

Agenda item:	6
Date of meeting:	20 May 2026
Report to the:	Trust Board
Title of report:	Chief Executive Officer's Report
Report authors:	Sarah Feal, Company Secretary and Freedom to Speak Up Guardian Vicky Brooke, Associate Director of Marketing, Communications and Engagement Lea Fountain, Associate Director of Communications
Executive sponsor:	Matthew Winn, Chief Executive Officer
Recommendation:	Approve
Appendix A	Modern slavery and human trafficking statement for 2026-27

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 report details in section 6.1 national publications/initiatives that are important to the trust. Changes are being made to the national Guardians' office, that does not affect how we support Freedom to speak up activity but moves the responsibility to the Trust board to publish and assure ourselves of the arrangements. The Trust will action the outcomes in the other national publications concerning neighbourhood estate, community health waiting lists and the application of the public health grant.

Section 6.2 and 6.3 focus on issues impacting the Trust.

The Board will have discussed proposals to activate our application to be an Advanced Foundation Trust in private and the outcome will be discussed in the public Board meeting.

The Board is asked to note the activity undertaken to merge the legacy organisations (section 6.3.1) and support the reporting of harmonisation processes through normal strategy reporting into the Board. Additionally, Trusts are required to detail their work in a **Modern slavery and human trafficking statement and the Board is asked to approve our statement, as set out in Appendix A**. Finally on issues impacting our Trusts, section 6.3.3. sets out our approach to undertake our part of the national review of nursing profiles. This process has some morale, operational and financial risks and as these become clearer, this will start to show in our workforce, operational and financial analysis at committee and Board levels.

The reports in the first section of the Board meeting are annual reviews of our Freedom to speak up arrangements and impact on equality, diversity and inclusion. Coupled with the bi-annual people priorities update, they are important sources of information and perspectives for the Board to know how well our staff are being supported and equipped to undertake their vital roles.

The Integrated Governance and performance report covers the final two months of last financial year and includes the feedback from the three Services Assurance Committees.

The Trusts/group ended the year with planned balanced financial position; staffing outcomes (appraisal, sickness etc) were consistent, with sickness levels still too high, hence it is major focus in our people priorities for this year. Performance and quality outcomes at a headline level are good, hence our national regulatory rating in the best quadrant. However there remains issues in five service areas with unacceptable long waits and quality issues in the community nursing and therapy services in Norfolk. These quality and performance issues all have active plans to remedy and the Service Assurance Committees are fully sighted on this work. The Board will receive updates and should seek assurance throughout the year on the impact of the mitigation actions.

Finally in the Board pack is the feedback from the latest Audit and Risk Committee and the current Board assurance framework, which the Board need to affirm reflects our current risk profile and be assured on the actions to mitigate these risks.

2.0 How the report supports tackling Health Inequalities

Not explicitly covered.

3.0 Links to Board Assurance Framework / Trust Risk and Issue Register

Many of the themes in the report impact our ability to provide high quality care and deliver our clinical and care strategy and therefore have an indirect link to many of the risks continued in the Board assurance framework – as set out tin agenda item 12 in the Board meeting.

Section 6.3.3.sets out emerging risks connected to the review of nursing profiles and will be reflected in the relevant risks within the trust risk register.

4.0 Legal and Regulatory requirements

- Modern Slavery Act 2015

5.0 Previous consideration by Committee or Executive

18 March 2026, Chief Executive's Report – Group Trust Board.

1st April 2026 – Trust Board

6.0 Report

6.1 National Updates

6.1.1 National Guardian's Office

[Revised responsibilities of Freedom to Speak Up](#) have been published, ahead of the National Guardian's Office closing in June. From 1 July 2026, NHS England will deliver some activities previously undertaken by the National Guardian's Office.

The Trust will be responsible for embedding effective Freedom to Speak Up arrangements, reporting the outcomes and ensuring an open/transparent reporting culture.

The Board will see the assurance of this approach in the annual staff survey report; board director feedback from staff when they undertake back to the floor visits; detail of the annual FTSU report (and non-executive champion challenge) and any external inspection approaches, that will always test out this speaking up culture.

