



Minutes of Trust Board held at 10.30am on  
Thursday 24 October 2024 in the Boardroom, NIAS HQ, Knockbracken  
Healthcare Park, Saintfield Road, Belfast BT8 8SG

**Minutes**

1	Welcome, Apologies & Declarations of Conflict of Interest	
<p><b>Present:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Michele Larmour, Chair</li> <li>• Dale Ashford, Non-Executive Director</li> <li>• Paul Corrigan, Non-Executive Director</li> <li>• Phillip Graham, Non-Executive Director</li> <li>• Phelim Quinn, Non-Executive Director</li> <li>• Michael Bloomfield, Chief Executive</li> <li>• Michelle Lemon, Director of Human Resources &amp; Organisational Development (HR &amp; OD)</li> <li>• Rosie Byrne, Director of Operations</li> <li>• Simon Christie Interim, Director of Finance</li> <li>• Dr Nigel Ruddell, Medical Director</li> </ul> <p><b>In Attendance:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maxine Paterson, Deputy Chief Executive &amp; Director of Planning, Performance and Corporate Services</li> <li>• Lynne Charlton, Director of Quality, Safety &amp; Improvement</li> <li>• Neil Sinclair, Chief Paramedic Officer</li> <li>• Nick Henry, Assistant Director of Governance, Risk and Assurance</li> <li>• Andoni Arandia, Assistant Director of Planning, Performance and Strategic Transformation</li> </ul> <p><b>Apologies:</b> None noted.</p> <p><b>Conflicts of Interest:</b> No conflicts of interest were declared.</p>		
2	Minutes of the previous meeting of the Trust Board held on 22 August 2024 <b>For Approval</b>	TB24/10/2024/01
<p>A minor change on Page 28 was agreed.</p> <p>Minutes approved on a proposal from Phelim Quinn and seconded by Paul Corrigan.</p>		
3	Matters Arising <b>For Noting</b>	TB24/10/2024/02



Matters Arising were discussed.

**Succession Planning**

The Chair informed members that the Chief Executive has announced his intention to retire at the end of March 2024. Board members collectively thanked Michael for his hard work and contributions to NIAS.

The Chief Executive thanked Board members for their kind words and assured them he will be continuing with business as usual until his retirement.

The Chair advised that recruitment for the Chief Executive and Director of Finance posts will now be progressed. The Chair highlighted that the Department of Health is undertaking a wider review of senior Executive posts, and the recruitment advertisements will reflect this.

Mr Quinn suggested that a more formalised framework on succession planning/talent management would be beneficial for the organisation. It was suggested that this could be discussed at Remuneration Committee and might include aspects such as how to prepare for senior level posts. The Board will consider how to take this forward.

**Strategic Outcome Framework**

Ms Paterson provided an update on the Strategic Outcome Framework. System Oversight Measures remain in development and should, in time, be focused on outcome measures which will evidence a “shift left” in care for patients. There has been communication with SPPG about how this could be developed. Governance is being maintained through the CEx forum.

**Patient Care Services**

Board members agreed to close action.

4	Chair’s Update <b>For Noting</b>	No paper
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The Chair provided an update on the Board Effectiveness audit undertaken by Internal Audit and confirmed it had received a satisfactory outcome.

The Chair provided an update on the most recent Chairs meeting with the Minister, and advised that the Chairs of the six HSC Trusts meet on a monthly basis.

The Chair of the Southern Health and Social Care Trust, Eileen Mullan, recently visited NIAS and saw how system pressures and delayed hospital handovers are being managed via the Regional Coordination Centre (RCC).

The Chair advised that she plans to visit the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust Chair and intends to meet NIAS crews as part of the visit.

The Chair advised she also had a useful discussion with the Assistant Directors Forum and that she intended to attend a further meeting in February 2025.

The Chair updated the Board in relation to the two Independent Advisors who have been supporting the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee (ARAC) and Safety Committee over the past few years and advised that both roles will come to an end now that there is a full complement of Board members. However, Robert Sowney will be retained to support the



development of NIAS's culture programme for an initial period of six months.

The Chair reported that she had received a letter from Save Our Acute Services requesting that the group's concerns in relation to service reconfiguration at the South West Acute Hospital be drawn to the Chair and NEDs attention. A reply has been sent advising that it would be prudent for the related ongoing RQIA review to conclude and that the Chief Executive has already agreed to a meeting with the group and would keep the Chair updated.

The Chair reported that members of the Northern Ireland Assembly Health Committee had recently had a very positive visit to NIAS HQ, where they got to see the working of the Control Room and hear about the challenges facing NIAS.

The Chair advised she had been on her first 'ride along' with operational crews and met with staff. She said how appreciative staff had been for her visit and advised that two more 'ride alongs' were scheduled in the coming weeks. The Chair encouraged other Board members to consider joining staff on a shift.

