DAC had been retrospective.

Ms Paterson explained that these DACs related to the Global Rostering System (GRS) and said that the contract for the GRS had expired during the pandemic. She advised that, although the Trust had submitted the GRS business case to DHCNI to commence the procurement process, it had been necessary to complete a retrospective DAC in the interim.

Mr Nicholson clarified that the GRS was not a system for which the Trust would contract on an annual basis. He also alluded to the CAD system and said that, when initial contracts expired, the Trust may not move to replace these systems immediately.

In response to a question from the Chair as to DAC number 21, Mr Nicholson agreed to find out further detail and advise accordingly.

The Chair thanked Mr Nicholson for the update which was **NOTED** by the Committee.

6.2 Fraud Update – verbal update

Mr Nicholson provided a verbal update on fraud and reported that there were currently four cases which had been investigated by the Trust and Counter Fraud and Probity Services. He said that a number of actions were now required to conclude the investigations and he hoped that these cases would be closed by the October meeting.

6.3 Progress on Achieving Business As Usual/Recovery Update

Ms Paterson advised that work was being taken forward by the Business Continuity lead to look at how the Trust provided assurance on how it operated during the pandemic. She said that this work would also look at the financial governance and controls in place.

The Chair welcomed this work and asked if the Trust considered the pandemic to be over.

Mr Bloomfield referred to the increase in infections and advised that abstractions had doubled in the Trust since mid-May which was consistent with community infection rates. He indicated that Covid-19 continued to present challenges across the HSC system which added to the complexity of the system trying to revert to business as usual. Mr Bloomfield said it was likely that the Trust would continue to manage the fact that staff would periodically be unavailable for work.

Mr Nicholson acknowledged the ongoing operational impact and was of the view that the repercussions of Covid-19 would continue to be felt for a considerable period of time. He referred to the previous discussion around the number of Direct Award Contracts; the extensive amount of annual leave in the system and the inability of the Trust to deliver clinical training due to staff being redeployed to support frontline duties.

The Chair said it would be important for Ms Paterson to link these various aspects in the work being taken forward around achieving business as usual.

Ms Paterson referred to the work taken forward around Risk 357 and advised that learning had been identified, particularly around the risk management framework.

The Chair said he looked forward to further discussion at the October meeting.

7. Internal Audit

7.1 **Internal Audit General Annual Report 2021-22 (AC23/06/22/06)**

At the Chair's invitation, Ms McKeown presented the Internal Audit General Annual Report for 2021-22. She explained that the report, which had been shared with all HSC organisations, summarised the performance and outcome of Internal Audit activity in the HSC during 2021-22 as well as aiming to share learning and general internal audit issues across the HSC. She added that NIAS was Organisation 6 within the report.

Ms McKeown drew the Committee's attention to the level of split assurances across the HSC. She added that 51% were satisfactory assurances and said that this was the lowest since the introduction of the report in 2015-16. Ms McKeown reported that, conversely, the implementation of outstanding audit recommendations by all Trusts was at its highest rate of 80% since the introduction of the report.

Ms McKeown drew the Committee's attention to page 3 of the report which identified the most common areas for limited/unacceptable assurances provided in 2021-22.

Mr Bloomfield acknowledged that 2021-22 had been the year with the lowest of overall satisfactory assurances across the HSC sector. However, he referred to pages 4-6 of the report and acknowledged the improved NIAS position which was comparable with other HSC organisations.

The Chair alluded to the progress which had been made by the Trust despite challenging operational circumstances. He thanked Ms McKeown for her report which was **NOTED** by the Committee.

8 External Audit

8.1 Draft Report to Those Charged With Governance (RtTCWG) (AC23/06/22/07)

Mr Gray pointed out that the Report to Those Charged With Governance remained in draft format and advised that the Trust accounts had been qualified as a result of the holiday-pay issue. He referred to the discussion at the Audit Committee meeting in June 2021 and said the Committee had, at that time, discussed this matter in detail.

Continuing, Mr Gray drew the Committee's attention to page 3 of the report which set out the audit actions. He reminded the Committee that one of its responsibilities was to consider whether it would recommend correction of the uncorrected misstatements.

The Chair noted that the report made reference on page 1 to '*it is proposed that the Comptroller and Auditor General will certify the 2021-22 financial statements with a qualified audit opinion ...*' and sought clarification on whether this was an opinion which the NIAO would present for consideration or whether the NIAO was proposing that the issue be considered in this manner.

Responding, Mr Gray clarified that the Comptroller and Auditor General would base his judgement on the information provided to him and it was for this reason that the NIAO had proposed a specific course of action.