6.1.2 Community health services waiting lists

NHS England has published guidance and detail on [community health waiting lists](#). The [NHS oversight framework](#) includes a community health service waiting times delivery metric and the [Medium term planning framework](#) sets a national ambition for 80% of community health service waits to be less than 18 weeks by the end of 2028/29, with systems also expected to have clear plans to eliminate waits of more than 52 weeks.

The Trust will incorporate these into its reporting and reflect the updated metrics in the first reporting cycle of 2026/7

6.1.3 Neighbourhood health centres

Neighbourhood health centres (NHCs) support the NHS shift towards prevention, early intervention and more integrated care delivered closer to home.

The NHS England [Neighbourhood health centre guidance](#) for regions and integrated care boards sets out the practical planning instructions for developing NHCs in the current planning period. The Neighbourhood health centres: design and performance

specification supports the planning and delivery of new-build neighbourhood health centres

The Trust will use this guidance as it develops sites in each of its geographies, in collaboration with partners and Integrated Care Boards. The Trust' finance and infrastructure committee will see the detail, as it considers business cases to be recommended to the Board for approval.

6.1.4 Public Health grant for 2026/27

The Government has updated the framework [for paying the public health grant](#) to local authorities, following decisions on ring fencing and the technical details associated with mayoral responsibilities to oversee this expenditure (where agreed). The framework gives indicative grant allocation for the following two years and we will be using this information to finalise plans with each local authority we provide public health services to.

6.2 **Regional Matters**

6.2.1 Advanced Foundation Trust Programme

The Advanced Foundation Trust Programme is designed to recognise and support the best-performing statutory healthcare organisations in England. Under the programme, Trusts that consistently provide high-quality care, have strong leadership, and good value for money can earn “advanced” status, giving them greater freedom to make local decisions and improve services for their communities.

This includes more control over how they use funding and plan care, with less day-to-day oversight from central NHS bodies. In return, these organisations are expected to lead improvements across the wider NHS, helping to reduce waiting times, improve patient outcomes, and deliver more care closer to home.

The Trust is considering the initiation of the application at its private Board on 20th May 2026. If this is approved, it will commence the formal process of applying for Advanced Foundation Trust designation.

6.3 **Matters related to our Trust**

6.3.1 New Trust

We were pleased to launch the merged Trust on April 1st 2026, with a brief Board meeting to adopt the key governance and policies to govern the organisation. As part of the merger work, 75 priority day one actions were identified as needing to be fulfilled for the organisation to operate successfully from day one.

71 of those priority actions were fully complete on day one; three were initiated and are to complete in quarter 1 and one initiated to complete in quarter 2.

There are still many harmonisation activities that will occur throughout 2026/7. The programme Board, chaired by the CEO, will oversee the changes and report on the benefits that have been realised from the merger.

The Board will see the outputs from this work in internal audits; reporting from the programme board at the regular Board reporting on the implementation of clinical and care strategy (priority 4 – Innovate and transform our organisation).

6.3.2 Modern slavery and human trafficking statement for 2026-27

We fully support the Government's objectives to eradicate modern slavery and human trafficking and recognise the important role NHS Trusts play in preventing exploitation and supporting individuals who may be affected.

We are committed to acting ethically and with integrity in all our activities and to ensuring that our employment practices, procurement arrangements and supply chains uphold high ethical and labour standards.

As an NHS Trust, we take a risk-based approach to identifying, assessing and managing the potential risk of modern slavery and human trafficking, with consideration given to higher risk areas such as workforce supply, estates and facilities services, and external contractors. Our procurement and contract management processes align with NHS Standard Contract requirements and relevant national guidance, and we expect our suppliers to share our commitment to ethical working practices.

We promote awareness of modern slavery through safeguarding arrangements and relevant staff training, and we have clear processes in place to escalate and respond to concerns. Where potential victims are identified, we work in partnership with local safeguarding teams and other statutory agencies to ensure appropriate support and referral pathways are followed.

The Trust Board is asked to **Approve** the statement for 2026-27 in Appendix A.

6.3.3 National review of nursing profiles

The Government agreed, as part of the pay settlement with the Unions, that nursing profiles would be updated, as this process had not been undertaken at a national level for a long time.

