



**Blood and Transplant**

Report of a Review of the Effectiveness of the  
NHS Blood and Transplant Board

January 2023

# Table of Contents

<b>1. Background</b>	3
<b>2. Review Process</b>	3
<b>3. Summary of Analyses</b>	4
1. The Role of the Board, its objectives and remit	4
2. Risk Management	7
3. Performance Management	9
4. Board Effectiveness	11
5. Board Meetings	14
6. Board Composition	16
7. Board Committees	18
8. General Section	21
8.1 How well do Board members work outside of Board meetings?	21
8.2 Are non-executive directors given the opportunity to support the executive directors?	21
8.3 Do executive directors feel they have the right support and challenge from non-executive directors?	22
8.4 Do you have sufficiently wide and deep understanding of the organisation to be able to contribute fully, and if not, what do you suggest to make this happen?	22
<b>4. Conclusion</b>	23
<b>5. Next Steps</b>	24

## 1. Background

The most recent Board effectiveness review took place in September 2021. The Board commissioned an external organisation, Campbell Tickell, to undertake this review, the report of which was issued to NHSBT in October 2021. The report made several recommendations regarding improvements which could be made both at Board level and at Audit Risk and Governance Committee (ARGC) level. An action plan was developed to implement the recommendations. This action plan was audited by NHSBT's internal auditors, Government Internal Audit Agency (GIAA) and several recommendations were made.

Since the external review, there have been a number of key changes to the corporate governance arrangements; namely the appointment of a new Chair of the Board, the appointment of an interim Chief Executive and a number of new executive directors. The GIAA had acknowledged that this could trigger a fresh Board Effectiveness review in due course and may therefore impact how the organisation choose to take forwards the findings from their audit of the Board effectiveness action plan.

Best practice suggests that a review of board effectiveness is undertaken annually or on a periodic basis. The Board Chair therefore thought it was necessary for an internal board effectiveness review to be undertaken, to provide feedback for maximising the strengths of the Board and highlight priority areas for performance improvement and further development.

It should be noted that this review was only undertaken for the Board and did not include the Board committees. A review of the Board committees would be scheduled some time in the summer. This is to give the Committees some time to embed, following the new committee structure approved by the Board at its meeting on 27 September 2022 and came into effect in January 2023. A proposal for a basic framework for annual committee self-assessment will be taken to the Board for approval in March, to ensure there is an effective procedure in place for assessing the effectiveness and functioning of the Board's committees.

## 2. Review Process

A self-assessment questionnaire, based on best practice, was designed by the Interim Deputy Company Secretary and sent to board members to complete. A 100% response rate was obtained (seven non-executive directors (NEDs), including the Chair and 11 executive directors, both voting and non-voting members of the Board).

Eight sections were examined within the questionnaire as follows:

1. The Role of the Board, its objectives and remit
2. Risk management
3. Performance management
4. Board effectiveness
5. Board meetings
6. Board composition
7. Board committees
8. General section

Since the Chair was relatively new in post at the time the review was conducted, there were no questions on the performance of the Chair.

Board members were asked to state whether they were NEDs or executive directors. This is to determine if there were marked differences in the answers provided by the NEDs and executive directors.

The questions were rated as follows:

1 = Strongly disagree      2 = Disagree      3 = Neutral      4 = Agree      5 = Strongly Agree

The completed questionnaires submitted have been analysed to draw conclusions and propose recommendations.

This report contains the findings from the review.

### 3. Summary of Analyses

This section provides a summary of the analyses of the eight sections examined, as noted above, with individual comments included for each section. It should be noted that some of the comments have been removed, as these will either easily identify the board member or other individuals or functions.

It should be noted when reviewing the report, that some executive directors made it clear that given their short time on the Board, they have not seen enough to form a fact-based opinion, cannot comment more explicitly on some sections, and have limited data on how well the board functions. Therefore, some of the answers given were based on early perception. Four out of the 11 executive directors who completed the questionnaire were not in the position to answer whether the board has become more efficient, less efficient or no change since the last board effectiveness review.

It should also be noted that where percentages have been provided, these exclude the numbers that did not answer the question.

#### 1. The Role of the Board, its objectives and remit

This section covered strategy, purpose and values, objectives, roles and statutory responsibilities. 10 questions were considered under this section.

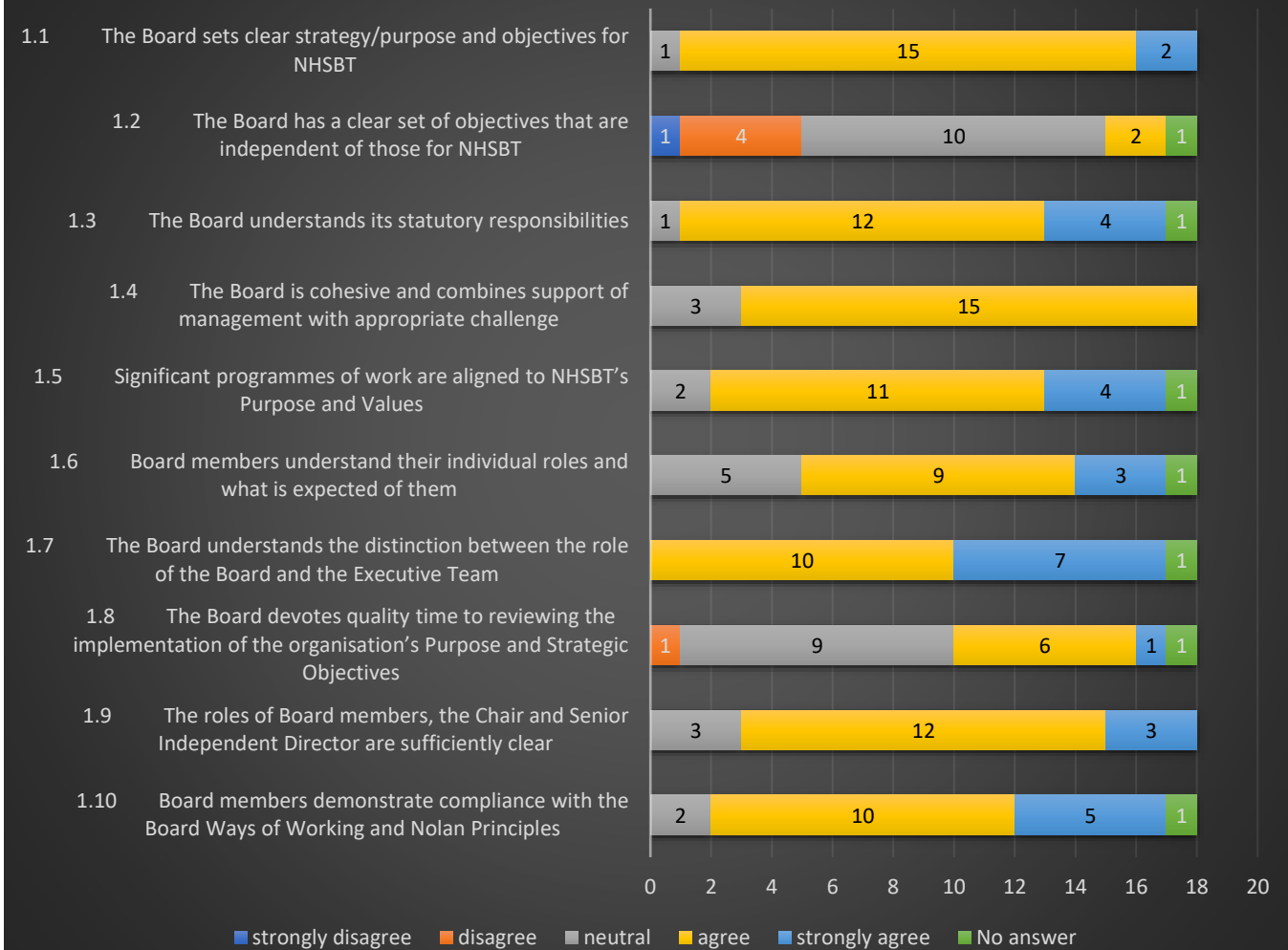
Whilst there was consensus that the Board sets clear strategy/purpose and objectives for NHSBT, and that the Board understands its statutory responsibilities, further work is required on setting clear purpose and strategic objectives for the Board. With 56% of board members scoring neutral, and only 11% agreeing that the Board has a clear set of objectives that are independent of those for NHSBT, it is evidently clear that the Board should consider making explicit clear set of its objectives and how it will achieve them.