5	Chief Executive's Update <b>For Noting</b>	No paper
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The Chief Executive provided updates on meetings and visits since the last meeting.

He advised that he attended the Badge Ceremony for the first cohort of Paramedic students to graduate and outlined the timeline for the Newly Qualified Paramedics to join NIAS and continue their training before becoming operational in December. The formal graduation ceremony is scheduled for December 2024.

The Chief Executive reported that he had also met with the students at UU entering their final year and the majority had indicated their wish to join NIAS when they qualify. He welcomed the good Paramedic workforce supply for the coming years from this BSc programme.

The Chief Executive advised that he attended the launch of a new Road Safety Strategy by the Infrastructure Minister, along with PSNI and NIFRS as partners in the Strategy. He also highlighted the Road Safe Roadshows for sixth year students jointly run by NIAS, NIFRS and PSNI. He advised these are very powerful sessions and recommended them to Board members.

The Chief Executive provided an update on the first meeting of a new Regional Integrated Care System (ICS) Partnership Forum he attended which has been established to oversee the developments of ICS, and in particular to guide and support the AIPBs which will focus on prevention, working across sectors to address wider health inequalities.

The Chief Executive advised that a tender has been issued to appoint a firm to carry out a formal evaluation of the RCC to inform a decision on its continuation from April 2025.

The Chief Executive referred to the major incident relating to a school bus crash in Carrowdore on 7<sup>th</sup> October. He highlighted the potentially serious nature of this incident and welcomed that no-one was seriously injured. He praised the response to incident by NIAS and other partners.

The Chief Executive also provided updates in relation to a meeting he and Chief



Executives of Trusts, PHA and BSO had with colleagues from ROI to explore areas for collaboration and sharing good practice; and the Advancing Healthcare Awards at which NIAS staff were finalists in four categories and won two awards.

The Chief Executive reminded Board members that it was International Control Room Week to celebrate and recognise the excellent work of the staff in our Control Rooms and thanked those who had been able to visit EOC.

Paul Corrigan asked if the RCC evaluation will consider the effectiveness of the RCC against its original aims. The Chief Executive confirmed that the evaluation terms of reference made it clear that the impact RCC has made and the value it has added would be addressed.

6	Sexual Safety in the Workplace Implementation Plan 2024 <b>For Noting</b>	TB24/10/2024/03
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The Chair welcomed Bron Biddle, National Ambulance lead on Sexual Safety, to the meeting.

Bron presented on the work AACE is taking forward with ambulance services across the UK to help develop and embed a culture of sexual safety in the workplace. Bron provided background to the issues, including discussion of workplace cultures in other sectors, including policing, and also shared some of her own story and experience of working within an ambulance service.

She went on to describe the national programme of work and confirmed that NIAS is fully involved in this, including by participating in training for People Professionals and in a newly established Community of Practice.

Ms Lemon and Ms Turley discussed the embedding of this work in the organisational culture work programme and the Chair agreed this must be mainstreamed in this work. Ms Lemon also described the relationship of this to The Executive Office Strategy on Violence Against Women and Girls. The Chief Executive also discussed related sessions and discussion at the recent NICON Conference.

Bron shared detail of some national news coverage and also stories of staff working in the ambulance sector. She recognised that some of the detail was extremely stark and potentially upsetting but highlighted the importance of Boards having the full detail of the seriousness of the associated issues.

The Board were very concerned to note the extremely serious nature of the case studies, research and findings around sexual safety, described by Bron. They agreed that the work must be a high priority for the Trust. They noted the related programme of work described and indicated their desire to be kept abreast of the progress of this within the organisation.

The Chair expressed the sincere thanks of the Board to Bron for travelling to Northern Ireland to present to them and for sharing her own story as well as providing strong leadership of a critical and comprehensive programme of work.

She indicated that the Board would look forward to receiving further updates as the work progresses.