This update provides assurance to the Board regarding the operation, governance, and robustness of the Trust's Job Evaluation (JE) arrangements over the last 12 months, including capacity, compliance with Agenda for Change, and current improvement activity. It also provides an update on the national review of nursing profiles that we are undertaking in partnership with our staff side colleagues.

Governance and Process Improvement

A task and finish group has been established to review legacy job evaluation processes and implement a single, standardised job evaluation process across the Trust.

This work includes:

- Review of electronic job evaluation systems (CAJE and IJES)
- Development of consistent process flows
- Alignment of policy and operational guidance

This activity will strengthen consistency, reduce variation, and mitigate equality and pay risk.

National Nursing Profile Review

A band 5 and band 6 standard nursing job description for intermediate care (in patients) has been developed in partnership with staff side colleagues and is progressing through final sign-off.

An overall project plan for the evaluation of all nursing roles from band 4 will be agreed with union colleagues by mid-June 2026. The plan will be implemented in a controlled and phased manner to manage capacity, risk and expectations. This work is being jointly led by our Chief Nursing and AHP Officer and Chief People Officer.

Current Position and Activity

Between 1 May 2025 and 30 April 2026:

- 68 Job Evaluation panels were convened
- 99 posts were formally matched
- 16 new panellists were trained.

This level of activity is regularly assessed as sufficient to meet current organisational demand and supports timely and consistent application of the job evaluation process.

The Board can be assured that:

- Job evaluation activity is being undertaken in line with Agenda for Change requirements and standards as per the national handbook
- There are appropriate governance arrangements in place, including partnership working and consistency checking
- Capacity and capability is being actively managed through panellist training
- Identified process improvements are being addressed through a structured and overseen programme of work

Risks identified at this stage that the Board are asked to be aware of:

- Large numbers of staff are at the top their band
- Impact on staff engagement levels
- Unknown cost impact

6.3.4 Update on our communication activity

Put people in control of their care

Community Appointment Day – In March we held a community appointment day in Cambridge to support people with physiotherapy needs. We've now completed [a short video](#) and write up of the event to help encourage others to attend these helpful and relaxed sessions.

Feedback from patients was overwhelmingly positive. Many highlighted the friendly and welcoming approach of staff, alongside clear explanations and practical advice. The opportunity to access multiple services in a single visit was also particularly valued.

- “I self-referred to physio via the website. It was really nice to be seen straight away and understand what I need to do to get better. I want to get back to playing football and the advice I received will really help my recovery and getting back to doing something I enjoy.”
- “Staff were excellent and I received very good care. They confirmed what I was thinking and clearly explained the next steps towards my recovery.”
- “Staff were great and very helpful in giving me advice on things I can try to support my recovery.”

World TB Day- Our [tuberculosis team held a special event](#) at Norwich Community Hospital in March aimed at raising awareness of how we can stop the spread of this bacterial infection.

Value our colleagues

Staff Survey – In March we received the results of the national NHS Staff Survey. The results are benchmarked against 13 community Trusts and are grouped under the seven People Promises, along with the themes of Staff Engagement and Morale.

Between both Trusts we had the best result in 7 out of 9 themes judged against our peers.

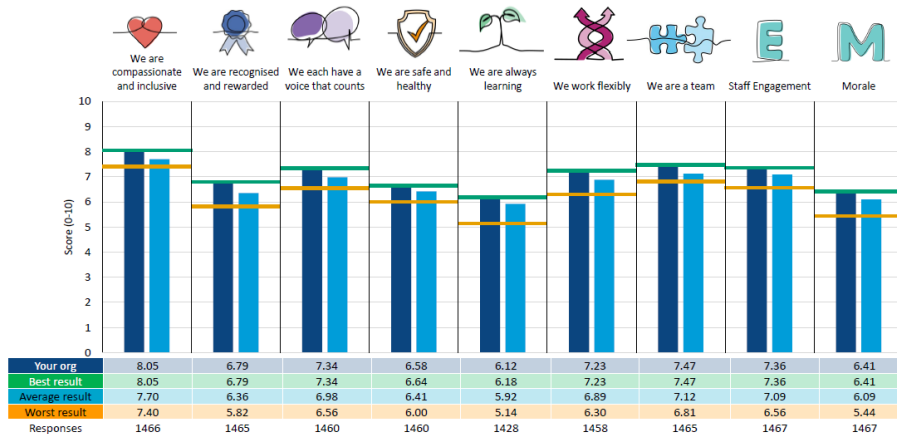
The results give us a clear picture of how staff are feeling and where we need to focus to improve.

