

## Board of Directors (in Public) Item 5.7

**Subject:** Wellbeing Guardian – Board Assurance  
**Date of Meeting:** Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2021  
**Prepared by:** Karen Nightingall, Chief People Officer  
**Presented by:** Karen Nightingall, Chief People Officer  
**Purpose of Report:** To Note

BAF Ref	Impact on BAF
DP1	We will put the health and wellbeing of our people at the heart of what we do. If the Trust is unable to deliver its health and wellbeing strategy, it is likely this would result in increasing levels of stress related sickness and absence from the workforce, reduced productivity and resilience. Staff turnover is also likely to be adversely affected.

### 1. Executive Summary

**Wellbeing Guardians:** look at the organisation's activities from a health and wellbeing perspective and acts as a critical friend.

#### Vision for the role

The Wellbeing Guardian is recommended to be a board-level role that provides oversight, assurance and support to the NHS board (or equivalent senior leadership team in non-trust settings) to fulfil their legal responsibility in ensuring the health and wellbeing of our NHS people.

The expectation is for this role to be introduced in every local, regional and national NHS organisation (for example at NHS Trusts, within a Primary Care Network, at CCG level and at national NHS E&I level).

### 2. Background

The NHS Staff and Learners' Mental Wellbeing Commission (2019), launched by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, identified a lack of uniformity in board-level leadership around the wellbeing of our NHS people.

The review recommended improving the consistency across NHS boards through the introduction of a board-level Wellbeing Guardian role, which has more recently been referenced in the NHS People Plan (2020).

The Chief People Officer will act as Wellbeing Guardian for the Trust.

### 3. Further Details

The NHS People Plan 2020-21 sets out national health and wellbeing policy ambitions to enable our system stakeholders to create a culture of wellbeing, where our NHS people are well looked after and cared for. These policy areas outline three key roles:

•**Wellbeing Guardians:** A non-executive director (or equivalent) who looks at the organisation's activities from a health and wellbeing perspective and acts as a critical friend.

•**Health and Wellbeing Champions:** People at all levels of our NHS organisations who promote and identify ways to enable the wellbeing of their colleagues.

•**Health and Wellbeing Conversations:** Supportive conversations between colleagues and their line managers (or those with caring responsibilities) at least once a year to openly discuss their health and wellbeing and develop a personalised plan.

#### **The Wellbeing Guardian should:**

- Care about people, find ways to connect with staff and staff networks and listen well
- Work closely with and support other executives who lead in this area
- Feel confident in challenging the Board and other senior leaders, questioning decisions that could impact on the wellbeing of our NHS people, and challenging behaviours or aspects of the culture that are likely to be detrimental to others.
- Be fully cognisant of the protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act and be committed to ensuring that disparities on the basis of a protected characteristic are eradicated.

#### **NINE PRINCIPLES:**

##### **Principle One**

The health and wellbeing of our NHS people and those learning and working in the NHS should not be compromised by the work they do for the NHS.

##### **Principle Two**

Where an individual or team is exposed to a particularly distressing clinical event, board time should be made available to assure the board and the wellbeing guardian that the wellbeing impact on those NHS staff and learners has been checked.

##### **Principle Three**

Regular assurance will be provided to the wellbeing guardian to ensure that wellness induction (previously wellbeing 'check-in') are being provided to all new NHS people on appointment and to all learners on placement in the NHS, as outlined in the 2019 NHS Staff and Learners' Mental Wellbeing Review's recommendations.

##### **Principle Four**

The wellbeing guardian will receive assurance that all our NHS people and those learning in the NHS have ready access to a self-referral, proactive and confidential occupational health service that promotes and protects wellbeing.

##### **Principle Five**

The death by suicide of any member of our NHS people or a learner working in an NHS organisation will be independently examined and the findings reported through the board to the wellbeing guardian.

**Principle Six**

The NHS will ensure that all our NHS people and learners have an environment that is both safe and supportive of their mental and psychological wellbeing, as well as their physical wellbeing.

**Principle Seven**

The NHS will ensure that the cultural and spiritual needs of our NHS people and those learning in the NHS are protected, and equitable and appropriate wellbeing support for overseas NHS people and learners working in the NHS.

**Principle Eight**

The NHS will ensure the wellbeing and make the necessary adjustments for the nine groups protected under the Equality Act 2010 (including consideration for how intersectionality may impact wellbeing).

**Principle Nine**

The wellbeing guardian will provide suitable challenge to the board to be assured that the organisation is working with system leaders and regulators, to ensure that wellbeing is given the same weight as other aspects in organisational performance assessment.

**4. Conclusion**

The Wellbeing Guardian is embedded in the Trust's People Plan launched on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2021. The Chief People Officer has been appointed to the role and attended a training course in February 2021.

The Chief People Officer will provide regular updates to the Board via the People Committee where assurance will be provided as part of the people plan.

**5. Recommendations**

The Board of Directors is asked to note the contents of the report.