7	Corporate Risk Register	TB24/10/2024/04
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	<b>For Noting</b>	
<p>Ms Paterson provided a brief overview of the Corporate Risk Register. Two risks have been added and approved since the register was last considered by Trust Board. Ms Paterson noted that, to address an outstanding Internal Audit recommendation, the Trust's risk appetite statement would be revisited and developed and that a workshop is being held in early December 2024 to inform this piece of work.</p> <p>Mr Graham commended the current work. He provided an overview of the ARAC's input to and consideration of the papers. He advised that historical risks have now been closed and believes the risk register is now much improved.</p> <p>The Chair noted the position and welcomed the progress made.</p>		
8	<b>Finance Report (Month 4)</b> <b>For Noting</b>	TB22/08/2024/05
<p>Mr Christie provided a brief overview on the Finance Report paper. He highlighted the Trust continues to forecast a break even position. Plans are in place to deliver the required level of savings. Mr Christie provided explanation on the format of the attached slides. Profiling work is ongoing, information and intelligence is being received regarding expenditure. Month 6 report will be submitted at the next Trust Board meeting.</p> <p>The Chair queried if there is a financial risk to two-hour backstop. Mr Christie confirmed there is no current financial risk. However, there remains an issue around capacity, delivery and performance impact and also staff morale.</p> <p>The Chief Executive stated that the reality is the Trust has limited options for increasing capacity in the short term as the use of IAS and overtime were both being fully utilised. Paul Corrigan highlighted that while there will always be some time lag, it is important that finance reports are reviewed in as timely a way as possible.</p> <p>Board members recognised strains and resources.</p> <p>Chair thanked Mr Christie for his report.</p>		
9	<b>Trust Performance Corporate Scorecard (September 2024)</b> <b>For Noting</b>	TB24/10/2024/06
<p>Ms Paterson provided an executive summary of the Trust's Performance Corporate Scorecard, highlighting the five key points, percentage figures and statistics as per the tabled paper. The report shows a mixed picture of some positive progress with ongoing challenges.</p> <p>Paul Corrigan asked if there any performance measures/ compliance built into the non-emergency contract.</p> <p>Ms Charlton advised that there were KPIs within the current regional non-emergency framework. Ms Charlton also advised of the current arrangements in place within NIAS to strengthen the governance and assurance processes related to use of Independent Ambulance services, including a quarterly assurance meeting with providers and a programme of unannounced inspections in line with the quality and safety aspects outlined within the framework. Ms Charlton referred to SMT discussions regarding the capacity to deliver on this programme with the recent increase of 7 providers to 16.</p> <p>Ms Charlton also updated members on discussions at Safety Committee related to the absence of regulation of Independent Ambulance Providers in Northern Ireland where the legislation differs to that in place in mainland UK. Ms Charlton also updated on communication with RQIA &amp; DoH in this regard and a recent request from RQIA to meet to discuss.</p> <p>The Chair asked Mr Christie if there is financial capacity to support a post to strengthen governance and assurance in this context. Ms Charlton advised that a job description had been developed and was currently awaiting Job Evaluation.</p>		



Board members discussed the importance of independent regulation.

Ms Lemon provided a brief update on absentee figures. Figures for September are 11.28% - conscious of seasonal absence, this is being made a priority and particular trends are being reviewed.

Ms Charlton advised that an amendment was required to the complaints section of the executive summary to reflect that there was one case accepted by NIPSO for investigation and apologised for the oversight. Papers to be updated accordingly.

Action:

Executive summary to be updated to reflect there is one case for NIPSO.

10	NIAS Draft Locality Plan <b>For Noting</b>	No paper
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Ms Paterson provided a brief overview for noting. The 'plan' is very brief and work is currently underway to develop a brief for the Minister and a public version which will be displayed on NIAS website.

11	Corporate Plan – Mid Year Progress <b>For Noting</b>	TB24/10/2024/07
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Mr Arandia provided a high-level update on mid-year progress of delivery of the Corporate Plan to support attainment of the Trust's six Strategic Objectives. Mr Arandia explained that meetings have been held with Senior Management to review progress and advised this would continue as part of the Directorate Accountability Meetings which are scheduled in the coming weeks.

It was reported that the Trust is making strong progress on some strategic outcomes and that others require more attention, as described in detail in the tabled paper.

The Chair asked that any reduction in confidence after the Accountability Review meetings to be drawn to Trust Board's attention.

Action:

Any confidence altered after the Accountability Review meetings to be fed back to Trust Board.

12	Committee Business: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety Cttee – minutes of meeting on 13 June 2024.</li> <li>• ARAC Cttee – minutes of meeting on 27 June 2024.</li> </ul> <b>For Information</b>	TB24/10/2024/08
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**Safety Committee**

Mr Ashford provided a brief overview and update on the work of Safety Committee and advised that EPRR will remain as a standing agenda item going forward. Mr Ashford noted Internal Audit's continued interest and engagement and that this was positive.

**ARAC Committee**

Mr Graham provided a brief overview and update on the work of ARAC and advised that an extraordinary ARAC discussion will be held on 5 December 2024 to review progress



against delivery of Internal Audit recommendations. Mr Christie provided assurance, advising that good progress is being made, but it is important to keep a focus on delivery of all outstanding recommendations.

13	Date and venue of next meeting: <b>Thursday 12 December 2024 at 09.00am in the Boardroom, NIAS HQ</b>	
14	Any Other Business	

The Chair reminded NEDs to take up mandatory NEDs training as required.

Action:  
NEDs to take up mandatory NEDs training required.

**SIGNED:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE:** 12 December 2024