

Minutes of the Audit Committee
Friday 17 November 2023 at 11.00am until 11.45am
Via Microsoft Teams

Present:

Mr Martin Wright, Non-executive Director (Chair of the Audit Committee)
Dr Frances Healey, Non-executive Director
Mr Cleveland Henry, Non-executive Director

In Attendance:

Mr Kieran Betts, Corporate Governance Officer (meeting support)
Mr Jonathan Campbell, Associate Director of Estates and Facilities
Mrs Clare Edwards, Associate Director for Corporate Governance
Mrs Dawn Hanwell, Chief Financial Officer, and Deputy Chief Executive

		Action
	<p>Welcome and Introduction</p> <p>Mr Wright opened the meeting at 11.00am and welcomed everyone.</p>	
23/112	<p>Apologies for absence (agenda item 1)</p> <p>No apologies were received from members of the Committee or from attendees of the meeting.</p> <p>The Committee was quorate.</p>	
23/113	<p>Declarations of any conflict of interest in respect of agenda items (agenda item 2)</p> <p>No one present declared a conflict of interest in respect of agenda items.</p>	
23/114	<p>Matters arising (agenda item 3)</p> <p>The Committee noted that there were no matters arising that were not either on the agenda or on the action log.</p>	
23/115	<p>Cumulative Action Log (agenda item 4)</p> <p>The Committee noted that only updates for the open actions relating to the Health and Safety Reports would be discussed at this meeting. The Committee confirmed that action 175 was complete and could be closed on the log. The Committee then discussed the remaining open actions and agreed that these all related to items on the agenda for the meeting. It was agreed that these actions would be discussed further following their presentation at the meeting.</p>	

The Committee was **assured** with the progress made on the actions within the cumulative action log and **agreed** on which actions should be closed.

23/116 Health and Safety Annual Report 2022-23 (agenda item 5)

Mr Campbell provided the Committee with an overview of the Health and Safety Annual Report. He informed the Committee that the report had been updated in-line with comments received at the July 2023 Audit Committee meeting where the report had first been presented. The Committee heard that these updates included amendments being made to the sections on Violence and Aggression, and NHS Workplace Health and Safety Standards; a clarification of the data presented in the report; and completing the information provided on health and safety training compliance so that it included data up to the end of the 2022-23 financial year. He added that the report now also contained a Health and Safety Workplan for 2023-24 to monitor ongoing actions. Mr Campbell also reported that a review of the Health and Safety Committee's Terms of Reference was underway, and that interviews for the Trust's new Head of Health and Safety were scheduled to commence at the start of December 2023.

The Committee noted that reported incidents of violence and aggression experienced by members of staff remained an issue. It suggested that this should be discussed further at an upcoming Board of Directors meeting to ensure that updates on how the Trust was dealing with this issue collectively were received, as it noted that the report only detailed the actions undertaken by the Health and Safety Team. Mrs Hanwell reported that a violence and aggression strategy would be discussed at the January 2024 Board of Directors meeting by Ms Frances Dodd, Associate Director of People Experience, as part of the Security Management Audit Action Plan. The Committee noted this update.

The Committee next discussed the fact that monitoring assurance for health and safety was difficult given that it was a broad issue which covered multiple workstreams. It acknowledged that while multiple Board Sub-Committees were responsible for receiving assurance items relating to health and safety, that ultimately the Audit Committee was responsible for monitoring overarching assurance in this area. Mrs Hanwell informed the Committee that work to improve integrated governance had commenced to improve the provision of collective assurance going forward. She added that it was hoped that the newly appointed Head of Health and Safety would be able to help provide this collective assurance as they would be responsible for monitoring and coordinating efforts across the multiple workstreams which related to health and safety.

Next, the Committee considered what the Trust was doing to improve its health and safety arrangements. Dr Healey noted that the report provided data on the Trust's current position and the work being done by the Health and Safety Team, but suggested this could be expanded in future reports to include work being done by the Trust collectively. Similarly, Mr Henry noted that the report could also be expanded to include targets for the future and detail the work which had been conducted to achieve these targets. Mr Campbell explained that it was hoped that the Health and Safety Workplan for 2023-24 included in the report would help

address these points, as updates for the actions contained within the Workplan would be regularly reported to the Audit Committee.