Another area which did not score so well was around the Board devoting quality time to reviewing the implementation of the organisation's Purpose and Strategic Objectives. One member suggested that the Board would benefit from an annual externally facilitated discussion on the role and remit of the Board, within the boundaries set by NHSBT Constitution and the roles and responsibilities of Board members.

The question which scored the best was the Board's understanding of the distinction between the role of the Board and the Executive Team. All, but one board members either agreed or strongly agreed with this. One board member did not score this question, due to their limited time on the Board.

A summary of the scores for this section is shown in the table below:

# 1 The Role of the Board, its objectives and remit



The comments made under this section are listed below.

## Comments on the Role of the Board, its objectives and remit:

- The board is beginning to work better but there is still a way to go before it is functioning as a truly high performing board.
- This Board would benefit from an annual externally facilitated discussion on:
  - The role and remit of the Board, within the Boundaries set by our Constitution
  - Roles and responsibilities of Board members
 I would suggest this is led by our Lawyers. It needs to be annual as with such a large Board there are frequent changes in personnel.
- I think as we are short of new NEDs there is lack of clarity on NED roles which should be resolved soon.
- I have only attended 2 board meetings and so some of my experiences may not be reflective of how the board generally operates.
  - My biggest observation is on item 1.8. The board meetings are packed with topics and so I have seen little evidence of the discussion on how we are implementing the Purpose and Strategic Objectives. I see a lot of routine reviews, some detailed questions from one or 2 NEDs on FBCs but little on how well we are implementing the Purpose and Strategic Objectives. I recognise that there are a number of things

that must happen, especially in the open session but this just takes a lot of time away from engagement.

- In addition, I am unclear whether the board wants the items that are brought to be “rubber stamping” exercises or genuine topics for debate and engagement. I have had a couple of sessions with different NEDs on specific topics which were always helpful in challenging our thinking/ penetration of the topic. I am not clear if this then is the pre-alignment to allow things to flow quickly at the board meeting – it feels like a bit of both just now. I am not sure the board challenges us enough.
- I find some things like the “Agreed Ways of working” to be of little use and am not clear where they add value.
- On item 1.10 I am neutral as I do not have enough data.

### Recommendations

- 1a. The Board should consider holding a yearly board away day to set clear set of objectives; review the purpose, strategy and culture of the organisation and how these are being implemented.
- 1b. The Board should consider employing an external organisation to facilitate a discussion on the statutory obligations of the Board, its role, remit and responsibilities, as part of a Board seminar (see recommendation 5a).
- 1c. The Board should consider reviewing the Board Ways of Working. This was last reviewed in January 2019.

## 2. Risk Management

This section covered risk process, risk appetite, risk reporting and risk strategy. Five questions were considered under this section. One board member (executive director) did not complete this section.

