

Agenda item:	6.0
Date of meeting:	30 September 2026
Report to the:	Trust Board
Title of report:	Chief Executive Officer's Report
Report authors:	Louisa Scoggins, Senior Executive Assistant Vicky Brooke, Associate Director of Marketing, Communications and Engagement
Executive sponsor:	Matthew Winn, Chief Executive Officer
Recommendation:	Approve
Confirm agreement	• Agree to the Board leadership roles (detailed in section 6.1.2) as part of the Trusts' implementation of the NHS Staff Standards. • Approve the Winter Board Assurance Statement for submission to the NHS England (as detailed in Annex A). • Approve the minor amendments to the Governance Manual set out in section 6.3.5. • Approve the use of the Trust's cumulated surplus to fund up to £3.2m the Children's Neurodevelopmental (NDS) programme in 2026/27 and to authorise submission of the associated Board assurance statement to NHS England (see section 6.3.1).

Assurance level:	Substantial ☐ Reasonable ☐ Partial ☐ Minimal ☐
Rationale:	Not Applicable.

1.0 Executive Summary

This report provides the Trust Board with an update on key national, regional and Trust developments. It highlights the publication of the Thirlwall Inquiry Report and the recommendations with direct relevance to the Trust, particularly in relation to safeguarding, responding to concerns of deliberate harm, leadership accountability and duty of candour.

Regionally, the report provides assurance on the Provider Board Capability and Winter planning for 2026/ 27. The Board is asked to approve the Winter Board Assurance Statement for submission to NHS England and to also confirm agreement with the proposed leads for the NHS Staff Standards.

The report also highlights the Trust's authorisation as an Advanced Foundation Trust from 1 October 2026, the mobilisation of new services and contracts, the Annual Safeguarding Report, Medical Appraisal and Revalidation, and proposed amendments to the Governance Manual. Concluding with key communications and engagement activity demonstrating progress across the Trust's strategic priorities. including partnership working, colleague development, innovation, research and service improvement.

The Board is asked to:

1. Note the recommendations in the Thirlwall report and receive an update from the Chief Nurse and Allied Health Professionals (AHP) Officer and Chief Medical Officer in the last quarter of this financial year into our implementation plan and progress (see section 6.1.1).
2. Agree to the Board leadership roles (detailed in section 6.1.2) as part of the Trusts' implementation of the NHS Staff Standards
3. Approve the Winter Board Assurance Statement for submission to the NHS England (as detailed in Annex A)
4. Approve the minor amendments to the Governance Manual set out in section 6.3.5.
5. Approve the use of the Trust's cumulated surplus to fund up to £3.2m the Children's NDS programme in 2026/27 and to authorise submission of the associated Board assurance statement to NHS England (see section 6.3.1).

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 in agenda item twelve in the Board meeting.

4.0 Legal and Regulatory requirements

- Care Act 2014
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Care Quality Commission (CQC) Fundamental Standards
- NHS Safeguarding Accountability and Assurance Framework

5.0 Previous consideration by Committee or Executive

22nd July 2026, Trust Board.

6.0 Report

6.1 National Updates

6.1.1 The Thirlwall report in the Countess of Chester hospital

The Thirlwall Inquiry Report was published on 15 September 2026, chaired by the Rt Hon. Lady Justice Thirlwall DBE. It examines events at the neonatal unit of the Countess of Chester Hospital between 2015 and 2018, culminating in the conviction of former Neonatal Nurse Lucy Letby for the murder and attempted murder of babies in her care.

The Inquiry's central finding is that there was a complete failure, at every level of the organisation, to invoke safeguarding procedures when concerns were repeatedly raised.

It makes [17 recommendations](#), as set out in Chapter 45 of the report. Whilst this is an acute hospital inquiry and most of recommendations are specific to hospital neonatal units, insulin storage, and paediatric pathology there are recommendations that do have genuine, direct read-across for our Trust.

Recommendation 4: Safeguarding training and contracts of employment

All staff, including Board members and Non-Executive Directors, must receive Safeguarding training covering how to deal with concerns and suspicions of deliberate harm by staff. By March 2027, every employment contract for NHS work, including agency and bank staff, must include an explicit obligation to follow safeguarding guidance.

Recommendation 9: Suspicion of Deliberate Harm Protocol

NHS England is to issue a national one-page protocol, due by March 2027, requiring that concerns raised in good faith are acted on immediately regardless of whether the recipient believes them, that moving a staff member under suspicion pending investigation is treated as a neutral act rather than a sanction, and that safeguarding steps including police involvement are followed. Trusts must embed the protocol once issued.

