



NIAS Trust Board Public Meeting

Date: 30 March 2026
Time: 11.00 am
Location: Board Room, NIAS HQ

Attendance		
Chair:	Ms M Larmour	
Attendees:	Mr P Corrigan Mr N Sinclair Ms L Donnelly Dr N Ruddell Mr P Quinn Dr P Graham	Non-Executive Director Director of Operations (Interim) Director of Finance (Interim) Medical Director Non-Executive Director Non-Executive Director
In Attendance:	Ms L Charlton Mr S Mullen Mr J McPoland Ms S Beggs Ms L Turley	Director of Quality, Safety QSI Director of PPCS (Interim) Comms Manager Board Secretary (Temporary) Assistant Director of HR&OD
Apologies:	Ms M Lemon Mr D Ashford Mr J Dennison Ms M Paterson	Director of HR & OD Non-Executive Director Non-Executive Director Interim Chief Executive

Minutes of Meeting		
Agenda Item	Summary of the discussion	Actions Agreed
1.	<p><u>Welcome, Introduction & Apologies</u></p> <p>The Chair welcomed members and attendees to the meeting and confirmed the meeting was held in public session.</p> <p>The Board NOTED apologies as recorded above.</p> <p>No conflicts of interest were declared.</p>	
2.	<p><u>Previous Notes</u></p> <p>The minutes of the previous Public Trust Board meeting held on 19 February 2026 were APPROVED (proposed by Dr Graham; seconded by Mr Corrigan).</p>	



3.	<p><u>Matters Arising</u></p> <p>The Board NOTED the updates provided in relation to matters arising.</p>	
4.	<p><u>Chair's Update</u></p> <p>The Board NOTED progress on key recruitment activity, including the Chief Executive recruitment process (advertised, regular engagement with recruitment firm, and an established panel) and the Director of Finance recruitment process with dates progressing.</p> <p>The Board also NOTED the regional Non-Executive Director recruitment exercise (joint HSC/NIAS), with interviews/dates planned following Easter and a second NIAS vacancy anticipated next year.</p> <p>The Board NOTED positive feedback from the Leadership and Governance Conference, including themes of scalability, evidence-based practice, shared learning and collaborative working, and the launch of an Audit Office report on partnership working (highlighted for members).</p> <p>The Board NOTED engagement with new Permanent Secretaries and that Ms Larmour would assume the chair role for PSCF in May.</p>	
5.	<p><u>Chief Executive's Update</u></p> <p>The Board NOTED the verbal update provided by Management, including engagement with the Health Committee and discussions on ambulance handovers and the "Release to Rescue" approach.</p> <p>The update also referenced fleet, violence towards staff and collaboration with southern colleagues on emergency preparedness and resilience (EPRR).</p> <p>Members highlighted the importance of maintaining engagement with elected representatives to ensure visibility of NIAS actions and issues affecting service delivery.</p> <p>The Board discussed safeguarding in the context of domestic violence and domestic homicide concerns, seeking assurance that NIAS is playing its part as an emergency response organisation.</p>	



	<p>Management advised that safeguarding training has been delivered (814 staff trained referenced), safeguarding leads are engaged in domestic homicide reviews, and work continues to strengthen processes (including control room triggers), links with multi-agency arrangements and policy development.</p> <p>The Board NOTED a Departmental request for information on NIAS activity in this area.</p>	
6.	<p><u>EQUIP Assurance Presentation</u></p> <p>The Chair welcomed BSO colleagues Craig Young and Ben Doran to the meeting.</p> <p>The Board received an assurance presentation on the EQUIP programme and thanked presenters for a transparent account of progress, risks and dependencies.</p> <p>Members discussed programme capacity, the requirement to maintain business-critical functions (finance, payroll and statutory obligations) alongside implementation, and the implications of savings and resource constraints.</p> <p>The Board NOTED that go-live timelines have already moved in response to readiness and quality concerns, and supported a "gold standard" readiness approach—proceeding only when data quality, standards and organisational readiness are confirmed.</p> <p>The Board discussed lessons from other large system implementations and requested that lessons learned be shared and tracked against NIAS controls and mitigations, with appropriate reporting through GARAC/PCOD and up to Trust Board.</p> <p>Management noted steps to strengthen NIAS internal capacity (including temporary/project management support) and agreed to provide further updates given the scale and interdependencies.</p> <p><u>Next Steps</u> EQUIP Programme Lead / Exec Team – Provide a lessons learned update and ongoing programme assurance reporting through GARAC/PCOD to Trust Board.</p>	<p>HR/Finance/Mr Mullen</p>



