



**Minutes of NIAS Trust Board held on Thursday 26 June 2025 at
10.35am in the Boardroom, NIAS HQ, Site 30, Knockbracken
Healthcare Park, Saintfield Road, Belfast BT8 8SG**

Present:	Mrs M Larmour	Chair
	Mr D Ashford	Non-Executive Director
	Mr P Corrigan	Non-Executive Director
	Dr P Graham	Non-Executive Director
	Ms M Paterson	Chief Executive (Interim)
	Mr N Sinclair	Director of Operations (Interim)
	Ms M Lemon	Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development (HR & OD)
	Ms L Donnelly	Director of Finance (Interim)
In		
Attendance:	Ms L Charlton	Director of Quality, Safety & Improvement (QSI)
	Mr S Mullen	Director of Planning, Performance & Corporate Services (Interim)
	Mr J McPoland	Comms Manager
	Mr A Hopper	National Ambulance Violence Prevention and Reduction Operational Lead (AACE)
	Ms C Barnham	National Ambulance Violence Prevention and Reduction Officer (AACE)
	Mr F Dillon	Violence Reduction Case Manager
	Ms S Beggs	Temporary Board Secretary
Apologies	Mr J Dennison	Non-Executive Director
	Mr P Quinn	Non-Executive Director
	Dr N Ruddell	Medical Director

1 Welcome, Apologies & Declarations of Conflict

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and noted the apologies received.

The Chair also welcomed Mr McPoland, Comms Manager, attending the meeting as an observer and advised that colleagues from AACE are attending for item 6.

The Chair reminded those present that they should declare any conflicts of interest at the outset or as the meeting progressed.

The meeting was declared as quorate.

2 **Previous Minutes (TB26/06/2025/01)**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 15 May 2025 were **APPROVED** on a proposal from Mr Ashford and seconded by Mr Corrigan.

3 **Matters Arising (TB26/06/2025/02)**

Members **NOTED** there were no Matters Arising.

4 **Chair's Update**

The Chair confirmed that all NED appraisals are now complete and have been submitted to the Department.

The Chair attended the Long Service Medal Ceremony on the evening of the last Trust Board Meeting, and commended Mr McPoland and colleagues on a very successful event.

The Chair attended the National Women's Network on 17 June 2025 and gave a presentation on her experience as a woman leader. The Chair was impressed by the number of good practice initiatives occurring nationally and as a result has asked for a meeting with Ms Laura Turley to talk through some of the initiatives.

The Chair has met with Christine Collins, Chair of RQIA, they discussed the GIRFT report and RQIA review service reconfiguration at SWAH. The Chair has asked Ms Paterson to pull together an update on the recommendations from those reports to provide assurance to the Board. The Chair briefed Ms Collins on NIAS governance structures and has offered her to attend a future Trust Board Meeting.

The Chair confirmed that Director objectives for 2024-25 have been signed off at the recent Remuneration Committee and objectives for 2025-26 are in place. The Chair wished to formally recognise Ms Paterson for her efforts in finalising objectives for the required deadlines.

HSC Trust Chairs met with the Interim Permanent Secretary on Tuesday evening, where areas of focus were reiterated, including the financial savings plan for 2025-26 and the proposal to establish a Shared Committee in Common.

Mr Corrigan referred to one of the recommendations from the Audit office being in relation to regulation and oversight of the independent ambulance sector. Ms Charlton advised that the DoH have indicated they plan to consider regulation of independent ambulance providers in parallel with the current review of non-emergency transportation services.

5 Chief Executive's Update

Ms Paterson acknowledged the last six weeks had been particularly intense for NIAS and placed on record her thanks and commendation to all staff and commanders who responded during the recent civil unrest in Ballymena and other affected areas. She further acknowledged the personal sacrifices made by staff redeployed at short notice, and highlighted the support and commendation received from the Department of Health and the Executive Office. Initial reflections from the internal debrief have

been very positive, and NIAS will continue to learn from these events and strengthen resilience and multi-agency relationships.