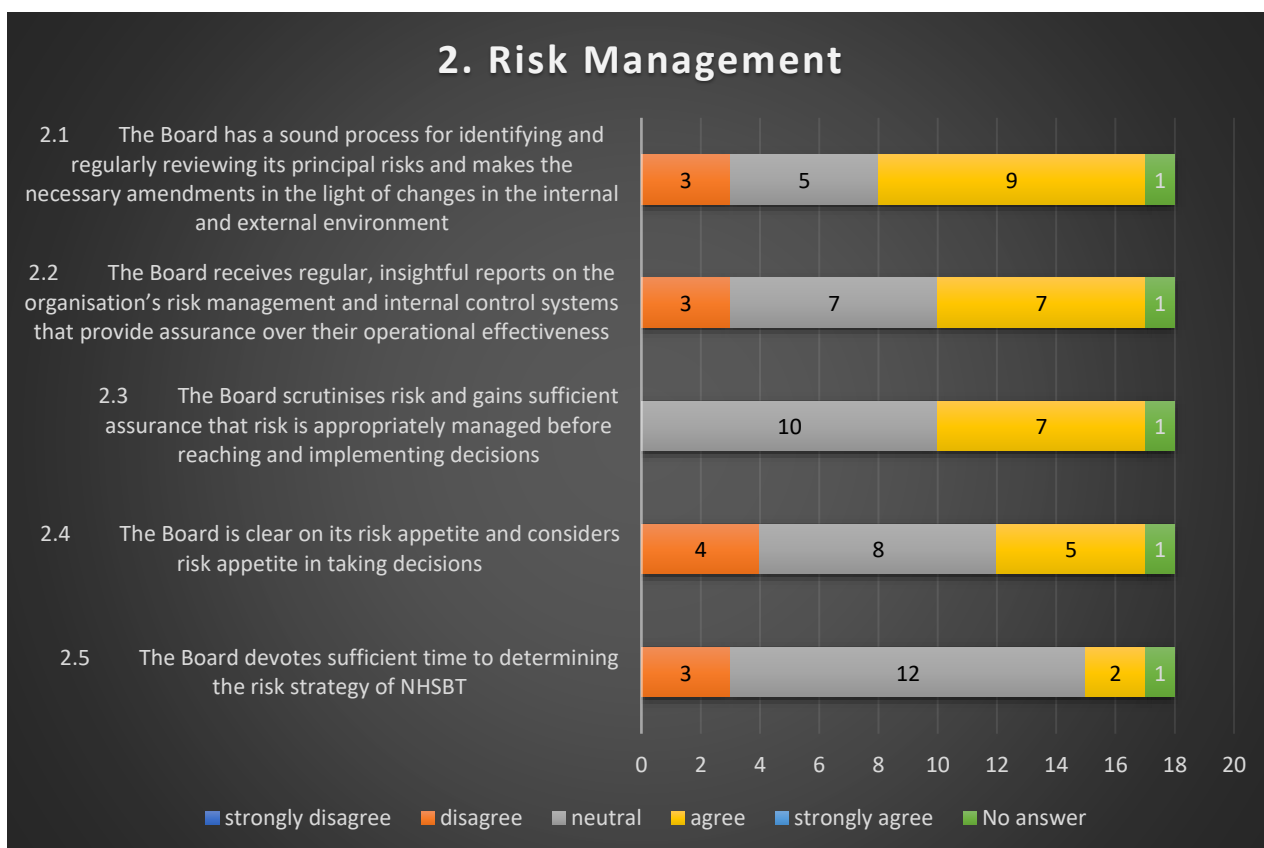
This was one of the least scored sections. Across the five sections, the number of times board members agreed was 30, compared to either scoring neutral or disagreed, which was 55 times.

It is evident that a significant amount of work is required on risk management, to enhance the Board's understanding, interest and involvement on this subject.

Only two (11%) board members agreed that the Board devotes sufficient time to determining the risk strategy of NHSBT. The rest (but one) either disagreed or were neutral. Similarly, whereas five board members agreed that the Board is clear on its risk appetite and considers risk appetite in taking decisions, four members disagreed and seven were neutral. Furthermore, seven board members agreed that the Board receives regular, insightful reports on the organisation's risk management and internal control systems that provide assurance over their operational effectiveness. An equal number (seven) were neutral and three disagreed.

One of the comments made was that the Board's interest and involvement in matters to do with risk is surprisingly low. It was also flagged that the up-coming risk deep dive will be a good starting point to make progress in this area.

A summary of the scores for this section is shown in the table below:



The comments made under this section are listed below.

**Comments on Risk Management:**

- A lot of work is needed in the coming months to get the board properly sighted on risk and to be in a position to respond nimbly to changing circumstances. For example, the executive team have done significant work to prepare contingency plans for strike action but the issue and the risks it poses to the organisation has barely registered with some of the non-executives or, if it has, they have kept it to themselves. The up-coming risk deep dive will be a good starting point.
- This may sound self-critical, but for an organisation of this scale the Board's interest and involvement in matters to do with risk is surprisingly low. In part the Board's progress is limited by the slow pace of change within the Exec on matters to do with Risk. This is not a reflection on the individual charged with Risk responsibility rather the lack of a collective will to move up a few gears.
- I think the Board is not clear on risk management or risk appetite and once new NEDs are on post this needs attention.
- I have limited data on this.
- This is all discharged through ARGC.
- These scores are only 3 as I am not on the ARGC where most of this assurance is received.
- Although I answered agree to these questions I did it in the context that this is done primarily through ARGC on behalf of the whole board.
- Neutral response as I have not been on board long enough to see how the board assesses risk. I believe there are opportunities for improvements on the assessment of risks and impact.

**Recommendations**

- 2a. The Board should consider setting out what it aims to achieve at the upcoming risk management deep dive to ensure the outcome of the session achieves this. This should include a session on determining the risk strategy of NHSBT.
- 2b. Further actions could be identified during the risk management deep dive session to inform an action plan.



### 3. Performance Management

This section covered the Board's understanding of and responsibility for the performance of NHSBT.

This section scored fairly well and consistently, with most board directors in agreement across the five questions. One board member (executive director) did not complete this section.

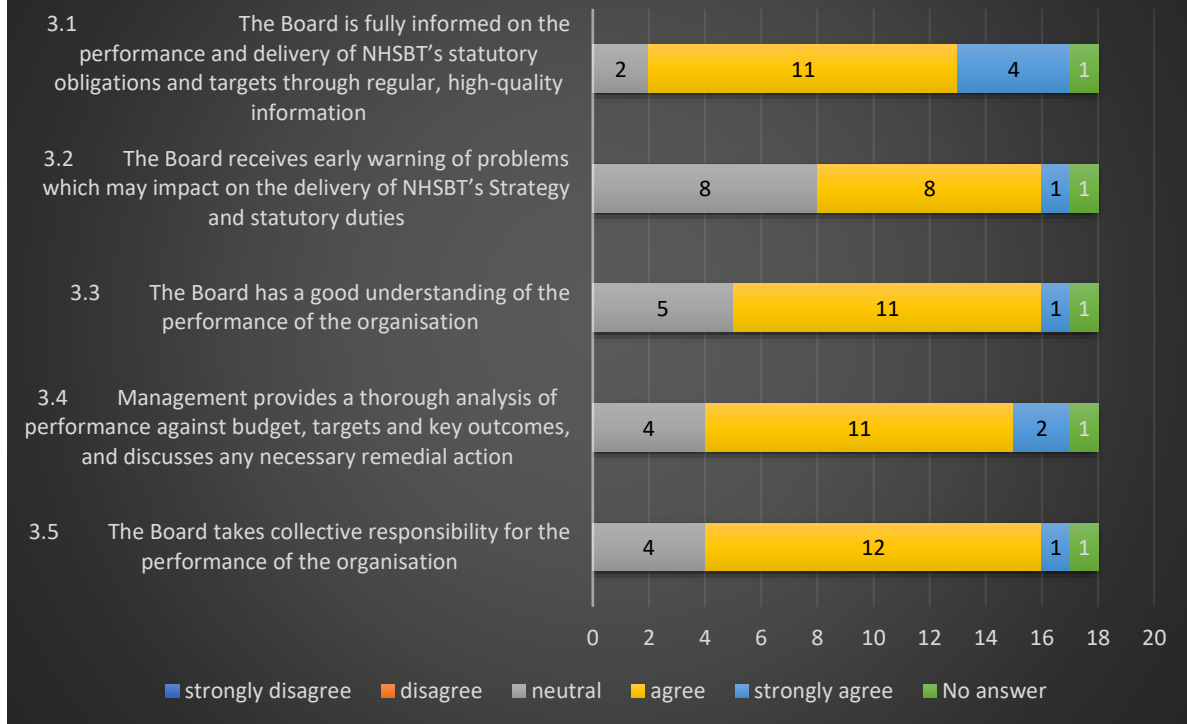
15 board members either agreed (11) or strongly agreed (four) that the Board is fully informed on the performance and delivery of NHSBT's statutory obligations and targets through regular, high-quality information. The two that did not agree, were neutral. At least 65% of Board members agreed to all, but one of the remaining questions. No board member disagreed or strongly disagreed on any of the questions.

