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| Agenda item: | 6 |
| Date of meeting: | 24 September 2025 |
| Report to the: | Group Trust Board |
| Title of report: | Chief Executive report |
| Report authors: | Sarah Feal, Company Secretary and Freedom to Speak Up Guardian Vicky Brooke and Lea Fountain, Trust communications leads |
| Executive sponsor: | Matthew Winn, Chief Executive Officer |
| Recommendation: | Approve |
| | The Winter Planning Board Assurance Statements |

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| Assurance level: | Substantial <input type="checkbox"/> Reasonable <input type="checkbox"/> Partial <input type="checkbox"/> Minimal <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Rationale: | Not Applicable. |

1.0 Executive Summary

The Trusts have embarked on the seasonal flu campaign to protect our staff and section 6.1.1. sets out why flu vaccination is so important. One of the reasons to protect the population and staff is to minimise the risk of our urgent healthcare services being swamped. To ensure the Trusts are in the best position to support patients and our health and care partners this winter, the Board is asked to sign off the two winter plans (as detailed in 6.3.1 and shown in the annexes).

NHS England has published two key elements of its oversight arrangements for NHS statutory providers. Firstly, a self-assessment of Board capability (as detailed in section 6.2.1), which the Board will develop in detail over the next six weeks and secondly national performance ratings of all NHS providers (as detailed in section 6.1.2). Both Trusts are positioned in the top quadrant of performance in the published league tables, which is satisfying to note, but comes with the expectation that high performing organisations should stretch themselves further and take on further responsibilities in the systems in which they operate. The Board will be discussing this “stretch” as part of the clinical and care strategy development and planning for 2026/27.

Finally, the report also details changes to Board and committee membership (section 6.3.2 and 6.3.3) and in the last section many of the great initiatives and developments happening across both organisations.

2.0 How the report supports tackling Health Inequalities

Focused flu vaccination support improvements in health inequalities in our population and staff group (section 6.1.1).

3.0 Links to Board Assurance Framework / Trust(s) Risk and Issue Registers

There are none identified.

4.0 Legal and Regulatory requirements

The sections on the NHS oversight framework will underpin the regulatory work of NHS England (sections 6.1.2 and 6.2.1).

5.0 Previous consideration by Committee or Executive

16 July 2025, Chief Executive's Report – Group Trust Board.

6.0 Report

6.1 National Updates

6.1.1 Campaign to vaccinate all frontline healthcare staff

Flu vaccination is one of the best tools the NHS has, to protect the health of our patients and staff, easing winter pressures and reducing the risk of avoidable disruption to our services. Last winter in England, there were 7,757 deaths from flu with 340,000 hospital bed days taken up by patients admitted because of flu. The vaccine is estimated to have prevented between 96,000 and 120,200 people from being hospitalised.

Uptake from staff vaccination has declined steadily year on year – falling from 74% in 2019/20 to just 37.8% in 2024/25 across the NHS. Our vaccination rates last year were 45.8% for CCS and 41.1% for NCH&C.

In line with advice to the Government from the independent Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation, COVID-19 will not be part of our frontline healthcare staff vaccination offer.

Our staff flu campaign commences on **1 October 2025** and runs to **31 March 2026**. The Group Trust Board will be invited to receive their vaccine on 22 October 2025 if they have not had it elsewhere and vaccination rates for our staff will be reported in Board reports during this period.

6.1.2 NHS oversight framework

NHS England has published the [NHS providers performance league tables](#) for the first time in the current structure. All organisations are judged by specific domains that are common to all and organisations providing care in specific care sectors then have data and performance specific to them. The data will be updated and published quarterly, but the domains/performance data structure will not be altered in year.

Organisations are ranked into a league table under four quadrants with one being the best and four showing the worst performers.

Both Trusts are in quadrant one and therefore judged as performing well compared to their peers. The performance ranking will become increasingly important, as coupled with the oversight framework (referenced next), the flexibility and freedoms that NHS trusts will be operate with will be determined by the combination of their self-assessment ratings and league table position.

The Board will see the national oversight ranking incorporated into the Board reporting from November 2025 as part of the information it can draw assurance from to undertake its' responsibilities.

6.2 **Regional Matters**

6.2.1 NHS Oversight Framework – Assessing Provider Capability

NHS England has developed an approach to [assessing provider capability](#) which forms part of the NHS Oversight Framework. This is intended to both strengthen board assurance and help regional oversight teams take a view of boards' grip and awareness of the challenges their organisations face and their track record of addressing them.