The Committee next discussed the issue of benchmarking the data contained within the report with other Trusts. The Committee noted that the report stated that this was difficult due to differences in the way this data was recorded by other organisations. The Committee supported the plan raised in the report to attain independent advisor audits to highlight the main issues faced by the Trust based on issues which had been identified at other organisations. Mr Wright pointed out that a number of issues which had been identified in a previous Health and Safety Executive inspection had not been resolved. Mrs Hanwell clarified that these actions were now linked with the Security Management Internal Audit Workplan and that the actions would now be completed as part of this work.

The Committee agreed that the report should be presented at the 30 November 2023 public Board of Directors meeting. The Committee requested that the report should be updated to include some descriptions of specific violence and aggression incidents ahead of this meeting. It also agreed that the ongoing issue of violence and aggression would be raised as part of the Chair's report that would be presented at the private Board of Directors meeting on 30 November 2023.

DH /
JC

The Committee **received** and **discussed** the contents of the Health and Safety Annual Report 2022-23. It was satisfied with the amendments which had been made to the report and **agreed** that the report should be circulated for discussion at the 30 November 2023 Board of Directors meeting.

23/117 Health and Safety Quarterly Update – Quarter 2 2023-24 (agenda item 6)

The Committee received the Health and Safety Quarterly update. It noted that the number of Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) reportable incidents and the number of reported Lost Time Incidents (LTI) had both decreased significantly compared with figures reported in previous quarterly updates. Mr Campbell confirmed to the Committee that these figures were correct, and that he would seek an explanation as to what had caused this improvement in the figures and then add this narrative to the report.

DH/JC

Dr Healey suggested that the reduction in RIDDOR reportable incidents could be correlated with data on the number of staff on sick leave as a result of a violence and aggression incident in the workplace. Mrs Hanwell additionally pointed out to the Committee that sickness absence statistics would only cover employees of the Trust, and that incidents involving agency and bank staff would therefore not be reflected in this data. Mr Campbell confirmed that he would investigate this matter further.

Mr Henry highlighted the "Datix Incidents by Type" bar chart included in Appendix B of the report. He requested that the chart should be amended so that each fiscal year should have a separate entry on the X-axis of the chart which would allow an easier comparison of the data. Mr Campbell agreed that he would make this amendment in future quarterly reports.

JC

The Committee **received** the Health and Safety Quarterly Update and **discussed** its contents. It **noted** that the number of RIDDOR reportable incidents had decreased significantly compared with previous Quarterly Update reports and requested an explanation for this improvement to be provided.

23/118 Cumulative Action Log (agenda item 4)

The Committee revisited the cumulative action log following the presentation of the Health and Safety reports. It noted that action 176 was complete. It then discussed action 161 which related to the defining of the scope of “Health and Safety” and action 162 which related to deciding which elements included in the Health and Safety Quarterly Update reports should be reported to the Workforce Committee, and Finance and Performance Committee for assurance. Mrs Hanwell noted that the clarification of what incidents were considered RIDDOR reportable incidents, especially incidents involving service users, would aid the completion of both these actions. The Committee noted this update and agreed that action 161 and 162 remained ongoing.

The Committee was **assured** with the progress made on the actions within the cumulative action log and **agreed** on which actions should be closed.

23/118 Key Messages and Any Matters to be Escalated to the Board (agenda item 7)

Mr Wright noted that he would raise the following updates at the next Board meeting:

- The Committee received and discussed the contents of the amended Health and Safety Annual Report 2022-23.
- The Committee agreed that the ongoing issue of the number of violence and aggression incidents experienced by staff working at the Trust would be raised for further discussion at the private Board meeting.
- The Committee received the Health and Safety Update for Quarter 2 of the 2023-24 financial year and noted its contents.

23/119 Any Other Business (agenda item 8)

The Committee did not discuss any other business.

Mr Wright thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 11:45am

Date and time of next meeting:

Tuesday 16 January 2024 at 9:30am until 12:30pm