Eight board members agreed that the Board receives early warning of problems which may impact on the delivery of NHSBT's Strategy and statutory duties. However, an equal number were neutral, and one strongly agreed.

Despite the relatively good scores, a comment was made that it is not clear that all directors (NEDs and executives) fully understand they have collective responsibility for the overall performance of the organisation rather than just the areas of their direct responsibility or interest. Another similar comment was that collectively, the board feels the responsibility of the performance of the organisation sits with the CEO/executive directors and the Chair, and not all NEDs feel this is their responsibility. Another commented that performance reports are detailed but may be too long and not clearly highlight areas for focus.

A summary of the scores for this section is shown in the table below:

### 3. Performance Management



The comments made under this section are listed below.

#### Comments on Performance Management:

- It is not clear that all directors (executive and non-executive) fully understand they have collective responsibility for the overall performance of the organisation rather than just the areas of their direct responsibility or interest.
- It seems to me that some individual Board members spend the time to try and understand the performance of the organisation, looking for linkages between the volume of activity/products delivered/clinical outcomes and budgetary expenditure. We could do with a much fuller discussions on where the money is being spent but the contribution of the organisation to the NHS is not as great as we had intended.
- As I couldn't systematically parrot off what NHSBTs statutory obligations are, I can't personally give a score above 3.
- I think collectively the board feels the responsibility of the performance of the organisation sits with the CEO/execs and the chair, I don't think all NEDs feel this is their responsibility.
- These scores are based on the 'post FPC' structure where I think there will be a weakness here until a way is found for the ARGC to pick this up.
- Performance reports are detailed but may be too long and not clearly highlight areas for focus.

#### Recommendations

- The Board should consider whether it could benefit from a review of the performance report, with key deliverables and spend highlighted, at every meeting.
- The Board should consider holding a session to discuss allocation of resources and situations where spend by NHSBT is not met with the intended performance.
- The Board should consider whether it could benefit from long range planning, such as 3 to 5 years, and mapping of anticipated resources to meet such plans.

## 4. Board Effectiveness

This section covered board skills mix, expertise and personalities; diversity; NED appointments; annual performance evaluation; induction and development; conflicts of interest and transparency. Nine questions were considered under this section.

One board member (executive director) only answered questions 4.1 to 4.3.

14 (78%) board members either disagreed or were neutral on 4.3 - induction and development programmes ensure Board members remain up to date throughout their time on the Board. This area had already been included in the corporate governance work plan as one of the areas for improvement prior to undertaking this board effectiveness review. The other areas with high percentages of neutral scores were around the annual performance evaluation of the Board, Board Committees and Board members, and corresponding action plan; and the Board evaluating the effectiveness of its decisions. One board member strongly disagreed that the Board evaluates the effectiveness of its decisions.

The Board was split on 4.5 - the Board dealing comprehensively with difficult issues. Eight board members agreed this was the case, with the same number scoring neutral. One member disagreed.

13 (76%) board members either disagreed (52%) or were neutral (24%) on 4.8 - the Board having the right blend of skills, expertise and personalities, and the appropriate degree of diversity (4.8). One of the comments noted that there is an awful lot to be done under this section, with several of the comments highlighting the lack of diversity on the Board.

Another area which did not score well was on 4.9 - appointments placing significant emphasis on succession planning. 71% either disagreed (30%) or were neutral (41%). Only four members agreed, with one strongly agreeing this was the case.

All, but one board member who was neutral, either agreed or strongly agreed that the work of the board is transparent and open to public scrutiny. A similar score was achieved for declaring and managing conflicts of interest and potential conflicts of interest, but with two board members scoring neutral.

A summary of the scores for this section is shown in the table below:

## 4. Board Effectiveness



The comments made under this section are listed below.

### Comments on Board Effectiveness:

- There is an awful lot of work to be done in this area. I would suggest a regular programme of Board education and visits, Post implementation reviews of major decisions, identification of “difficult issues” so we can prioritise them. (I still find it odd we have no recognisable EDI strategy document). We need more time spent on succession planning/skills required.
- Lacking in diversity and commercial science / data.
- Limited data but overall, the board is not very diverse in its skills/ make-up.
- I think we could strengthen annual board appraisal for executive members – whilst we have biannual appraisal/midyear reviews specific comments/feedback has really been on my role as an executive rather than my role as a board member. I think specific

feedback from the Chair (via the CEO) would be helpful on this point as to me it doesn't feel like I have an appraisal as a board member.

- Board has good skills but insufficiently diverse.
- I have not been to enough Board meetings and Committees to assess the effectiveness of reviews and behaviours.
- 4.8 - strong blend of skills on the Board but diversity is poor.

## Recommendations

- 4a. The Board should be provided with an updated induction and development programmes that are relevant and meet the needs of the Board.
- 4b. The Board should consider introducing a Board Resolutions tracker, which records all decisions made by the Board during the financial year and major decisions flagged, with a timetable for revisiting the latter.
- 4c. The Board should consider introducing a board skills framework and undertaking a board skills matrix exercise and succession planning which should guide the recruitment of board members.
- 4d. Review the annual appraisal process for executive directors, including objectives setting. The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) processes should be followed for NED performance review and objective setting.
- 4e. Introduce a formal programme for board site visits/ regular education programme.

