

NHS 24 BOARD MEETING		02 MARCH 2023 ITEM NO 10.4 FOR ASSURANCE	
NHS 24 MID-YEAR REVIEW 2022/23			
Executive Sponsor:		NHS 24 Board Chair	
Lead Officer/Author:		Board Secretary	
Action Required		The Board is asked to formally note the outcome of the NHS 24 Mid-Year Review 2022/23.	
Key Points for this Committee to consider		<p>The NHS 24 Mid-Year Review 2022/23 took place on 5 December 2022 via Microsoft Teams video conference. The format of the session focused on Finance, Workforce, the Mental Health Hub, Current Performance, Working from Home, and Winter Pressures, in line with the Board's current resilience and strategic plans.</p> <p>The Cabinet Secretary letter to the NHS 24 Board Chair and Chief Executive which details the outcome of the NHS 24 Mid-Year Review 2022/23 is attached and contains an overview of the topics discussed.</p>	
Governance process		This paper is for Board assurance only.	
Strategic alignment and link to overarching NHS Scotland priorities and strategies		This paper is for Board assurance only.	
Key Risks		There are no key risks associated with this paper.	
Financial Implications		There are no financial implications associated with this paper.	
Equality and Diversity		There are no equality and diversity implications associated with this paper.	

1. RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 The Board is asked to formally note the outcome of the NHS 24 Mid-Year Review 2022/23.

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NHS 24 Chair and Chief Executive

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23 January 2023

NHS 24 – Mid-Year Review 2022/23

I am writing to you following the NHS 24 Mid-Year Review held via Microsoft Teams on 5 December 2022. Please accept our apologies for the delay in responding to you. I would like to record my thanks to you and everyone who was involved in the preparations for this Review.

In line with your Annual Review, in-person Reviews have not proved possible this year but nonetheless, this remains an important part of the accountability process for the NHS. I was supported in the meeting by the Director of Primary Care, Tim McDonnell and relevant policy officials from the Primary Care Directorate.

The agenda for this year's review focused on Finance, Workforce, the Mental Health Hub, Current Performance, Working from Home and Winter Pressures, in line with the Board's current resilience and strategic plans.

This letter summarises the main points discussed and the actions arising from the Review.

FINANCE

You provided a helpful update on your current financial position. Despite the current financial pressures we are facing across the system, you are forecasting an underspend of around £2.5m this year which will be returned to the Scottish Government leaving you with a final break-even position for the year. You confirmed that this was mainly due to challenges with recruitment meaning you were required to re-baseline your recruitment targets accordingly.

As we move towards the 2023/24 financial year we will continue to work closely with all NHS boards, including NHS 24, to address the financial pressures facing the system, whilst ensuring that patient safety remains the key priority.

WORKFORCE

You provided a helpful update on the new initiatives that NHS 24 is undertaking in order to expand, improve and maintain the wellbeing of its workforce. You noted that recruitment has been challenging, and that many of the obstacles faced are both site-specific and role-specific. You presented a range of initiatives that the Service has implemented, including the Blended Roles Test

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of Change programme and the recent shift reviews in order to improve recruitment processes and attract talented and skilled staff across the organisation.

I would also like to highlight the progress in removal of technological barriers to allow clinical supervisor staff to participate in a Hybrid Working Test of Change programme. This is a very exciting and innovative area, and I am pleased to hear about the early positive feedback from staff involved in this programme. I would also like to hear more about how patient safety, confidentiality and staff wellbeing are maintained during this programme as it progresses and I look forward to seeing a full evaluation when available.

I am aware of the current workload pressures on NHS 24 due to increasing demand as a result of Covid-19, seasonal flu and Strep A. The resilience and staff wellbeing of the workforce is key, and I was pleased to see that this remains at the forefront of your planning with an increased focus on improving sickness absence and staff wellbeing.

You spoke of the challenges of measuring clinical effectiveness, noting that this is a combination of demand and capacity, WTE and average handling time. I would like to be sighted on the metrics used to measure NHS 24's clinical effectiveness and any performance data that helps to illustrate this performance when it becomes available.

MENTAL HEALTH HUB

As I reflected at our meeting, I was able to hear more about developments within the Mental Health Hub at my recent visit to the Lumina Centre in Glasgow on 25 November. The volume of work undertaken by the Mental Health Hub was very clear, and reflected the work you have done to reduce call waiting times and call abandonment rates. It is evident that this is an extremely important and effective service to provide to the people of Scotland.

You also highlighted the positive impact that Psychological Wellbeing Practitioners (PWP) have made within the Service, including in the staff wellbeing space, which is extremely important for NHS 24 in order to continue providing a high-quality service. I note it has been difficult for the Service to recruit PWP in the past but I was pleased to hear of the significant progress in recruitment.

PERFORMANCE

Current performance against key measurables reflect the incredible pressure the Service is currently facing, and I am aware that it is challenging to meet targets that were originally devised prior to the pandemic, given the significant developments in service delivery over the past two years. However, I note the clear focus on not only improving call waiting times but also enhancing patient experience, including reducing patient journey time through the Service and ensuring calls are closed at first point of contact.

You outlined your initiatives to help improve abandonment rates and call waiting times, including the Virtual Queueing Test of Change (ToC) and I am keen to see the feedback and data for this ToC when available.

I am aware discussions are on-going with your sponsor team about how we can better monitor performance and service improvements moving forward, more aligned to patient outcomes and the significantly different service delivery model now being provided by the Service following the impacts of Covid-19 and the re-design of unscheduled care. I expect to see further detail on a revised performance and monitoring framework in the coming months as we move towards the new reporting year.

WINTER PRESSURES

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I would like to acknowledge the preparatory work that was done on winter planning and thank everyone involved for their input.

We discussed at our meeting the challenges we were already starting to see in terms of increased demand at the beginning of December and the likelihood that this demand would continue to increase as a result of Covid, seasonal illnesses and the emergence of Strep A.

Our predictions were obviously correct with the Service experiencing record demand levels over December and into January and particularly over the festive holiday period. I am aware how challenging a period this was for the Service and would like to convey my thanks to you and all NHS 24 staff for the dedication and professionalism you have shown during this period.

A lot of planning went into ensuring you were able to continue to provide a safe and effective service to patients during this period and as we start to see demand starting to ease slightly, I know you will now be looking to reflect on the challenges encountered and take forward any learning.

CONCLUSION

I am very grateful for your ongoing efforts to ensure resilience and performance over what continues to be a challenging winter for our health services.

We will continue to keep the discussion points raised today under close review and to provide as much support as possible

KEY ACTION SUMMARY

- Performance data from the Test of Change for Hybrid Working to be made available to the Cabinet Secretary
- Detail on metrics measuring clinical effectiveness to be made available to Cabinet Secretary
- Primary Care to share data on GP appointment availability with Cabinet Secretary
- Test of Change Virtual Queueing data to be provided to the Cabinet Secretary



HUMZA YOUSAF

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