

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

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Chair
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Dear Colleague,

It is astonishing to think that COVID-19 has been with us for over a year. Throughout all that time, our staff have been incredible. Thanks to their dedication and because they are working so effectively together, we have not had to stop a single service. There remain high numbers of people using our services, and we expect the number of people seeking mental health support to rise in coming months.

Leadership and Staffing

As you know, Jonathan Warren has retired as CEO, leaving the Trust on course to achieve our ambition of being in the top quarter of mental health trusts nationally for safety and quality by 2023. I look forward to welcoming Dr Adam Morris when he joins us as interim Chief Executive in May for six months. Another senior appointment is Kathryn Ellis, who will join us as Director of Strategy and Partnerships on a 12-month secondment from 26 April. Permanent CEO recruitment will begin during the week beginning 19 April, moving to ensure a stable leadership on the Board by the end of year. As my term as Chair comes to an end in December, we are also starting to talk about the process to appoint my successor.

There is clear evidence that improved staff experience improves the experience and outcomes of service users. Our staff survey results have seen an improvement, with four of the ten key areas showing significant improvement. The independent analysis of the survey says we are the sixth most improved mental health trust in the country. While pleased with this progress, we recognise we have more to do and have clear plans in place. Our Culture Change programme is looking at ways to achieve our People Plan mission of being in the top quarter for mental health and learning disability trusts for staff engagement and experience by 2023. Our new 'Leading Confidently' programme for our staff is directly linked to our values of positively, respectfully, together. We shall be training more than 600 staff over the next 12 months. Caring for people who care for others is vitally important, which is why we have increased wellbeing support for staff as they cope with the added pressures of the pandemic. This has included setting up a dedicated helpline, which we have also rolled out to other health and care staff across Norfolk and Suffolk and to our partners in the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector.

Children, families and young people

The rise in referrals for children has continued. This reflects an increase in reported self-harm and complexity. The safeguarding team is supporting child and family teams to work with our acute hospital colleagues and social care to support young people and children. Children, Families and Young People (CFYP) remains an area where we must do better. Work continued throughout this last year to find ways to see and treat people more effectively. Waiting lists for assessment have reduced by 17% (120 people) in Norfolk and by 16% (44) in Suffolk over the past three months. This is on top of managing high numbers of referrals each month. While it has been tough, our staff have been making sure that we regularly check each person who has been referred.

Other projects we are delivering to support mental wellbeing include:

- People with learning disabilities who need inpatient care are enjoying state-of-the art facilities, after refurbishment of the bungalows at Walker Close, Ipswich, was completed.

- Staff working in a specialist memory service, which takes referrals from the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital, have reduced their waiting list from 425 patients to 65 in just six months, using a new telephone triage system.
- Our [new Trust website](#) has a clear, simple design and more accessible format so that people are able to access information and participate much more easily

Here is a summary of other areas of our performance:

- In the six months to January, vacancy rates rose from 17.9% to 23.3% for qualified staff. The recent appointment of 22 University of Suffolk students should improve this percentage. Additionally, we have recruited seven registered nurses from overseas, with additional funding from NHSE for 16 more nurses. Support-staff vacancies reduced from 12.1% in October 2020, to 9.4% in January 2021. Overall, vacancies are below the Trust target. Medical vacancies have risen slightly to 13.2% (34 vacancies). This is much lower than early 2020 when more than one in four posts were vacant.
- Improving Access to Psychological Therapies services have achieved the recovery and reliable improvement targets for the past 12 months. Access to wellbeing services remain below target.
- Out of Area Placements (OAP) for adult mental health services are showing ongoing improvement since October 2020. Total OAP bed days are reducing across Norfolk through proactive management, and better collaboration between service users, care teams and the Out of Area Matron. Delayed Transfer of Care is below the 7.5% threshold at 3.4%. More improvements for bed management are planned. We have created capacity for 20 new beds and expect OAP rates to lessen further over time.
- Clinicians continue to look after as many people as possible. Emergency and routine wait assessments are under target. However, using telephone assessments, in line with COVID-19 precautions, improves emergency performance to 81%.
- The numbers of those waiting for treatment longer than 18 weeks has fallen since July. There were 527 people waiting at the end of January. All those waiting are being contacted regularly.
- During January and February, 78 complaints were received – down from 87 the previous two months. All complaints are being investigated with support from the newly re-formed Customer Service Team with a service user led initiative to resolve complaints informally at the point of care
- Staff have reduced restrictive interventions to pre-COVID levels; work to sustain this reduction will be monitored through the Reducing Restrictive Interventions Committee.
- In Suffolk, 25% of people under 19 with an eating disorder received NICE-approved treatment within one week for urgent cases and 50% within four weeks for routine. Referrals are increasing, which is impacting on service delivery. In Norfolk & Waveney, the same metric was 76.2% for urgent cases and 65.8% within four weeks for routine cases (below the national target of 95%). Performance has been affected by COVID-19; there was a drop in referrals in February.

Looking forward in partnership

We have been working with our colleagues in NHS, social care and voluntary and community sector in Norfolk and Suffolk. Plans over the next year broadly aim to see more support for people with long-term conditions and serious mental health issues in the community. They will also see us link our popular First Response Service to 111 to offer mental health triage for those who need urgent help.

I hope that you found this useful. If you have any further queries, please do write to me using my email address: marie.gabriel1@nhs.net My telephone number is 07507 869 969.

Yours sincerely



Marie Gabriel CBE
Trust Chair, NSFT