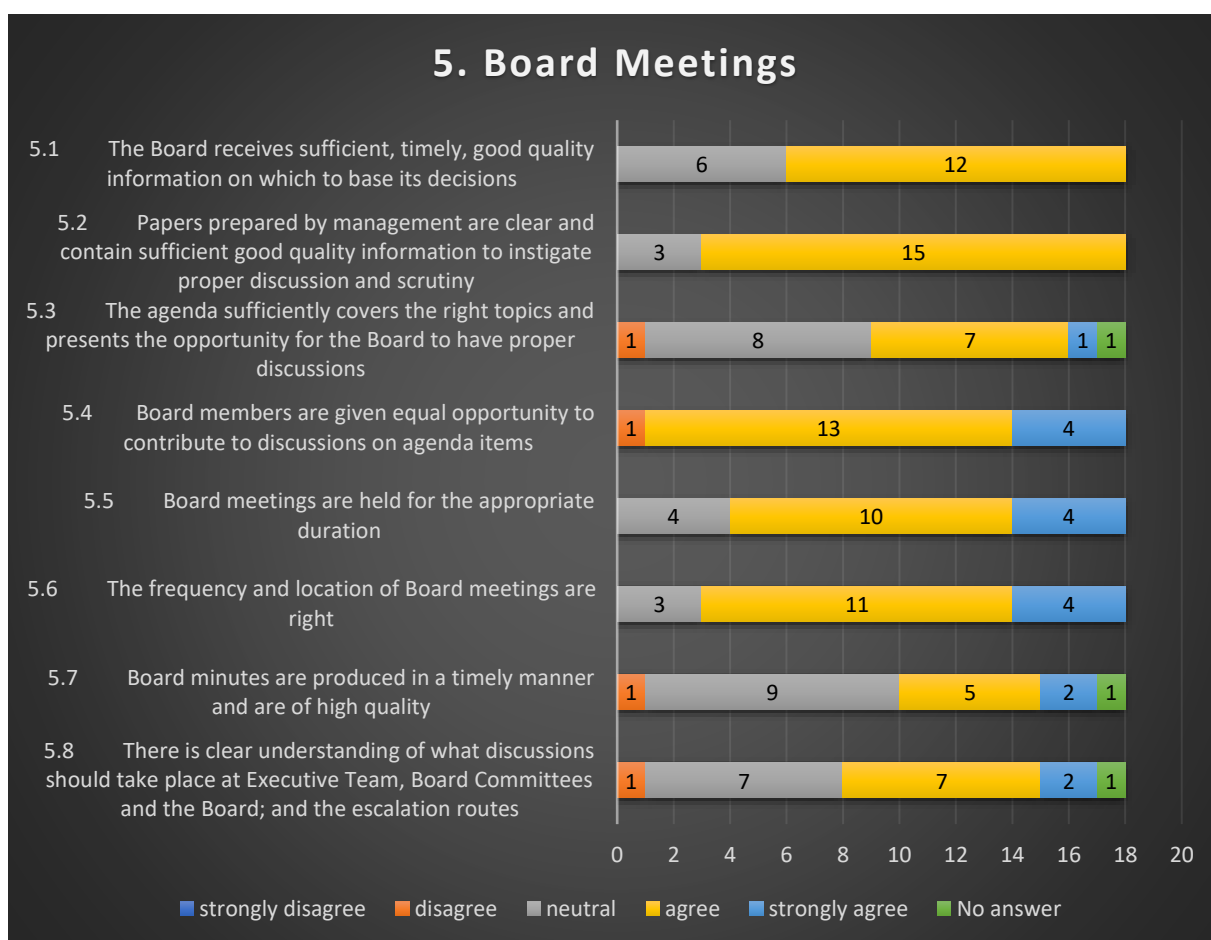
## 5. Board Meetings

This section covered board meetings administration, agendas, board minutes and opportunity to contribute at meetings. Eight questions were considered under this section. One board member (executive director) did not answer questions 5.3, 5.7 and 5.8.

78% (14) and 83% (15) respectively agreed or strongly agreed that board meetings are held for the appropriate duration, and the frequency and location of board meetings are right. Similarly, 83% agreed that the papers prepared by management are clear and are of good quality. However, one of the comments was that while the board meetings themselves are generally good, there is considerable scope for improving the quality of board papers so that they clearly state what is required from the board and provide the information for the board in a clear and concise way. 94% either agreed or strongly agreed that board members are given equal opportunities to contribute to discussions on agenda items.

One of the areas clearly flagged as an area for improvement is producing high quality Board minutes in a timely manner. 59% (10) were either neutral or disagreed this was the case. Similarly, 53% (9) did not feel that the agenda sufficiently covered the right topics, although the remaining 47% believed this was the case.

A summary of the scores for this section is shown in the table below:



The comments made under this section are listed below.

#### **Comments on Board Meetings:**

- While the board meetings themselves are generally good there is considerable scope for improving the quality of board papers so that they clearly state what is required from the board and provide the information for the board in a clear and concise way.
- In common with Board Effectiveness, we have more to do in this area. I do not think the split format of meetings public/private helps much but fear we are stuck with it.
- I'd like to see more time given to analysis of performance - see above – and to free discussion about the risks and issues the organisation faces and how these will be developed, involving the Board. E.g., the Board have not had a discussion on workforce planning.
- I would suggest we drop the Guest speakers and use the Board dinners as a working session for Exec and NEDs to discuss a topical issue. E.g., Governance teach-in, Risk Appetite, EDI strategy, Workforce Planning, Donor Experience Strategy etc.
- Board Minutes are far too slow to arrive. That does not help anyone.
- Data is limited. I do see one or 2 board members taking more “air-time” than others. The board minutes could improve.
- Not seen sufficient meetings in order to assess but do consider that papers are too long and do not highlight key points. Additional opportunities to discuss matters in detail and strategically would be beneficial.

#### **Recommendations**

- 5a. The Board should consider introducing or reinstating in-person board seminars and teamworking events with sufficient time for informal discussion, and a forward plan of topics agreed by the Board.
- 5b. The Board should consider thoroughly reviewing the Board forward plan at every meeting, to determine whether the items on the plan, which informs the agenda, sufficiently cover the right topic.
- 5c. The Board should be provided with an improved quality of the board minutes and circulate to the Board within two weeks of the meeting.