Recommendation 13: Manager accountability and duty of candour

A statutory barring system for NHS managers is to be introduced by September 2027, alongside an individual duty of candour for all managers to patients and colleagues, and a revised NHS Leadership and Management Framework Code placing patient safety as the first duty.

NHS England and the Department of Health and Social Care have not agreed (yet) to formally adopt all of the recommendations from the enquiry. However, the Trust can develop the cultural and practical infrastructure to deliver the recommendations four and nine, given they are central to the delivery of good care.

The Board will receive an update from the Chief Nurse and Allied Health Professionals (AHP) Officer and Chief Medical Officer in the last quarter of this financial year into our implementation plan and progress.

6.1.2 NHS Staff Standards

Following the publication of the NHS Staff Standards in July 2026, the Trust is undertaking a gap analysis in relation to the actions identified within the standards. The Chief People Officer anticipates that this will be completed and discussed with our staff side representatives at the Staff Partnership Committee in October 2026.

To support governance and accountability, the NHS Staff Standards require designated Board-level leadership for a few key workforce priorities. The following leads are proposed:

- Health and Wellbeing Guardian – Chair of the People, Participation and Equalities Committee.
- Senior Responsible Officer for Tackling Racism – Chief Executive.
- Flexible Working Champion – Chief People Officer.

These appointments complement the existing Board-level Sexual Safety Champion role, currently undertaken by the Chief Nurse and AHP Officer.

6.2 **Regional Matters**

6.2.1 Provider Board Capability Assessment

All NHS providers are been asked to self-assess against a set of capability statements across the domains derived from [The insightful provider board](#). The purpose of the self-assessment is to strengthen NHS Trust Boards' assurance.

As an Advanced Foundation Trust, we have been exempted from the process, as NHS England have already undertaken extensively testing and oversight of our Board capability and governance.

The Executive has reviewed the capability statements and can confirm that our self-assessed position would be unchanged, with a rating of green. This outcome aligns with the view of NHS England, in their assessment of our Advanced Foundation Trust application.

6.2.2 Winter planning 2026/27 – expectations and assurance

In line with national guidance, all providers are accountable for operational delivery through the Winter period and specifically:

- Completing an organisational Winter Plan with staff flu vaccination programmes in place
- Ensuring tested arrangements for escalation, infection prevention and control, on-call leadership and staff welfare and protect delivery of agreed 2026/ 27 trajectories.

All NHS Trust Boards are required to demonstrate that they are assured that the Trust has the necessary arrangements to support delivery through the Winter period through the completion and submission of a Board Assurance Statement self-assessment including a Quality and Equality Impact Assessment.

The Director of Corporate Affairs/ Accountable Emergency Officer and Chief Nurse and AHP Officer have led the completion of the Winter self-assessment, in conjunction with Service Directors, Infection Prevention & Control Team and the Emergency Planning, Response & Resilience Team. This has included attending the Winter planning system events led by the Norfolk and Suffolk and Central East Integrated Care Boards (ICBs). A Quality Impact and Equality Impact Assessments have also been completed.

The Executive have reviewed and agreed the completed Winter Board Assurance Statement.

The Trust Board are asked to **approve** the Winter Board Assurance Statement for submission to the NHS England on 30th September 2026.

The detail of the Winter Statement can be found in **Annex A**.

6.3 **Matters related to our Trust**

6.3.1 Advanced Foundation Trust

The Trust has been authorised to be an Advanced Foundation Trust from 1st October 2026. This is a big moment for our Trust and it places us among a small group of NHS organisations nationally that have demonstrated the highest standards of quality, leadership, governance and improvement.

We are excited by the potential that this status will unlock, giving us a strong platform to innovate, strengthen partnerships, and continue transforming services so that people receive high-quality care, closer to home. Our first act as an Advanced Foundation Trust, will be to use our accumulative prior-year surplus position to transform Children and Young People care for those waiting for a neuro-developmental assessment.

The Trust has an accumulated surplus of £4.9m generated since 2024/25, which will be available for use from 1 October 2026. Whilst the waiting list initiative spans a 24-month period, this proposal seeks approval for up to £3.2m of funding for 2026/27 only, providing continued support for delivery of the programme whilst NHS funding opportunities continue to be pursued. Any funding requirement for 2027/28 will be reviewed and brought back to the Board through the normal planning process.