Ms Hagan extended her thanks to Mr Nicholson and the Finance Directorate for their assistance and referred to page 1 of the report which set out the proposed audit opinion. She clarified that the proposal was to certify the Charitable Trust Funds with an unqualified opinion at this stage.

Ms Hagan highlighted the salient points of the report, including the NIAO's responsibility around personal data. She pointed out that one data handling incident had been identified in April 2022 and assurance had been sought from the Trust's Chief Executive.

Ms Hagan said it would be important to draw the Committee's attention to the bottom of page three which set out a number of actions for the Committee.

She pointed out that there had been no new matters to communicate concerning the planned scope and timing of the audit. Ms Hagan also alluded Section 3 of the report which referenced a number of significant risks identified in the NIAO Audit Strategy and she outlined how these had been addressed.

Ms Hagan explained that Section 4 of the report set out the qualitative findings and a number of key messages. She noted the content of the appendices to the report.

The Chair thanked Mr Gray and Ms Hagan for their overview of the RtTGWC which was **NOTED** by the Committee.

9 **Accounting Treatment of the PSNI Holiday-Pay Issue (AC23/06/22/08)**

Mr Nicholson drew the Committee's attention to the correspondence between the Permanent Secretary and the Trust Chief Executive on this issue. He advised that the accounting issue remained the same as last year and the NIAO opinion had not changed. Mr Nicholson indicated that the liability had now increased from £4 million to £6 million.

The Chair confirmed that, apart from the increase in the liability sum, the Trust was in the same position as last year and he alluded to the recent correspondence from the new Permanent Secretary reiterating the DoH's view. The Chair was of the view that the issue had been in existence for some time now and it was important that the Committee would continue to monitor the position. He invited those present to comment and said that the Committee would take the discussion into account before it would make its recommendation to the Trust Board.

Mr Bloomfield advised that, apart from the quantum involved, the position had not changed from last year. He reminded those present that the In Committee meeting had discussed the issue fully at its meeting in June 2021 and he pointed out that those circumstances remained relevant. Mr Bloomfield

indicated that the materiality of this issue had effected NIAS as as a result of the extent to which the Trust relied on overtime. He emphasised the importance of the Trust acting consistently with guidance issued by the DoH.

Mr Bloomfield referred to the correspondence which had been shared with the Committee and advised that the new Permanent Secretary had taken the same view as his predecessor. He said that he could not see any basis for the Committee or Trust Board to reach a different view on this issue.

Ms Mitchell expressed her agreement with the comments made by Mr Bloomfield and advised that this was a regional issue. Acknowledging the Permanent Secretary's correspondence, Ms Mitchell was of the view that this was helpful and would provide reassurance to the Committee that the DoH's position had not changed, albeit the amount of liability had increased due to the passage of time.

The Chair noted that a year had passed and the issue had not been remedied.

Mr Ashford asked whether there was any sense that this matter would be resolved in the coming months. He alluded to Mr Bloomfield's earlier comment that the NIAS was the only Trust impacted and queried whether other Trusts would be impacted given that the materiality would increase over time.

Mr Bloomfield said he expected this to be the case.

Mr Knox confirmed that the materiality would be an issue for the other Trusts but acknowledged that NIAS was well above the threshold.

Mr Nicholson said that the Trust's reliance on overtime was significantly more than other Trusts and the level of income which determined the materiality threshold was much lower. He said that Mr Knox's reference to the materiality issue which had impacted on other Trusts related to clinical excellence awards which did not impact on NIAS. Mr Nicholson said that the resolution of the issue would result in a complex exercise to implement payments.

The Chair alluded to the RtTCWG and highlighted the earlier discussion on this. He said, given the passage of time and the fact that the value involved had increased, his view would remain the same as last year. He suggested that this would remain as a live issue and said he expected the Committee to have to consider the issue again next year.

With this in mind, the Chair said that he would recommend that the Trust would not move to correct the uncorrected misstatements and that the approach taken by the Trust, supported by the DoH, was appropriate.

Mr Ashford indicated his agreement with this position.

Mr Bloomfield thanked the Chair and Mr Ashford for their support. He expressed disappointment that, as Accounting Officer, the Trust would have its accounts qualified for a second year.

Responding to a question from Mr Ashford, Mr Knox explained that, if the issue was resolved, the Trust would retain the funding as an accrual. However, with a provision, it was considered non-cash. Mr Knox pointed out that, if no payments were made during this financial year, some Trusts may experience similar challenges as the NIAS.

The Chair said he would appreciate being kept advised of the position in other Trusts.

The Committee **NOTED** the briefing on the Accounting Treatment of the PSNI Holiday-Pay issue and **APPROVED** the recommendation to the Trust that it not move to correct the uncorrected misstatements.