Local teams are being supported by HR business partners to analyse and understand their results, talk with staff, and agree and implement actions in response to the results.

[CCS overview results:](#)

➤ **People Promise elements and themes: Overview** Survey Coordination Centre **NHS**

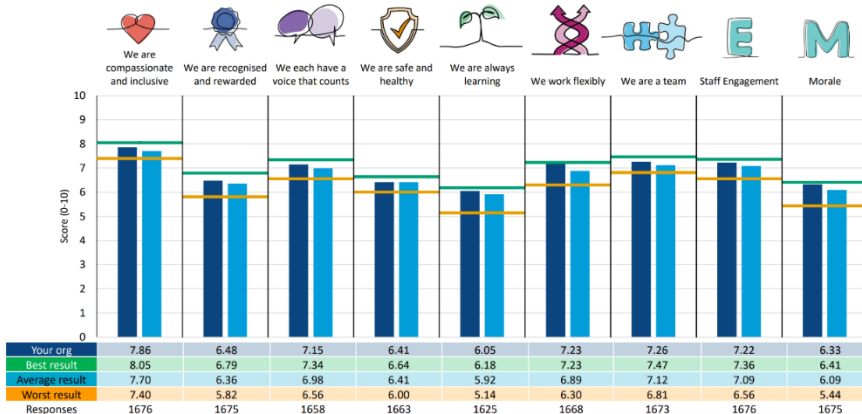
People Promise elements, themes and sub-scores are scored on a 0-10 scale, where a higher score is more positive than a lower score.



NCH&C overview results:

➤ **People Promise elements and themes: Overview** Survey Coordination Centre **NHS**

People Promise elements, themes and sub-scores are scored on a 0-10 scale, where a higher score is more positive than a lower score.



Creating a new Trust – We had an extensive programme of communications to support staff through the creation of our new Trust. This included:

- Regular updates in the run up to creating the new Trust
- Drop-in online briefings
- Celebration events to mark the end of our previous Trusts
- A welcome message to all staff and an online welcome pack
- A [launch video](#) featuring teams from across our new Trust.

Providing support during difficult global and national events – We have communicated with all staff acknowledging the impact recent global and national events may have had on colleagues and how managers can support affected team members. Following the awful attacks in Golders Green in April and the national raising of the security alert level, we also prepared a message to support our colleagues, promote vigilance and encourage people to understand their local business continuity plans.

Compassion and inclusion – This month we are celebrating equality, diversity and inclusion with various events including Inclusion Week, Equalities Week and National Day for Staff Networks. We will be marking this with a campaign around compassion and inclusion and what this means to us all as individuals. This will be followed in June with a campaign promoting our networks and encouraging people to get involved and help shape them, to coincide with a series of network events at our Wellbeing Festival.

Launch of our staff recognition programme – In April we launched new ways colleagues can be thanked and recognised for their achievements.

- **Star community** – Our peer-to-peer scheme helps colleagues to say thanks to each other using digital stars.
- **Service recognition awards** – Our service awards mean leaders can provide certificates to thank people at a local level
- **Shining Star Awards**- Our Trust wide monthly awards are open to anyone who is making a difference or going above and beyond. Nominations can be made by public and colleagues through our website <https://eastofenglandcommunityhealthandcare.nhs.uk/shining-star/>

Colleagues were also recognised in our former Trust’s monthly staff awards:

Faye Jessop, Community Nurse from South Place, Norfolk

Faye was nominated by a patient’s family member for the outstanding care she provided to the family during an incredibly difficult time. In a patient's final hours at home, Faye demonstrated the very best of the 6Cs of nursing, offering compassionate support, clear communication, and exceptional clinical skill. Faye went above and beyond her duties, staying beyond her scheduled hours to ensure symptoms were managed with dignity and comfort. Her professionalism, courage, and kindness made a profound difference. “Faye went above and beyond caring for my mum in her last few hours at our family home. Faye was the epitome of the 6 cs of nursing. Faye's care was outstanding, her communication with the GPs, nurses, myself, dad and my mum was clear concise and compassionate.”