Boards must self-assess across six key areas, derived from the 'Insightful Provider Board' concept:

1. Strategy, leadership and planning
2. Quality of care
3. People and culture
4. Access and delivery of services
5. Productivity and value for money
6. Financial performance and oversight

The Board will be discussing the framework in October, as well as the aligned "well led" framework from the Care Quality Commission, to enable us to submit as response to NHS England at the end of the month. The Board cycle will then include a refreshing of the Board self-certification on an annual basis and oversight of actions that we will agree to improve our effectiveness.

6.3 Matters related to our Trust(s)

6.3.1 Winter Planning 2025-26

Trusts will not be required to return winter plans to NHS England or to follow any templated approach. Instead, individual Boards are asked to sign off their own winter plans assuring themselves, and the public they serve, that the requirements set out in the Urgent and Emergency Care Delivery Plan have been addressed and provide that onward assurance to NHS England via a Board Assurance Statement.

The Group Trust Board is asked to **approve** the Assurance Statements for both Trust(s).

6.3.2 Board changes

Since the Board last met, we have given a fond farewell to Carolyn Fowler, the Director of Nursing at NCHC and Andrew Hopkins, Executive Director of Finance and Performance at NCHC. We thank both colleagues for the dedication to the organisation over many years and wish them well for the future.

Welcome to new Non-Executives

We are pleased that Mani Sharma and Charlotte Black have joined the Board as non-executive directors and that Jayne Sharma will join us on 1 October 2025, as an Associate Non-Executive Director.

6.3.3 Group Governance Manual

Following a six month review of our Governance Manual, since the joint Board has been in operation, no substantive changes are required to be made to the manual. The Group Trust Chair has completed a review of committee membership, which has been updated as per the table below with effect from **15 October 2025**:

| Committees | NEDs | Execs (lead Exec in bold) |
|--|--|--|
| Charitable Funds Committee | John Kennedy (Chair) Lynda Thomas | Chief Finance & Resources Officer Director of Corporate Affairs |
| Remuneration Committee (Committee in Common) | John Kennedy (Chair - SID) Njoki Yaxley Lynda Thomas | Chief Executive Officer & Chief People Officer (in attendance) Trust Secretary |
| Audit & Risk Committee (Committee in Common) | John Kennedy (Chair) David Crawford Anna Gill (QC Chair) | Chief Finance & Resources Officer Director of Corporate Affairs |
| People Participation & Equalities Group (Advisory Group) | Njoki Yaxley (Chair), Anna Gill | Chief Nurse Chief People Officer |
| Finance & Infrastructure Committee (Joint) | Mani Sharma (Chair), David Crawford Jayne Sharma | Chief Finance & Resources Officer Chief Information Officer Director of Strategy & Transformation |
| Quality Committee (In Common) | Anna Gill (Chair) Charlotte Black Njoki Yaxley | Chief Nurse , Chief Medical Officer, Deputy Chief Executive Officer |
| Children & Young Peoples | Anna Gill (Chair), Mani Sharma | Chief Medical Officer , Director of Strategy & Transformation |
| Luton & Bedfordshire Adults & Ambulatory | Charlotte Black (Chair) David Crawford | Deputy Chief Executive Officer , Chief Nurse, |
| Norfolk Adult Services | Anna Gill (Chair) Njoki Yaxley Jayne Sharma | Chief Medical Officer, Chief Executive Officer , Chief Nurse |

Committee effectiveness reviews and development sessions have been planned as part of our normal cycle of business and in line with good governance principles.

The Group Trust Board is asked to **note** the membership.

6.4 Update on our communication activity across both organisations

Providing great local health and care

Creating our new values and clinical and care strategy

Work is underway to develop a new strategy and values which will guide the work of the new Trust.

Engagement with the strategy and our values is progressing well. Patient groups are being involved through our co-production teams. Staff have also been getting involved through team engagement sessions, leadership events and equality network sessions.

Over the coming weeks, we'll continue to engage as many people as possible through facilitated sessions at team meetings, staff network meetings and other forums, as well as engagement with patients and carers. The strategy will be completed later this year.

Creating an identity for our new Trust

We've launched an engagement exercise around the name of our new Trust. All staff have received a survey link to vote for their preferred option. Discussions are also being held with patient groups.

We will take the most popular name (as voted) and work with the Department of Health and Social Care for final approval, so it can become the name of our new Trust in April.

Winter planning and resilience

As part of our proactive approach to keeping staff and patients safe during the winter months, attention is already moving to how we can support our communities and partner organisations in this pressured time of year.

NCH&C's infection control and prevention team has been running a series of one-hour, in-person training sessions across multiple sites in July. These sessions are designed to equip teams with the knowledge, tools and confidence they need to manage winter-specific infection prevention and control (IPAC) challenges effectively.

Community outreach

Our teams have been out in our communities to raise awareness of the services we provide and encourage people to access support where they need it. This has included our sexual health teams reaching out to students during Freshers Week, palliative care teams taking part in a Living Well Day in partnership with Norfolk and

Norwich University Hospitals NHS FT), a Wound Infection Roadshow by the tissue viability team and community sessions in Beds and Luton.