<p>7.</p>	<p><u>Finance Report (Month 10)</u></p> <p>The Board NOTED the Month 10 finance position and that funding has been identified for elements of EQUIP backfill.</p> <p>Members discussed whether available resource is sufficient and noted that further reprioritisation of programmes of work may be required to make staff available for EQUIP delivery.</p> <p>The Board NOTED the year-end revenue position and management’s break-even plan, including strengthened daily grip and efficiency oversight. Members expressed concern regarding volatility in monthly forecasting and underscored the need for improved budgetary control and a stable finance team entering 2026/27. Internal Audit work on budget management was referenced as an additional source of assurance.</p> <p>Members noted Internal Audit planned work on finance/budget management, as an additional source of assurance.</p>	
<p>8.</p>	<p><u>Performance Report</u></p> <p>The Board NOTED the January performance report and the transition to a new reporting format from April, supported by BI dashboards.</p> <p>The Board discussed the significant impact of demand pressures, repeat calls and high OOCA levels, and highlighted the substantial hospital handover delays (including hours lost and the proportion of arrivals waiting over two hours).</p> <p>Members expressed particular concern at the deterioration in Category 2 response times during the period and discussed the relationship between operational pressures, prolonged handovers and staff wellbeing/absence.</p> <p>The Board NOTED increased sickness absence (with mental health/stress a significant contributor) and the need for careful interpretation in planning guidance, ensuring absence improvement is not treated purely as a savings lever.</p>	



	<p>The Chair requested it be recorded that the Board is concerned about overall organisational performance, recognising the regional dependencies impacting hospital handovers, and reiterated that the risks to public safety and staff welfare have been communicated to the Minister.</p> <p>Members discussed the need for clearer guidance for primary care colleagues on appropriate ambulance use/expectations and highlighted ongoing work with DoH on eligibility criteria and regulation of independent ambulance provision.</p> <p><u>Next Steps</u> Director of Quality & Safety – Consider wording change from “patient safety” to “public safety” duty within relevant documentation and reflect in future papers (as discussed).</p>	<p>Ms Charlton/Mr Mullen</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p><u>ALF 2026 Sustainability 3 Nation approach</u></p> <p>The Board NOTED the update and the value of communications/engagement approaches, including shadow board style engagement with staff to support culture change and improve staff voice into Board decision-making.</p> <p>Members reflected on the value of leadership visibility and one-to-one engagement with staff to understand operational challenges and generate improvement ideas.</p> <p>The Board NOTED progress in sustainability, including securing a sustainability officer and the strategic focus on fleet/estates impacts.</p> <p>The Board also NOTED estates strategy development and anticipated reporting through SPF/GARAC and onward to Trust Board via the forward work plan.</p>	
<p>10.</p>	<p><u>Cross border resilience (Humanitarian Disaster and Assistance Course)</u></p> <p>The Board NOTED ongoing collaboration with National Ambulance Service (NAS) colleagues to support standardised all-island EPRR arrangements, informed by learning from major incidents.</p>	



	<p>Members discussed barriers and enablers including professional registration across jurisdictions, medicines/controlled drugs legislation, and fleet insurance considerations.</p> <p>Dr Ruddell highlighted his previous engagement with DoH representatives and the Board NOTED that DoH is liaising with counterparts and relevant regulatory agencies to explore solutions for statutory ambulance services, including automatic/retrospective recognition/registration arrangements.</p>	
11.	<p><u>Standing Financial Instructions</u></p> <p>The Board NOTED the updated SFI's which were recently submitted to the GARAC Committee on 12 March 2026.</p>	
12.	<p><u>Board Assurance Framework</u></p> <p>The Board APPROVED the Board Assurance Framework update and NOTED the new structure of accountability meetings, with the first meeting scheduled imminently and chaired by the Interim Chief Executive.</p> <p>Members welcomed progress in policy management and the overall assurance framework and requested a visual internal governance/assurance diagram (organisational meetings/forums) to support understanding of reporting routes.</p> <p>Members discussed whether key strategic risks (including emergency response capability and recruitment/retention, succession planning and talent management) are appropriately rated and sufficiently evidenced by assurance sources.</p> <p>The Board discussed the need to strengthen collective understanding of "how data counts"—how performance and risk data is constructed, aggregated and interpreted—and suggested this be explored via a future workshop/NED development session.</p> <p>Members reflected on the balance between meeting length, increasing performance scrutiny, and ensuring a safe, curious space for challenge by both NEDs and Executive Directors.</p>	<p>Mr Mullen</p>
13.	<p><u>Business Cases</u></p>	



	<p>The Board considered business cases and APPROVED the proposals (proposed by Dr Graham; seconded by Mr Corrigan).</p>	
14.	<p><u>Committee Business</u></p> <p>The Board NOTED the forward work plan is flexible and may be amended as required.</p> <p>Members discussed Terms of Reference updates (including new published frameworks on being human and being open) and the appropriate committee routes for oversight, with further discussion planned at a NED workshop to clarify DoH expectations.</p> <p>The Board NOTED that DoH has issued Terms of Reference for Safety Committee and that these are to be reviewed ahead of the next committee meeting, aligning NIAS documents accordingly.</p> <p>The Chair recorded thanks to Mr Ashford for his contribution over eight years, including significant work on EPRR.</p> <p>The Board NOTED that Mr Quinn will assume the Chair role for Safety Committee from 15 April.</p>	
15.	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p>Members discussed potential venues for the May meeting (including the Southern Office and Strabane).</p> <p>The Chair thanked Executive colleagues and NEDs for their additional support and contributions in a challenging period, recognising the complexity and constraints outside NIAS direct control.</p>	
16.	<p><u>Date and venue of next meeting:</u> 28 May 2026 at 9.30am, venue TBC</p>	

M. Lammour

SIGNED: _____

DATE: 26/5/26