Turning to regional ambulance handover reform, Ms Paterson confirmed that this remains a Ministerial priority, with an interim target to eliminate >2-hour breaches and a longer-term ambition to move towards a 45-minute standard. £10m regional funding has been identified to support this work ahead of winter, and four key performance measures will be used for accountability. NIAS, as RCC host, has proposed and secured agreement that RCC will coordinate delivery on behalf of Trusts. The Minister has also agreed to quarterly accountability meetings with trade unions to monitor progress, recognising the importance of timely crew release for patient outcomes and staff welfare. Ms Paterson stressed that ED engagement will be central to successful local implementation and suggested a workshop with clinical leads who had visited London to share learning from the W45 model.

Ms Paterson informed the Board that NIAS is participating fully in the development of a regional Committee in Common (CiC), alongside the five geographical Trusts, with NIAS's own CiC structure being established from July. She emphasised that this would complement, not replace, NIAS's statutory governance arrangements, and will provide a mechanism to address shared challenges across the system.

She reported that on 23 May the Interim Permanent Secretary had visited NIAS to review its contribution to the wider system reset plan. This initiative seeks to address financial pressures and drive sustainable transformation, with ambulance handover reform recognised as a critical enabler of flow and workforce resilience. NIAS is also leading the regional Falls Workstream as part of this reset and is contributing to the Support & Intervention Framework to align with system accountability arrangements.

Ms Paterson highlighted NIAS's ongoing investment in quality and workforce. On 25 June she attended the Quality Improvement

Level 2 Graduation, where 13 staff presented 11 projects aligned to the Quality Strategy.

Ms Paterson also welcomed Year 13 students participating in NIAS's second annual work experience week, and the intake of 24 newly qualified and 5 qualified paramedics who have joined operational service.

Ms Paterson noted the completion of DAO training on 4 June and the first meeting of the Culture Programme Board on 16 June.

Finally, Ms Paterson thanked Ms Donnelly and colleagues for their work on the Annual Report and Accounts, which received a satisfactory audit outcome. She noted that this was Ms Donnelly's first year-end as Director of Finance and commended the excellent result.

The Chair thanked Ms Paterson for her comprehensive update, which was NOTED.

6 **AACE Presentation: Violence and Aggression Work (TB26/06/2025/03)**

Mr Mullen introduced AACE colleagues, Mr Adam Hopper and Ms Clare Barnham who have been working with NIAS for a number of years, particularly with Mr Frankie Dillon, violence reduction lead.

Mr Hopper explained they provide support to all ambulance services, including those in the devolved nations. The violence prevention has been hitherto funded by NHS England. However, due to its dissolution, this funding will soon cease.

Mr Hopper shared promotional footage from four years ago which was shared on all social media platforms that demonstrates the abuse staff receive, not just front-line staff but call handlers also.

The Chair queried why there is a significant decline in the last year. Mr Dillon said there is nothing tangible to prove why but the introduction of body worn video in the last 12 months could be an enabling factor.

The presence of weapons has increased by 14% in the last five years and the Chair suggested it may be worth linking with the PSNI regarding related incidents as this will most likely correlate across and help form a preventative strategy.

Trust Board discussed leadership within NIAS in terms of the use of body worn videos and that staff should be encouraged by station officers and peers to use them. It was queried if the use of BWV is mandated, and Mr Corrigan said the policy states staff were mandated to carry and wear but not record.

Figures show that 30% of staff are signing out cameras and since the recent civil unrest this has increased.

The Chair said this poses a strategic risk if staff are in a challenging position and also a health and safety risk if there is a lack of evidence.

Mr Dillon continues to work with the Comms team to consistently get the message out to encourage staff to wear BWV cameras.

Some staff have been reluctant to use BWV cameras as they were concerned these may be used for disciplinary matters, this has not been the case and staff are now gaining trust.

Mr Dillon said there was an e learning package delivered with over 800 completed. There are a host of reasons that staff don't use BWV, but Mr Dillon's team continue to promote, encourage and provide different solutions.