Advice and guidance

Through media and social media, we've been sharing information to support people to look after the health and wellbeing of themselves and their families. This has included summer safety (how to stay safe in the sun, around water etc), back to school advice (such as healthy packed lunch ideas, dealing with separation anxiety and road safety), how to avoid accidents around the home, how to look after your health during a heatwave, encouraging vaccines (for flu, COVID and measles as well as building awareness of the upcoming chickenpox vaccination programme), and supporting national campaigns around blood pressure campaign, pharmacy services, the NHS app, smoking cessation and World Breastfeeding Week.

Dreamdrops events for children

The CCS-linked charity Dreamdrops (which supports children in Huntingdonshire) has been busy running a range of summer activities. One of its roles includes running the Collins Club which provides days out for families with autistic children and in the last few weeks it has organised lots of summer activities including an adventure day with archery, climbing and canoeing; a fishing day; and a boat trip – [you can read about the events here](#). The charity will be celebrating its 20-year anniversary with a black-tie event at Huntingdon Town Hall on 20 September.

Collaboration with partners

MSK community events

Following the success of our first Community Appointment Days earlier this year, Norfolk and Waveney Community Musculoskeletal Services (MSK) hosted two more events at the Norfolk Showground on 9 and 10 September.

NoW MSK, launched in April 2024, is a collaboration between NCH&C and East Coast Community Healthcare (ECCH) to deliver a unified approach to MSK services across the region.

More than 700 patients were invited to meet the team, share their concerns, and receive tailored support, advice and exercise plans to help them stay active and well.

Collaborating with schools for the Norfolk Healthy Child Service

We have been working with schools across Norfolk to raise awareness of the services available for 5- to 19-year-olds across the area, and up to 24 for those with additional needs.

We've shared more information about what the service is, how it works and how to find out more. The team, led by school nurses, works closely with children, young people and their families, playing a pivotal role in enhancing their health and wellbeing through. They can support in identifying children's needs, signposting appropriate services and targeted evidence-based interventions.

SEND festival in Cambridgeshire

In July we took part in the second annual SEND festival. The event in St Ives was for young people (14 to 25 years) with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families, Cambridgeshire schools and professionals. Tracy Whitwell, SEND Transition Lead and Kathy Unwin, Children's Complex Specialist Nurse spoke about the need and advantages of annual health checks and hospital passports. Tracy said she "was grateful for the opportunity to raise awareness that the checks help identify potential health problems early, allowing for timely intervention and support."

Spotlight on NCH&C's Post-COVID Assessment Service

NCH&C's Post-COVID Assessment Service was featured by the BBC, highlighting the life-changing support it provides to people living with long COVID. The coverage included powerful stories from patients such as Deborah Caitens-Smith and Mary Hines, who described the physical, emotional and professional toll of the condition.

With over 4,800 people seen so far, the service offers personalised care, expert guidance and access to innovative programmes that help patients manage symptoms and rebuild their lives.

Read the article on BBC News: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c8jgzkvz42eo>

Celebrating two years at Priscilla Bacon Lodge

On 8 September, Priscilla Bacon Lodge (PBL) at Colney marked two years since welcoming its first patient. PBL has become a place shaped by community, compassion and collaboration. Over the past two years, our teams have continued to deliver high-quality palliative and end-of-life care.

An exciting development at PBL has been the creation of the Living Well Community Hub, which provides outpatient support for people living with life-limiting conditions. The hub is delivered in partnership between NCH&C and the Priscilla Bacon Hospice Charity.

Peterborough Children in Care Team

On 1 August the Peterborough Children in Care Team have transferred over to CCS from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS FT (CPFT). This adds to the service that is already provided by CCS in Cambridgeshire. Five staff members have been affected and supported through the change.

Valuing our people

Defence Employer Recognition Scheme

CCS has been awarded [Gold Award from the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme](#). This is a fantastic achievement that recognises our ongoing commitment to supporting the armed forces community, including reservists, veterans, and their families. A lot of work sits behind helping us reach this milestone, which reflects the inclusive and supportive culture we strive for.

Staff awarded title of Queen's Nurse

Donna Clements, Research Nurse at NCH&C, has been awarded the title of Queen's Nurse and will receive her award at a ceremony in London in November. This title recognises Donna's research contributions to community nursing across the Trust.

Staff award winners at CCS and NCH&C

Judging has taken place for the NCH&C REACH Awards. We received 315 nominations, which have been shortlisted to 28 finalists and 10 highly commended entries. Winners will be announced at the awards ceremony on 25 September.