## 6. Board Composition

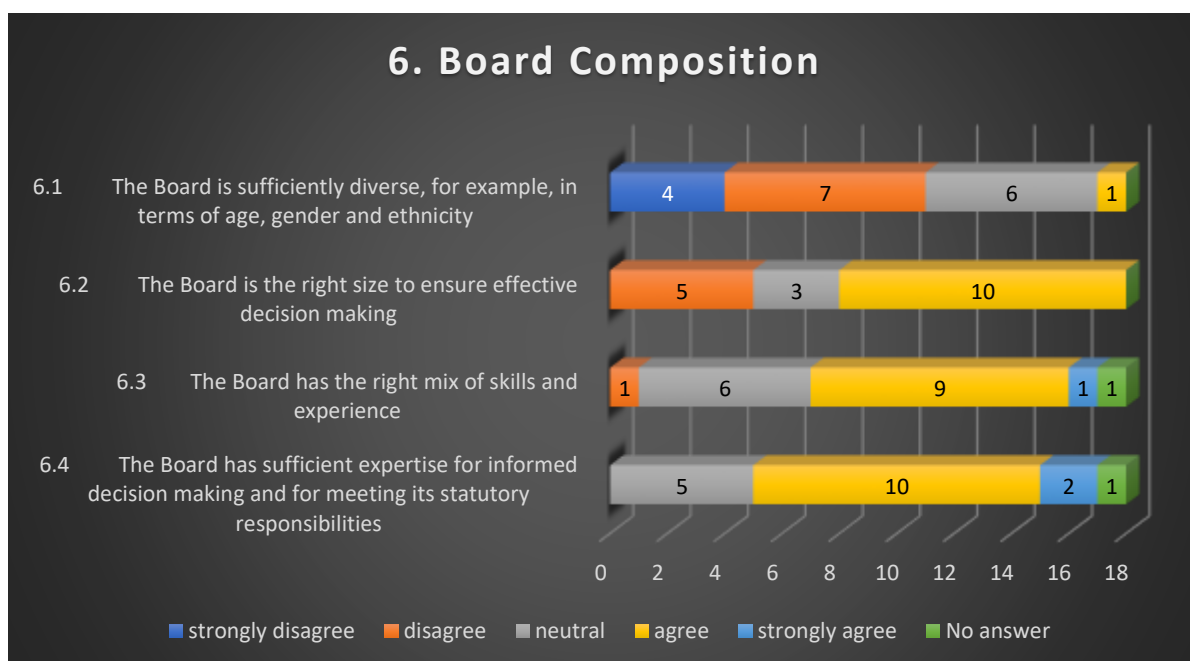
This section covered the composition of the Board – skills mix, diversity, expertise and right size. Four questions were considered under this section. One board member (executive director) did not answer questions 6.3 and 6.4.

The question on whether the Board is sufficiently diverse, for example, in terms of age, gender and ethnicity, scored poorly, with only 6% (1) of board members in agreement, 61% disagreeing (22% strongly disagree) and 33% neutral. This reinforces 4.8, where 76% board members either disagreed (52%) or were neutral (24%) on the Board having the right blend of skills, expertise and personalities, and the appropriate degree of diversity.

Even though 56% (10) board members agreed that the board is the right size to ensure effective decision making, the remaining 44% either disagreed or were neutral. Two board members commented that the Board is really too large for really effective conversation and decision making, and the addition of extra attendees adds very little value.

It was also commented that the NED team have been under strength and consequently without the full range of necessary skills available, which is not good for governance, executive support or workload. However, one member noted that the recruitment of NEDs will affect this position.

A summary of the scores for this section is shown in the table below:





The comments made under this section are listed below.

**Comments on Board Composition:**

- The appointment of a permanent Chief Executive and new non-executive directors should address the skills mix and expertise requirements.
- The Board, as it includes all the exec, is really too large and the addition of extra attendees adds very little value. The Exec numbers are a reflection of Exec specialisms and unless the exec structure were to change makes it hard to reduce numbers.
- For much of my time on the Board the NED team have been under strength and consequently without the full range of necessary skills available. This is not good for Governance, Exec support or workload.
- It's also time to get real about NED time expectations. To make a full contribution NEDs must have the opportunity to know more about the organisation – see above - and interact freely with Execs. The required time is probably 4-6 days pm for a NED, a bit more for a Sub-Committee chair.
- Insufficient diverse and too big for really effective conversation and decision making in my view.
- I understand that recruitment of additional NEDs may affect the above.

**Recommendation**

6. As per 4c above, the Board should consider introducing a board skills framework and undertaking a board skills matrix exercise and succession planning, once the new NEDs are on board. This should guide future recruitment of board members.