10 **Annual Report and Accounts**

10.1 **Letter of Representation: NIAS for the year ended 31 March 2022 (AC23/06/22/09)**

10.2 **Draft, Audited, Uncertified Annual Report & Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022 (AC23/06/22/10)**

At the Chair's invitation, Mr Nicholson drew the Committee's attention to the Public Funds and Charitable Trust Funds as well as the letters of representation which accompanied them.

He explained that for the purposes of discussion, he would take agenda items 10.1 and 10.2 together. Mr Nicholson pointed out that the Committee had considered the draft public funds accounts in detail at its meeting on 12 May 2022 and he clarified that the accounts before the Committee were now draft audited uncertified accounts.

Mr Nicholson acknowledged that the production of the accounts continued to be challenging in view of the tight timescales and particularly in view of the pressures both within the Trust and the Finance Directorate. He said that he would like to take this opportunity to express his thanks to all involved in the production of the Annual Report and Accounts, in particular Mr Walker, Mr Watterson and Mr McCutcheon.

Mr Nicholson also extended his thanks to External and Internal Audit colleagues and said that the comments from External Audit on the Annual Report and Accounts had served to enhance the documents and the disclosures within.

Mr Nicholson referred members to the financial reporting and performance within the documentation and reminded them that the headline figures remained subject to approval by the Committee and subsequently the Trust Board.

Mr Nicholson reported a surplus of £50,000 on the Revenue Resource Limit (RRL) and a surplus of £177,000 on the Capital Resource Limit (CRL). He advised that the Trust had achieved its target around the public sector prompt payment policy.

Mr Nicholson drew the Committee's attention to page 80 of the Annual Report which set out the Trust's Governance Statement for 2021-22. He explained that the Trust had previously considered the 'condition of estate' to have been resolved and no longer considered it to be a control issue. However, he said that, following a re-examination of this issue, the Trust recognised that, while a planned programme of works had resulted in significant improvements in statutory compliance matters, ongoing work was still required. Mr Nicholson pointed out that this issue therefore remained a control issue and had been identified as such within the Governance Statement.

Mr Nicholson referred to the earlier discussion around the use of DACs. He drew the Committee's attention to page 118 and explained why the Trust had considered it important to identify this as a new control issue for the current year.

Mr Nicholson explained that the uncertainty around the financial position for 2022-23 in the absence of a functioning Executive had also been identified as a new control issue. He advised that, within this section, there was reference to the DoH expectation and Ministerial commitment to revert to 2019-20 levels of activity by March 2023 at the latest.

Mr Nicholson said he would commend the Annual Report and Accounts to the Committee. He explained that, if approved by the Committee, the documentation would be considered by the In Committee Trust Board later that afternoon with a view to approval and laying the Annual Report and Accounts before the NI Assembly.

The Chair thanked Mr Nicholson and echoed his thanks to all those involved in the development of the report and accounts, particularly the in-depth analysis by External Audit which had enhanced its content.

The Chair noted that there had been no significant material changes to the documentation since the Committee had last met in May. He queried whether the Annual Report and Accounts had reflected the potential for the Trust to have its accounts qualified.

Mr Nicholson explained that the Comptroller and Auditor General would make reference to this in his documentation should he accept the NIAO's proposal to qualify the accounts.

On a proposal from the Chair, which was seconded by Mr Ashford, the Committee agreed to put forward the following recommendation for approval by the Trust Board:

The Trust has a Committee structure with agreed Terms of Reference outlining specific duties in respect of the establishment, review and maintenance of an effective system of integrated governance, risk management and internal control.

Within this framework, the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, having relied upon the work of the Trust's External and Internal Auditors and assurances provided by them, agreed at its meeting on 23 June 2022 (subject to the satisfactory completion of any outstanding audit matters and a number of minor amendments and changes) to recommend to the Trust Board that:

1. The Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022 should be approved by the Trust Board as presented and:

- the Performance Report should be signed by the Chief Executive;*
- the Accountability Report (which includes: Governance Report; Remuneration and Staff Report; and Accountability and Audit Report) should be signed by the Chief Executive;*
- the Financial Statements relating to Public Funds should be signed by the Chair and the Chief Executive; and*

This is recommended by the Committee to the Trust Board and Accounting Officer despite the recommendation from the Northern Ireland Audit Office in its Report to those Charged with Governance that the ARAC should recommend adjusting the holiday pay accrual to a provision. This may result in a qualification to the accounts.

2. The Letter of Representation (Public Funds) for the year ended 31 March 2022 should be approved by the Trust Board and signed by the Chief Executive.