Mr Hopper said the same challenges are represented across the country, but uptake is starting to improve. There is a BWV charter,

governance and policies for staff to feel safer in the use of BWV Cameras.

Ms Barnsley advised that they are encouraging Trusts to move away from the “zero-tolerance” approach to violence and aggression and engage in a health and preventative strategy. .

The team continue to collaborate with other partners e.g. PPS, CPS and Health Ministers to facilitate a partnership approach.

The immediate priorities were discussed which included ongoing education and encouragement of staff to report and use cameras. Mr Dillon and Mr Henry are working on a staff survey to gain intelligence on how NIAS can support staff and help manage violence and aggression.

There is a plan to develop a business plan with options on how to deliver refresher training for staff on conflict resolution.

Mr Ashford referenced another campaign ‘we’re the target, you are the victim’ and suggested it may be worthwhile considering joint training with other blue light services, in particular NIFRS.

Mr Hopper said there are many models within other countries and Ms Paterson added that NIAS will collaborate with other services in NI to share resources and learning.

The Chair thanked colleagues on behalf of NIAS Trust Board and they acknowledge this is a key priority and welcome the good overview and oversight. She thanked Mr Dillon for what he has taken forward and prioritised to date and welcomes Mr Mullen’s oversight in this area.

7 **Corporate Risk Register (TB26/06/2025/04)**

Trust Board **NOTED** the substantive changes since the last time the CRR was approved at Trust Board in February 2025, which has been discussed at GARAC.

Risk 825 (PCS Capacity) may be reconsidered due to the timeliness of recruitment and Ops Structure Review. Mr Sinclair confirmed that Mr Neil Duncan has a plan in place and doesn't think it will need escalated again.

Dr Graham said the risk register is working well particularly with the new element of assurance and the fact it has reduced down to 15 items demonstrates the improvement. He thanked Mr Mullen, Mr Henry and the team and confirmed the GARAC Committee approved the CRR for Trust Board to note at today's meeting.

8 **Performance Update (TB26/06/2025/05)**

Mr Mullen introduced the Performance Report which has been revised following feedback from the Committee and it now contains an Executive Summary highlighting the significant matters of the Key Performance indicators and actions being taken to address performance throughout the trust.

Trust Board **NOTED** the report which outlines the key performance metrics up to and including the 31 May 2025

Mr Mullen said that system performance in terms of hospital handover is still very challenging, and actions are being taken to address. The Trust is working actively with RCC on a daily basis on this issue.

The Chair pointed out a minor error on the first line on page 3 (should be April 2024) and Mr Mullen agreed to amend. It was noted that the section on page 4 regarding safeguarding referrals needs to be updated.

ACTION: Mr Mullen

Mr Corrigan said the SPF Committee are satisfied with the style and content of the revised report and pointed out there may be occasions that this report will go to Trust Board before going to

SPF. As SPF the agenda is expanding and may not have the time to delve into everything in more detail the Committee will endeavour to ensure they are prioritising the right matters and will review at the NEDs meeting in October.

9 Committee Business (TB26/06/2025/06)

Trust Board **NOTED** the summary of items listed at Committees since April and the Committee / Trust Board forward Work Plan.

Dr Graham has agreed with members of the GARAC Committee that they will schedule an additional meeting in February 2026 to review the progress with Internal Audit.

10 Any Other Business

Committee ToR on website

Ms Beggs said that following a meeting with DoH Sponsor Branch it was requested that NIAS Committee Terms of Reference are added to the website and Ms Beggs sought Trust Board's approval to do so.

The Chair agreed but asked for a caveat to be added stating that the ToR are part of an ongoing governance review.

The Chair thanked members for their attendance and contribution at today's meeting and reminded members that there will be cyber training at the end of the next Board Meeting on 28 August 2025.

**THIS BEING ALL THE BUSINESS, THE CHAIR CLOSED THE
PUBLIC MEETING AT 2.30PM.**

SIGNED: _____

M. Larmour

DATE: _____

28/8/25

FINAL