Board assurance statement for NHS England

The proposed non-recurrent expenditure is affordable within the Trust's aggregate surplus position and supported by available cash reserves. The investment aligns with the Trust's strategic objectives (in the clinical and care strategy and annual plan) and local systems priorities. It also meets the requirements of the Advanced Foundation Trust financial flexibilities for non-recurrent transformational expenditure. The Trust remains confident that it will maintain a balanced aggregate financial position following this investment, with cumulative surpluses continuing to be sustained since 2024/25.

Thank you to all in the Trust whose continued hard work has helped us to reach the standards required of the assessment process.

Recommendation: The Board is asked to **approve** the use of the Trust's cumulated surplus to fund up to £3.2m the Children's NDS programme in 2026/27 and to authorise submission of the associated Board assurance statement to NHS England (above).

6.3.2 Services and staff joining the Trust

Over the past few months, commissioning organisations have awarded the Trust the following services, which we are now mobilising, to bring into the Trust.

Oral health – in North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire Council for oral health improvement and supervised toothbrushing programmes. These programmes are an important way of helping children, families and communities develop healthier habits and improve dental health. Both begin on 1 October 2026.

New IT contract appointment – appointment as the new provider of IT services for GP practices across Suffolk. This will mirror the service the Trust already provides to Primary Care in Norfolk.

Experts at hand - The Experts at Hand initiative is a core pillar of the UK Government's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) reform programme. It is designed to bring specialist health and education professionals directly into mainstream schools, early years settings, and colleges.

Backed by a **£1.8 billion national investment** over three years, the opportunity will enable the Trust to deploy Speech and Language Therapists and Occupational Therapists, to work alongside school staff, Educational Psychologists and Specialist Teachers, with the aim of removing traditional referral bottlenecks and formal diagnosis requirements.

The program focuses on early, targeted interventions to identify and meet needs before difficulties become entrenched.

We are agreeing final numbers of staff and costings with each of our Councils and will then rapidly move to recruitment and implementation.

6.3.3 Annual Safeguarding Report

The Annual Safeguarding Report provides the Board with second line assurance that the Trust is meeting its statutory safeguarding responsibilities and promoting the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and adults at risk. The report summarises safeguarding activity, performance, training compliance, audits, learning from incidents, reviews and complaints, and highlights progress against key priorities during the reporting period.

It also identifies areas for improvement, emerging risks and future objectives, enabling the Board to oversee the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements and ensure that safeguarding remains embedded throughout the organisation's culture, practice and governance.

The detail of the report can be found in **Annex B**.

6.3.4 Medical Revalidation and Guardian of Safe Working Hours

The final reports for Medical Appraisal and Revalidation of the two legacy Trusts will be submitted by the Trusts' Responsible Officer and for Arthur Rank Hospice, in which was act as their Designated Body

The statement concludes that all Doctors were engaged with the appraisal and revalidation process, and are safe, up to date and fit to practice. There were no concerns that necessitated General Medical Council referral.

There were no exception reports made by Doctors to the Guardian of Safe Working Hours within the last 12 months.

6.3.5 Governance Manual

The Trust Board is asked to **approve** the following minor amendments to the Governance Manual:

Scheme of Reservation and Delegation (page 36)

The delegation be amended from the Trust Board to the Audit and Risk Committee:

- Approve proposals for action on litigation against or on behalf of the Trust.
- Review use of NHS Resolution Clinical Negligence Scheme for Trusts and risk pooling schemes (Liabilities to Third Parties Scheme / Property Expenses Scheme).

Finance and Infrastructure Committee (page 114)

Section 5.1 to be amended from:

5.1 The members will be appointed by the Trust Board who will appoint six members to the Committee, as follows:

- Three Non-Executive Directors, one of whom will be nominated to be Chair, and one will be Deputy Chair.
- Three Executive Directors.

To:

5.1 The members will be appointed by the Trust Board who will appoint a maximum of up to six members to each committee, as follows:

- Up to three Non-Executive Directors, one of whom will be nominated to be Chair
- Up to three Executive Directors

Section 6.1 to be amended from 'will meet at least six times a year' to 'will meet at least four times a year'.

6.3.6 Update on our communication activity

Put people in control of their care

- **New Norfolk sexual health and outreach service** – the Trust launched the Norfolk Sexual Health Outreach and Prevention service in August. This

service will provide information, support and outreach activities that help people stay well and access support before problems arise, focusing on education, community engagement and early intervention. The Trust is delivering the service on behalf of Norfolk County Council Public Health.