Mr Bloomfield conveyed his appreciation to Mr Nicholson for leading on the development of the Annual Report and Accounts in such challenging circumstances.

10.3 Letter of Representation: NIAS Charitable Trust Funds for the year ended 31 March 2022 (AC23/06/22/11)

10.4 Draft, Audited, Uncertified Charitable Trust Funds Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2022 (AC23/06/22/12)

As with the public funds, Mr Nicholson advised that he would consider agenda items 10.3 and 10.4 together. He drew the Committee's attention to the letter of representation and the draft, audited, uncertified Charitable Trust Funds Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts.

He pointed out that the Charitable Trust income had reduced slightly from the previous year when the Trust had received a significant number of donations and grants. Mr Nicholson said he was pleased to advise that expenditure had increased and that plans to use the charitable funding around the health and wellbeing and psychological support of staff had been implemented. He added that Ms Lemon's team was leading on this work.

Mr Nicholson reported the Trust had been successful in being awarded a further grant totaling approximately £189,000 from NHS Charities Together and he confirmed that the first payment had been received early in the new financial year.

Continuing, Mr Nicholson advised that a long-standing objective was to progress the Trust's intention to register with the Charities Commission NI and he explained that the Trust's registration had been paused due to the pressures of Covid-19. He added that registration would be a focus for the current year.

Mr Nicholson advised that the Trust also intended to look at how it could use its charitable funds in the area of research and development.

The Chair reminded those present that the Committee had considered the draft, unaudited, uncertified Charitable Trust Fund accounts at its meeting on 12 May and he asked Mr Nicholson whether anything material had changed since that time.

In response, Mr Nicholson advised that a number of minor changes had been made following review by the NIAO.

On a proposal from the Chair, which was seconded by Mr Ashford, the Committee agreed to put forward the following recommendation for approval by the Trust Board:

The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee reviewed the Charitable Trust Funds Trustee's Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022 and the Letter of Representation. The Committee also received a report from the Interim Director of Finance.

The Committee, having relied upon the work of the Trust's External and Internal Auditors and assurances provided by them, agreed at its meeting on 23 June 2022 (subject to the satisfactory completion of any outstanding audit matters and a number of minor amendments and changes) to recommend to the Trust Board that:

1. The Charitable Trust Funds Trustee's Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022 should be approved by the Trust Board; and

a) The Trustee's Annual Report should be signed by the Chair of Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and the Chief Executive; and*

b) The Financial Statements should be signed by the Chair of Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and the Chief Executive.*

2. The Letter of Representation (Charitable Trust Funds) for the year ended 31 March 2022 should be approved by the Trust Board and signed by the Chief Executive.

** As detailed in the Trustee's Annual Report, and in line with the Standing Orders, the Chair of the Committee assumes the position of Chair of Trust Board when Charitable Trust Funds are discussed, as the Chair was appointed Chief Commissioner to the Board of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland.*

The Chair conveyed his thanks to all involved.

11 **NIAS Policies:**

- **Body Worn Video (BWV)**
- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**
- **Completion of Patient Records**
- **Use of Clinical Imagery within NIAS Electronic Patient Care Records (AC23/06/22/13)**

Ms Paterson provided an overview of the policies for consideration.

The Chair sought further clarification around the Use of Clinical Imagery within NIAS Electronic Patient Care Records and how this might work in practice.

Responding, Dr Ruddell explained that there were occasions when clinical images were felt to be helpful in the treatment of patients and he suggested that their use would increase as the Trust moved to link directly with Alternative Care Pathways. He advised that the policy provided clarification to staff on the circumstances in which the use of clinical images was acceptable and those circumstances in which it was not.

Dr Ruddell referred to the implementation of the Regional Electronic Ambulance Communication Hub (REACH) and said that the devices used by staff had the ability to take clinical images at scene which could then be attached to the patient record and transmitted. He added that once the images were transmitted, they were removed from individual devices.

The above named policies were **APPROVED** on a proposal from the Chair. This proposal was seconded by Mr Ashford.

12 **Closed Meeting**

The Chair advised that he did not propose to have a Closed Meeting.

13 **Any Other Business**

There were no items of Any Other Business.

14 **Date, time and venue of next meeting**

The next meeting of the Audit Committee will take place on Thursday 6 October 2022 at 10am (venue and arrangements to be confirmed).

The Committee noted the ARAC dates for 2022-23 as follows:

- Thursday 8 December 2022
- Thursday 19 January 2023
- Thursday 30 March 2023

THIS BEING ALL THE BUSINESS, THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 12.55PM

SIGNED: 

DATE: 6 October 2022