NCH&C's latest STAR of Recognition winners have been announced on The Loop. The most recent STAR of the Month award went to:

Helen Nku, Head of Integrated Care in South Place, was awarded STAR of the Month for July. Helen was chosen for "holding the team together like glue" and for continually going above and beyond. "Helen is instrumental in managing and keeping all the teams safe and supported."

South Asian Heritage Month

From 17 July to 18 August, we celebrated South Asian Heritage Month.

The theme for this year's South Asian Heritage Month was "Roots to Routes" – exploring the rich journeys and connections people have through migration and movement and how this impacts their identity, heritage, community and legacy. As well as sharing stories, stalls were held across the patch to share more about the cultures, histories and people connected with South Asia.

HSJ Staff Wellbeing Award

CCS has been shortlisted for the HSJ Staff Wellbeing Award. The award recognised the work happening within the group to create an inclusive, flexible and supportive workplace for all our people. Winners will be announced in November.

Secure our future through innovation

Work continues in Building Trust

We held Group Briefings in July and August to update staff on developments across the Group and give colleagues an opportunity to ask questions. Over 500 staff from both Trusts attended the live sessions, which saw a good level of engagement. Recordings are available for staff to watch on demand.

Improving Back Office Services Through Digital

NCH&C, as part of the Norfolk and Waveney Procurement Collaboration played a key role in a ground-breaking project that won the 'Improving Back Office Services Through Digital' category at the HSJ Digital Awards 2025. The award recognises the successful rollout of the Enhanced Purchase to Pay (EP2P) solution. This innovative programme has established a new national benchmark for procurement and finance services across the NHS.

International spotlight on virtual wards

A 30-minute programme about our virtual wards and rapid response service has been shared on a German/French online TV channel ARTde. The programme has been viewed 21k times and highlights how the service is helping keep people out of hospital. The producers approached us to take a deeper look at what is happening in the NHS – due to a series of negative headlines about our healthcare in European media. Comments on the piece included: “Something like this would also be a good measure to relieve the burden on our emergency services in Germany. It would be good to see more home visits from doctors or nurses. The fact that home visits are better, especially for older people, isn't just true in Great Britain, and the fact that they're cheaper for the healthcare system could also be true in Germany. A great documentary and a good example for the healthcare system, even if, in Great Britain's case, it was born out of scarcity.”

AI physiotherapy app trial

A successful [trial of a new AI-powered physiotherapy clinic by our Dynamic Health service](#) - which provides same-day appointments for back pain via a smartphone app - has more than halved waiting lists for back pain in its first large-scale deployment in England.

Created using video footage of a human physiotherapist, the pioneering digital clinic can offer NHS patients personalised treatment for back pain at a population scale, with zero waitlist, in a setting which feels like a video call with a physiotherapist.

The service has been covered by [BBC News](#), [The Guardian](#), [Trend Watching](#), [Health Tech World](#), [Healthcare Management](#), [The News International](#), [Cambs Times](#), [Cambridge Independent](#), [Peterborough Matters](#), [Digital Health](#), [Technology Magazine](#) and [Digital Watch Observatory](#). [AI Magazine](#) and featured on [BBC Look East](#) and [Youtuber The Chatty Tree](#)

Former BBC tech journalist Rory Cellan-Jones, who now writes a health focused tech blog, wrote in his [Always On Newsletter](#) “..if there is any project that embodies the principles of Wes Streeting's 10 year plan for the NHS, with its emphasis on moving care out of the outpatients' department and into the community, it is Cambridgeshire's experiment with app based treatment for back pain.”

Tackling waiting times in Speech and Language Therapy

The CCS model of Speech and Language Therapy delivery has just been published in a [retention and waiting times report](#) by the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapy. The report was commissioned by NHS England. Details of the successful work in CCS feature on pages 5 and 6 of the [“How services are tackling waiting times” appendix](#).

Funding awarded for new electric vehicle chargers

[NCH&C has been awarded £92,184 through the NHS Chargepoint Accelerator Scheme](#). The funding will cover hardware and installation of 22 charge points at sites across the Trust, specifically for NHS-owned or leased vehicles. This scheme is a joint initiative from the Department for Transport and the Department of Health and Social Care.

Celebrating QI Week

Across our group we have been celebrating Quality Improvement (QI) Week through a series of events and showcases of activity within our teams. The aim is to recognise the work done so far and inspire others to seek opportunities to innovate and improve.

CAHPO Award shortlisting

Three staff members from CCS have made the shortlist in the Chief Allied Health Professions Officer (CAHPO) Awards for AHP Workforce Transformation. Aisha Raja, Louise Surridge and Alice Daws have been recognised for their project responding to post-pandemic referral surges. The project streamlined service delivery and created a framework to enhance career progression, job satisfaction and staff retention.