- **Getting ready for school** – Best start for life is a priority in the Trust's Clinical and Care Strategy and starts with school readiness. A social media campaign took place over the summer promoting useful tips for families to support their child as they prepare for school in September. This was shared with partner agencies.
- **Flu** – The Trust presented at an NHS England best practice session about flu campaigns attended by around 100 Trust, how the campaign had increased staff vaccination rates. We have launched Vaccinationtrack to enable all colleagues to easily book their annual flu jab this year.

Value our colleagues

- **Leadership development** – The Trust launched a new Chrysalis leadership development programme which has three levels: aspiring leader; established leader; and senior leader. The programme builds on existing leadership development, offering support at every stage of a leadership journey.
- **Shining Star winners** - The latest Shining Star winners have been announced:
 - Joanne Taylor, Clinical Operations Manager in Norwich Place won the accolade in July 2026. Joanne was recognised for her exceptional work supporting a patient with highly complex needs, coordinating care across a range of services to ensure both their physical and mental health needs were met.
 - In August 2026 Edwina, from the Trust's Triage Service, and Grant, a volunteer in Norwich Place, were selected as our Shining Stars. Edwina was nominated for exemplifying outstanding nursing professionalism and the Trust's core values during a distressing situation. Grant was nominated by three colleagues for his reliability, hard work and the invaluable contribution he makes every week.
- **Trust work experience programme** – In August 2026 the Trust welcomed 15 students from across Norfolk to take part in the Trust's work experience programme. Students gained valuable insight into the diverse roles that contribute to delivering care for our patients, service users and communities.
- **Long Service Awards** - Recognising the dedication, commitment, and experience everyone brings to our Trust and the wider NHS, the Long Service Policy has been updated so that all NHS service is recognised and the Long Service Awards were launched. Over 500 applications for the awards have been received and staff presentation events will be held across the Trust this autumn.

Work in partnerships

- **New neighbourhood health and wellbeing service** – The Trust is among several local healthcare partners collaborating on the new initiative at St Saviours Yard in Norwich. Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust, Adult Social Services from Norfolk County Council, Change Grow Live, and a range of other local organisations are involved in the community-based project to provide easier access to appointments and professional advice and support services in a welcoming and accessible environment.
- **Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) Team of the Week award** – the Diabetic Podiatry team in the West won the QEH Team of the Week award: “When I first arrived in the clinic, I was in unbelievable pain due to a toe that had ‘died’ due to a blood clot in my leg. Lynne was incredible she was so calm and kind immediately putting me at ease. The procedure was extremely painful, but she was gentle and explained every step she was about to take (and most importantly why she was doing it). Her positive attitude gave me hope that I wouldn’t lose my toe. I have had weekly appointments since and have been treated by most of this amazing team. The notes and photos kept means they have been able to pick up the care. They are all so professional, reassuring and kind. I walk (hobble) away every week feeling 100% that my care was important to them and their number one priority. I honestly could go through a dictionary and choose every word for incredible and still want more.”

Innovate and transform our organisation

- **Health Service Journal (HSJ) Award nominations** – Bedfordshire Unscheduled Community Care Hub and Frailty Virtual Ward have been shortlisted for a HSJ Award in the Transforming Care for Older People category. Teams from the Trust and our wider system partners have created an integrated model of care that brings senior clinical decision-making into the community, enabling frail older people to receive rapid assessment, treatment and monitoring in their own homes while avoiding unnecessary hospital attendance and admission.

Flok Health, our AI physiotherapy service in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, has also been shortlisted in the HSJ Awards in the Partnership of the Year category.

- **Research Champions** – the Trust celebrated the graduation of its latest round of Research Champions in August 2026. The programme helps staff develop research knowledge and create projects to champion research in their areas of work. This year the Quality Improvement (QI) team were also involved in the event, as the Trust explores the connections and opportunities between research and QI.
- **Service visits** – Leaders continue to visit the Trust’s services. In July 2026 Charlotte Black, Non-Executive Director, spent the day with members of the Looked After Children (LAC) team to learn more about the vital support they provide for children and young people in care.

Chief Information Officer, Sarah Buchan, visited our Children's Services team in Luton alongside Colonel Leona Barr-Jones, CEO at East Anglia Reserve Forces and Cadets Association and Deputy Lieutenant of Bedfordshire. A key theme of the discussions with the team was how the Armed Forces Covenant works in practice.

- **Accessible information self-assessment** – the Trust's accessible information self-assessment has been completed, led by our services and service user partnership working group. The self-assessment is published on the Trust's website in full and as an easy read document, in accordance with best practice. The supporting action plan is monitored through the People Participation and Equalities Committee.
-