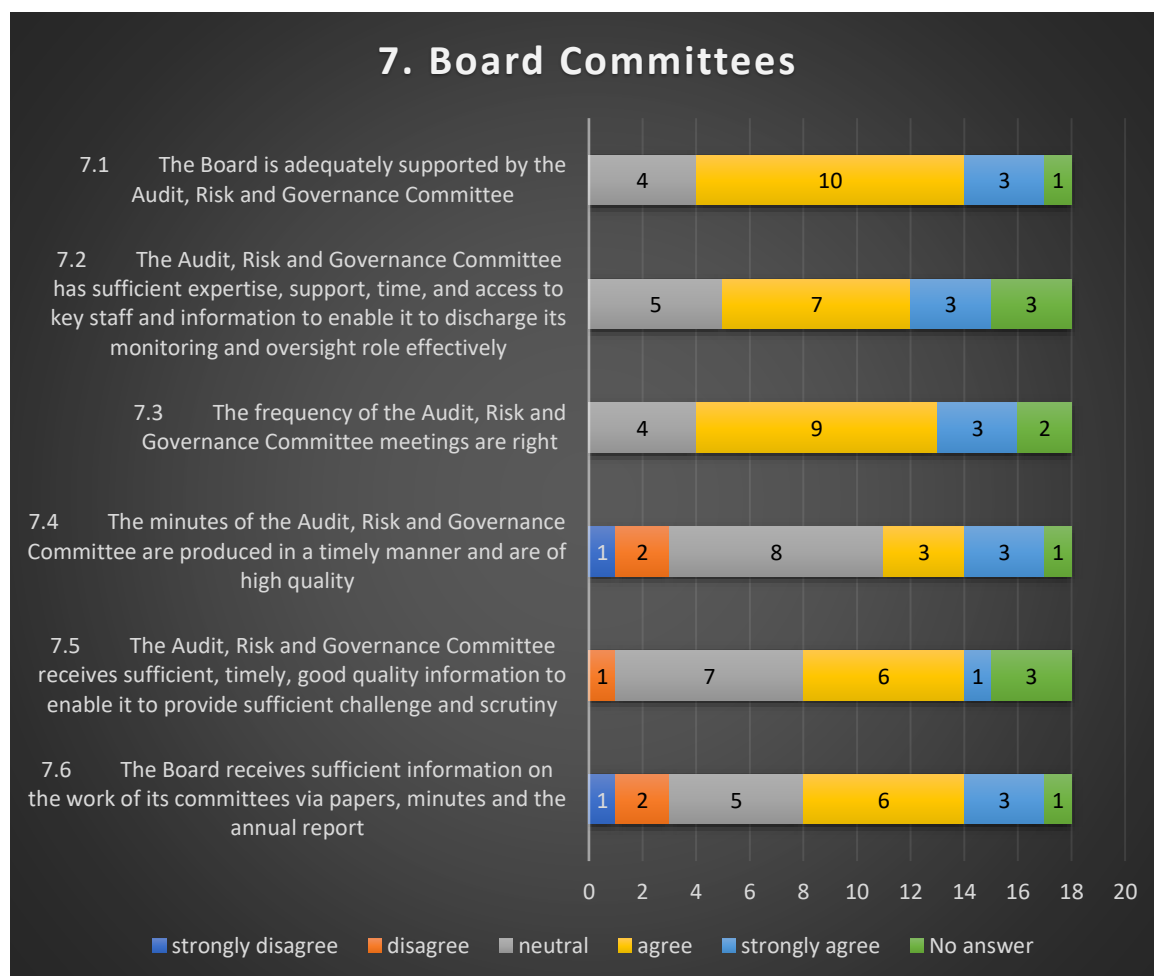
## 7. Board Committees

A new committee structure was approved by the Board in September 2022, which saw the introduction of a new Clinical Governance Committee, the dissolution of the Finance and Performance Committee, and the remit of the People Committee changed. This section mainly considered the Audit, Risk and Governance Committee (ARGC), to give time to the other committees to embed. A review of the effectiveness of all Board committees will be undertaken in six months' time.

Two NEDs did not score 7.2 and 7.5; and one of those did not also score 7.3. One executive director did not complete this section. Aspirations for the People Committee and Clinical Governance Committee (questions 7.7 and 7.8) were not required to be scored. However, these were scored in two cases and these scores were discounted.

As with section five, an improvement is required in producing high quality and timely minutes for the ARGC, with 82% strongly disagreed, disagreed or neutral. There was general agreement that the Board is adequately supported by the ARGC and the frequency of the ARGC meetings are right. Even though 67% of board members either agreed or strongly agreed that the ARGC has sufficient expertise, support and time to enable it to discharge its duties, a comment was made that the committee has had a very wide remit and the skills have not always been available. It is hoped that the arrival of new NEDs on the Board will address some of the skills gaps. The Board was split on the ARGC receiving sufficient and timely good quality information.

A summary of the scores for this section is shown in the table below:



### Question 7.7

#### People Committee: what are your aspirations and expectations for this committee?

- The People Committee needs to provide support and challenge to NHSBT based on an up-to-date knowledge and experience of People issues and management across both the public and private sectors. It must also be able to provide assurance to the board on People policies, planning and development.
- An EDI strategy and a credible workforce plan.
- To improve culture and management skills within NHSBT.
- People, staffing, and culture – doing committee rather than just assurance.
- That the Committee provides assurance to the Board that the people strategy is being delivered and is effective. Provides assurance that attraction, retention, performance and succession planning for critical roles is in place and effective.
- Ensure people plans (now & future) are linked to delivery of the NHSBT strategy.
- Ensure policies enable recruitment/retention: business continuity.
- Intense focus on ensuring we have the staff we need in these immensely challenging recruitment & retention times.

### Question 7.8

#### Clinical Governance Committee: what are your aspirations and expectations for this committee?

- The CGC should be able to provide assurance to the board that clinical issues are well managed, investigated as necessary and that lessons are learned where relevant.
- A full sense of upcoming Clinical Risk areas and how our work can contribute to Health Equalities.
- To maintain high standards of clinical governance.
- Ensure clinical risks to NHSBT are managed.
- Assure both development and implementation of NHSBTs clinical governance. Ensure a robust framework is in place.
- Ensure legal requirements are met.
- That the Committee provides assurance to the Board that the key clinical systems and processes are effective and robust. That the Committee reviews and evaluations work to reduce health inequalities.

The comments made under this section are listed below.

#### Comments on internal audit and corporate reporting:

- There remains more work to be done to align our Internal Audit resources – GIAA, Clinical Audit and Quality Audit – and have one reporting system for follow up actions. Our Annual R&A needs further development, especially in the ESG space. (We lack an Environmental strategy).

- The Audit Committee has had a very wide remit and the skills have not always been available. I hope this can change soon with additional NEDs arriving.
- The Minute production is still problematic.
- There remains more work to be done in creating new and effective Sub-committees. At the time of writing, it is unclear how they are to be resourced. NED's, Execs and CoSec. My personal view is that I would like to have seen us take a little more time to get the planning of this change right before trying to implement. That said, I'm doing my best to look for dropping balls.
- Limited data but interestingly I have no real understanding of the different committees and it is not part of any onboarding.
- No ARGC minutes have been circulated to the Board for c.1 year! The unanswered questions can only be answered by ARGC members.
- I marked down 7.5 because I don't think the minutes have been shared with the full board and the updates in board are verbal.

### Recommendations

- 7a. The Board should be provided with copies of the minutes of Board committees after committee meetings and produce written assurance reports (rather than verbal updates) summarising deliberations of the meetings.
- 7b. The Board should be provided with a document showing the Board committee structure with a summary of the mandate of every committee and committee membership.
- 7c. The comments on the aspirations and expectations of the People Committee and Clinical Governance Committee should be fed back to the respective committees to inform their workplans.
- 7d. The internal audit resources (GIAA, clinical audit, and quality audit) should be aligned and one reporting system for follow up actions introduced.

## 8. General Section

The General Section was designed to determine how well directors work outside of board meetings, the challenge and support from NEDs, and board members' understanding of the organisation to be able to fully contribute. It also examined board members' perception of the Board's effectiveness since the last effectiveness review was undertaken.

Board members were to comment and not provide scores; however, few board members provided scores. These scores were discounted, as this will not give the views of majority of board members. Narratives provided to the questions are detailed below.

### 8.1 How well do Board members work outside of Board meetings?

- NEDs are very generous with their time but are not always asked to spend it well. Some EDs do not recognise the experience that NEDs can bring (others do and take proper advantage). Agreeing clear objectives for all NEDs will be important with periodic informal review during the year to make sure the objectives are being met.
- Good interaction with most of the Execs. NEDs could probably talk to each other a bit more.
- Well.
- Work well with Executive colleagues.
- Good. NEDs are approachable generally and have always been supportive/helpful.
- I have good relationships with key NEDs who support me and are available if I need them.
- More critical friend 1 2 1 chats would help.
- Very well.
- Not that much communication between meetings these days.
- Good collaboration through committee structure and review of Board papers.
- The Board dinner facilitates good discussion and a space for strategic conversations.
- Consideration could be given to creating more opportunities for strategic planning/ brainstorming.
- Really good working between NEDs and Execs on specific topics.
- Not known.
- Recent meetings called with the Board to discuss CQC and Blood stocks were helpful and supportive.