Shaibu Awudu, Community Staff Nurse - Luton District Nursing Service

Kirsty Hughes said: “Shaibu visited a patient where hoarding concerns had been identified. He was able to gain consent for photographs of each room of the patient’s home and this identified clutter in all the rooms including one room which was completely inaccessible! This posed a significant fire risk, risk of infestation, and inaccessibility to facilities within the home, and Shaibu was able to quickly escalate safeguarding concerns to support the patient.

“Challenging individuals about the way they live is a very difficult conversation and the fact that Shaibu was not only able to discuss this with kindness and compassion, but he was able to gain consent to share photographs with the local authority safeguarding team, demonstrates the incredibly supportive approach that Shaibu takes to helping people under his care.”

Kirsty Rouse, Education Mental Health Practitioner - South Norfolk 2 MHST

Lisa Harper and Claire Rose nominated Kirsty Rouse, following some excellent feedback from a parent whose daughter Kirsty recently supported around her presenting anxieties and the difference observed in this young person since Kirsty has been working with them as a family.

They said: “Kirsty’s intervention has been invaluable in supporting this young person as well as their parents to manage their anxieties, so they are able to still engage in all the activities they enjoy. This is also alongside excellent positive feedback from another professional regarding a recent referral to another service who highlighted Kirsty’s excellent practice.

“And finally, for Kirsty also stepping in and supporting with the planning as well as managing the ‘whole school approach’ offer to schools.”

The Trust recognised many national “days and weeks” with targeted activity. This included **International Women’s Day** – We shared stories from women across our Trust who are giving back and using their voices for positive change. [You can view these here.](#)

Admin Professionals Day - We shared the stories of some of our administrative colleagues to showcase their invaluable contributions. [You can view these here.](#)

Neurodiversity Week and Overseas NHS Workers Day

Work in partnerships

First Contact Physiotherapist (FCP) Conference – Our [FCPs held a successful conference](#) in Buckden Cambridgeshire, bringing together our FCPs and external colleagues for a highly successful day of learning and collaboration.

The event covered a range of key topics including spinal assessment, Functional Neurological Disorder (FND), social prescribing, persistent pain and fibromyalgia, and the use of private MSK radiology reports in primary care. It was a fantastic opportunity for networking, knowledge sharing, and strengthening connections, highlighting the importance of continued collaboration and professional development in primary care.

Accessible information – In April we held the first accessible information working group including representatives from services and lived experience partners. This was a helpful session with lots of great ideas and sets us on the path to support improvement across our services. This is part of a wider Accessible Information Standard project to make our services as accessible as possible for all.

Youth participation group – Our Luton youth group met in March and had some great conversations covering:

- How young people use social media to get health information and would like to see information from our new Trust
- What it might take to encourage them to take part in research and what the barriers are

- How they'd like to get involved in future – e.g. co-production, assisting with interviews etc

This feedback is being used to inform our next steps both for the group and for our services.

4. Innovate and transform our organisation.

Service moves - The Specialist Amputee Rehabilitation Service has officially moved from Pine Cottage to the former Birch Unit at Colman Hospital. The renovated building provides patients and staff with access to a new day room and therapy kitchen, and a new staff area has been opened. The updated space provides patients with more room for movement and rehabilitation.

Adult health and social care news - [BBC News](#) has published an article showcasing the impact of the Willow Therapy Unit at Norwich Community Hospital on patient discharge outcomes. The coverage highlights how the £19m, therapy led intermediate care unit is helping patients leave hospital sooner and return home more safely through an integrated approach involving community health services, acute hospitals and adult social care. The piece was also broadcast on BBC Look East and BBC Radio Norfolk.

