

## Item 5.5b

**Annual Report 2019/20 - Compliance with the Code of Governance**

Liverpool Heart and Chest Hospital NHS Foundation Trust has applied the principles of the NHS Foundation Trust Code of Governance ('The Code') on a 'comply or explain basis'. The NHS Foundation Trust Code of Governance, most recently revised in July 2014 is based upon the principles of the UK Corporate Governance Code issued in 2012.

During 2019/20, the Board of Directors has maintained governance policies and processes that reflect the principles of the Code, including:

- A clear vision, underpinned by strategic objectives and operational plan
- A Corporate Governance Manual which includes the constitution and procedures by which the Board of Directors and Council of Governors operate; the Scheme of Reservation and Delegation, the Board Committee structure and associated Terms of Reference, Standing Financial Instructions and key corporate policies.
- At least half the Board of Directors, excluding the Chair, comprises independent non-executive directors;
- The appointment of a Senior Independent Director;
- Regular private meetings between the Chair and non-executive directors;
- Robust annual appraisal process for the Chair and non-executive directors that has been developed and approved by the Council of Governors;
- Robust recruitment process for the appointment of non-executive Directors;
- Induction process for Non-executive and Executive Directors;
- Comprehensive induction programme and ongoing training programme for Governors;
- Annual review of non-executive director independence;
- Annual review of compliance with Fit and Proper Persons' criteria for all Directors;
- Publicly accessible Register of Interests for Directors, Governors and senior staff;
- Senior Governor appointed;
- Provision of Board minutes and summaries of the Board's private business to governors;
- Effective infrastructure to support the Council of Governors including sub committees, interest groups and informal meetings with the Chair;
- Process for annual evaluation of the Council of Governors and for setting key objectives / priority areas for the following year;
- Membership Strategy with KPIs and engagement plan reported to the Council of Governors;
- Two Nominations and Remuneration Committees for executive and non-executive appointments / remuneration respectively – in the case of non-executive appointments / remuneration recommendations are made to the Council of Governors for approval;
- High quality reports to the Board of Directors and Council of Governors;
- Board evaluation and development plan;
- Codes of Conduct for Governors and for Directors;
- Going concern report;
- Robust Audit Committee arrangements;

- Governor-led appointment process for external auditor
- Freedom to Speak Up (Raising Concerns) Policy;
- Anti-fraud policy and plan

The Board of Directors conducts an annual review of the Code of Governance to monitor compliance and identify areas for further development.

The Board has confirmed that, with the exception of the following two provisions, the Trust has complied with the provisions of the Code in 2019/20.

Liverpool Heart and Chest Hospital departed from:

- i) Provision which states:

*‘BoD evaluation should be externally facilitated at least every 3 years. The evaluation needs to be carried out against the board leadership and governance framework set out by Monitor. The external facilitator should be identified in the annual report and a statement made as to whether they have any other connection to the trust’*

The Board commissioned an independent evaluation against the Monitor framework in March 2017, and therefore a further review was due in March 2020. The Board gave careful consideration to this requirement and decided that commissioning an external review in 2019/20 did not offer best use of Trust resources given the assurance received following the CQC’s assessment of the Well led criteria as ‘outstanding’ in the summer of 2019. The Board also responded following the publication of the Kark recommendations by asking MIAA to facilitate a review of the Board’s core skills and competencies and utilising this work to inform the Board Development Plan for 2020/21. The Board determined that it would consider the timing of a second comprehensive independent review in Quarter 4 of 2020/21.

- ii) Provision B.7.1 which states:

*‘Any term beyond six years (e.g. two three year terms) for a non-executive director should be subject to particularly rigorous review, and should take into account the need for progressive refreshing of the Board. Non-executive directors may, in exceptional circumstances, serve longer than six years (e.g. two three year terms following authorisation of the NHS Foundation trust) but this should be subject to annual re-appointment. Serving more than six years could be relevant to the determination of a non-executive’s independence.’*

The Chair was re-appointed by the Council of Governors (September 2019) for a final term ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, at which point he will have served on the Board of the foundation trust for almost thirteen years.

The Board has determined that the Chair continues to be independent and there is clear evidence of continued challenge. The Chair has no material conflicts of interest and maintains a clear boundary between personal and professional relationships. There has been a consistent turnover of non-executive directors, bringing collective challenge and fresh perspective to the Board. There was a change of Senior Independent Director in 2019 and focus on the Board succession plan. Specifically, there is a robust succession plan in place to support the appointment of a new chair with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 and work has already progressed to identify and cultivate potential candidates.

The Council of Governor's decision to continue the Chair's tenure took account of the Chairman's outstanding contribution and performance; and as the Board has seen a refresh of non-executive directors, the re-appointment of the Chair would provide ongoing stability during a challenging operational period within a rapidly changing external environment.

The Council of Governors also recognised the Chair's specific experience and personal networks in the context of the Trust's wider systems leadership role within Cheshire and Merseyside and more locally. The Liverpool health system.