### 8.2 Are non-executive directors given the opportunity to support the executive directors?

- Not universally. Executive Directors need to be encouraged to consult with NEDs to support them where possible and relevant.
- Yes, in my experience.
- Yes (x3)
- NEDs need to take the opportunity, not wait to be given it.
- I don't spend time with NEDs outside of board meetings.
- Yes, but could we be more structured? (without more time).
- In the area of pre-reviewing papers – yes. In other areas, less so
- Support is typically focused on business case review and through the formal committees.

- Yes, but perhaps we could be more formal in aligning NEDS to Execs to ensure the best value is added.
- Yes, I think so - having said that I have seen less of the NEDs in the last year than previously. Tricky getting support for consultant interviews though...and it's a statutory requirement.
- Uncertain on this and therefore suggests there is opportunity to do more of this.
- Not known.

**8.3 Do executive directors feel they have the right support and challenge from non-executive directors?**

- Yes (x2)
- Yes, I think so – having said that I have seen less of the NEDs in the last year than previously. Tricky getting support for consultant interviews though...and it's a statutory requirement.
- On the whole, yes.
- Received excellent robust and constructive challenge. Interactions always generate a value add.
- In general, yes.
- Not known.
- Non-Execs provide good challenge and support, but I would expect slightly more challenge than I have witnessed.

**8.4 Do you have sufficiently wide and deep understanding of the organisation to be able to contribute fully, and if not, what do you suggest to make this happen?**

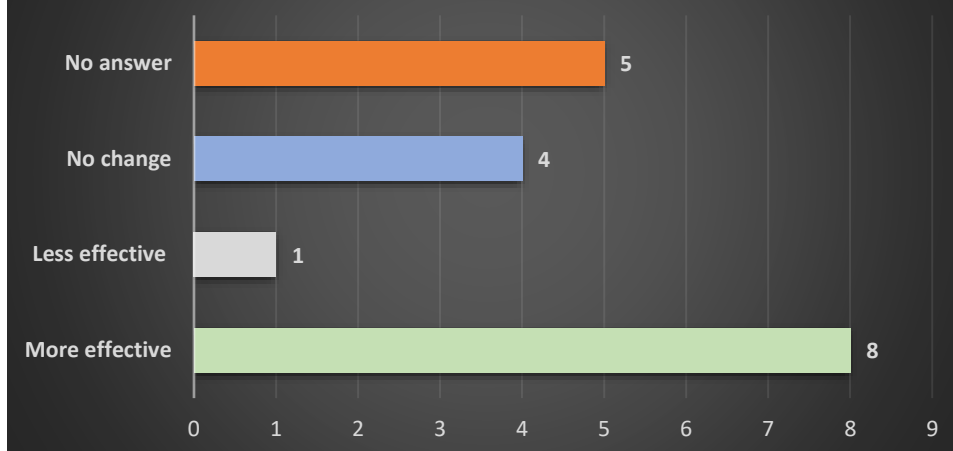
- Yes (x4)
- More work needs to be done with a continual education programme and I'd suggest this can link to informal Board dinner topics for discussion.
- For People Committee, shadow key jobs.
- Sufficient.
- Yes – but I think understanding on clinical services is still comparatively reduced in some execs and NEDs.
- Deeper understanding would always help but more visits both with board and outside board are most useful.
- I think site visits by non-execos should become more structured.
- Confirm, this is the case.
- Board and Exec need to be more visible and be closer to the operation of NHSBT to get a better understanding of what is happening and the realities for our staff.

**8.5 Since the last board effectiveness review, is the board more, or less, effective?**

For the NEDs, three out of seven agreed that the Board is more effective since the last effectiveness review; one thinks it is less effective; two no change; and one did not answer. Five executive directors think the Board is more effective; two stated no change; and four did not answer. The reason for the non-response could be due to the limited time some of them have been on the Board, as noted earlier.

The graph below summarises answers given to this question.

### 8.5 Since the last board effectiveness review, is the board more, or less, effective?



The comments made under this section are listed below.

#### Comments on General Section:

- The board is on a journey and has made considerable progress since the previous board effectiveness review but there is still quite a way to go before the answers to all the questions above would be 5. Recent additions to the Executive team, the forthcoming influx of new NEDs together with support and guidance from Jan and Brenda will enable board effectiveness to develop at pace.
- First, I am delighted we have adopted this Board Evaluation good practice. Having drawn a quantifiable benchmark, we can now look to build and measure improvement.
- Good outcomes depend upon having the right understanding of the organisation, the resources (Exec and NED) available to work on the missing pieces and a list of Board priorities which I expect to come out of this exercise.
- I am delighted we have Jan and Brenda available to support furthering our Governance capability as we start from a pretty low place for an organisation of our scale. We must ensure, as with Risk Management, the teams have the resources they need to help us do our job better.
- The Board and the organisation have had a difficult year and needs to spend some time working together and re-building.
- A lot of senior leadership change has meant it's hard to say if we're more effective – with so many new NEDs joining, I'd like to see more time outside of board to onboard them and NED & Exec time together.
- Feels a more inclusive board last 2 months with chair involving and consulting NEDs more and an interim CEO who is very inclusive of exec team and wider team. Keep involving, consulting and thinking positively.

#### Recommendation

8. The Board should make conscious effort to build the relationship between the NEDs and executive directors and ensure they know each other and the organisation well enough to mount effective challenge and provide effective support. [This links with recommendation 5a].

## **4. Conclusion**

The Board is broadly in agreement on the areas that are working well and those that require improvement. Even though 62% of board members (excluding the five who did not provide a response - this will reduce to 44% if they are included) think that the Board has become more effective since the last Board effectiveness review, there is considerable amount of work to be done to get the Board to a position where all Board members can be confident that the Board is truly effective.

## **5. Next Steps**

An action plan will be presented at the next Board meeting in March, after the Board discusses and approves or amends the proposed recommendations. This action plan will be added to the governance action plan following the Care Quality Commission Well Led Inspection Report.

Another Board effectiveness review will be carried out in six months' time alongside the Board Committees' effectiveness review.