Health Child Programme – The Fenland Citizen has shared a positive article about the impact for children's health because of the Healthy Child Programme in Cambridgeshire. It explains these positive outcomes have led to the decision to extend our contract for the service. [Cambridgeshire's successful Healthy Child Programme extended - Fenland Citizen](#)

iCaSH move – Our Norwich iCaSH (Integrated Contraception and Sexual Health service) moved in March to Rowan House in Norwich. The first Friends and Family Test (FFT) survey results suggest the move is working well for patients. Comments include:

- “The building was very well signposted. The actual building was really clean and looked lovely”
- “Lovely new clinic/facilities”
- “The direction to the venue was very explanatory without needing to ask anyone”

AI physio media coverage – The story of a woman's rare condition being identified quickly with the help of our AI service was covered by the media in March:

- [Woman in agony saved from paralysis by artificial intelligence physiotherapist | The Independent](#)
- [‘An AI physiotherapist helped diagnose a rare medical emergency and saved me from paralysis’ - Yahoo Life UK](#)
- [AI physiotherapist saves Cambridgeshire woman from paralysis after rare diagnosis | Cambridgeshire Live](#)

Health Tech News has also highlighted the impact of our work using AI in physiotherapy as part of a roundup of digital and data innovations in the region. [HTN region series: East of England](#)

Solar panels - We marked Earth Day in April with the announcement that we have completed further solar panel installations at North Walsham Hospital, Dereham Hospital, and Parkview. Of the nine sites to have new panels installed, we have just one further site to do at Colman Hospital. 1,794 solar panels have been fitted at our Trust sites to date and the saving on electricity should exceed 805,680 kWh per year across the installations.

Appendix A: Modern slavery and human trafficking statement for 2026-27

East of England Community Health and Care NHS Trust continues to fully support the Government's objectives to eradicate modern slavery and human trafficking and recognises the significant role the NHS must play in both combatting it and supporting victims. We are committed to ensuring our supply chains and business activities are free from ethical and labour standards abuses. Steps taken to date are included below.

Our Staff

We confirm the identities of all new employees and their right to work in the United Kingdom and pay all our employees in line with best practice and national guidance. Our Freedom to Speak Up Policy additionally provides a platform for our employees to raise concerns about poor working practices. A Freedom to Speak Up report is submitted to the Board of Directors on a 6-monthly basis which includes an overview of the number of concerns raised by staff and the category that they fall into.

Internal Policies

We have several complementary internal policies that support our commitment to eradicating Modern Slavery; these include:

- Freedom to Speak Up / Raising Concerns Policy.
- Safeguarding People Policy.
- Level 3 Refresher Training for Adults and Children – Contextual Safeguarding and Modern-Day Slavery.
- Recruitment Policy.

Procurement and our supply chain

The Trust complies with the Procurement Act 2023, and the Provider Selection Regime, when procuring services. The use of mandatory selection questionnaires as part of our procurement process, clauses in contracts that require suppliers to comply with legislation, audits to review compliance, and contract performance management to ensure compliance all contribute to assuring our compliance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

Our procurement and contracting team are qualified and experienced in managing clinical and non-clinical contracts, and have received appropriate briefing on the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, which includes:

- Requesting evidence of their plans and arrangements to prevent slavery in their activities and supply chain.
- Using our routine contract management meetings with our providers, to address any issues around modern slavery.
- Implementing any relevant clauses contained within the standard contract forms.
- Training and Awareness.

Patients and Service Users

Modern Slavery awareness is integrated into our safeguarding policies and training. Awareness is also raised through information sharing on the Trusts' Intranet and on the public website. This helps our staff to know how to raise concerns if they suspect modern slavery or human trafficking when interacting with patients or service users.

Review of effectiveness

The Trust reviews the slavery and human trafficking statement on an annual basis and presents it at the Board of Directors meeting in Public. This demonstrates a public commitment, ensures visibility, and encourages reporting standards. We continue to take further steps to identify, assess and monitor potential risk areas in terms of modern slavery and human trafficking, particularly in our supply chains.

In 2026-27, our anti-slavery programme will also work to:

- Continue to support our staff to understand and respond to modern slavery and human trafficking, and the impact that every individual working in the NHS can have in keeping present and potential future victims of modern slavery and human trafficking safe through our safeguarding teams.
- Continue to ensure that all our staff have access to formal training on modern slavery and human trafficking which will provide the latest knowledge and the skills to manage this, and,
- Work with our partners to ensure modern slavery and human trafficking are taken seriously and feature prominently in safeguarding agendas.

This statement is made pursuant to section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and applies to East of England Community Health and Care NHS Trust.

The Trust Board approved this statement at its meeting on 20 May 2026.