

Muckamore Abbey Hospital Inquiry

Organisational Module 9 – Trust Board

WITNESS STATEMENT OF MARTIN DILLON

I, Martin Dillon, former Chief Executive Officer within the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (the Belfast Trust), make the following statement for the purposes of the Muckamore Abbey Hospital Inquiry (the MAH Inquiry):

1. This is my fourth witness statement to the MAH Inquiry. I make this statement to deal with a necessary correction arising from my third witness statement dated 30 May 2024, filed in relation to Organisational Module 9, and in relation to the oral evidence I gave to the MAH Inquiry on 9 October 2024. The correction relates to the date of my initial knowledge of allegations of abuse at MAH in later 2017.
2. The documents that I refer to in this statement can be found in the exhibit bundle attached to this statement marked "MD4".
3. At paragraph 53 of my third witness statement, and during my oral evidence, I confirmed that, to the best of my recollection, I first became aware of concerns at MAH on 20 October 2017 when I received a joint letter from the Department of Health's then Chief Social Work Officer and then Chief Nursing Officer. I did acknowledge during my oral evidence that my recollection on this issue may not be correct, and, subsequent to my oral evidence, I have become aware that my previous recollection in respect of this issue was definitely not correct.
4. Since providing my oral evidence to the MAH Inquiry, I have had the opportunity to consider the minutes of a Belfast Trust Executive Team meeting that occurred on

27 September 2017. A copy of the minutes of that meeting are exhibited behind Tab 1 of the exhibit bundle. Unfortunately, at this remove, I have no actual recollection of this meeting, however the minutes show that I chaired the meeting. The minutes also confirm, that under "Any Other Business" (see page 6 of the minutes), "*Marie Heaney advised Executive Team in relation to a serious incident in the PICU ward in Muckamore.*"

5. Whilst I do not myself have a recollection of the meeting, nor what Marie Heaney said about MAH at the meeting, having had the opportunity to consider the minutes, it is clear to me that I must have known about concerns arising in Muckamore Abbey Hospital from at least 27 September 2017. The reason I say I must have known from "at least" 27 September 2017 is that I cannot rule out having been informed on some earlier date, although unfortunately I also have no recollection about being informed any earlier. I do know that in September 2017 the Belfast Trust was undertaking a major public consultation exercise in relation to financial savings proposals, which included proposals to reduce some services, and that I was heavily involved in this process and, unfortunately, it is that that I do have memory of from that time rather than anything connected to MAH. This exercise resulted in an extraordinary Trust Board meeting in mid-October to take decisions upon the proposals consulted upon with which I was heavily involved.
6. When I became aware that the evidence I had given to the MAH Inquiry was inaccurate, I instructed the solicitors assisting me to immediately correspond with the MAH Inquiry about it. A letter was sent to the MAH Inquiry on 11 October 2024. This prompted a response from the MAH Inquiry on 14 October 2024 requesting that I set out my clarification in a supplemental witness statement, which I now do. Copies of the Directorate of Legal Service's letter of 11 October 2024 and the MAH Inquiry's response of 14 October 2024 are exhibited behind Tab 2 of the exhibit bundle.
7. I wish to sincerely apologise to the MAH Inquiry that the evidence I gave previously on the above issue was not accurate. I wish to assure the MAH Inquiry that my previous evidence was given in good faith, and to the best of my recollection.

Having now considered material that bears on the issue, I am also grateful for the opportunity to correct the record accordingly.

8. I also gave oral evidence to the MAH Inquiry that I believed I was on leave in late September 2017. I explained that unfortunately it is no longer possible to access my electronic diary. I now believe, having seen the minutes of the Executive Team meeting of 27 September 2017, that my belief about being on leave in late September 2017 cannot be correct. I do believe, however, that I definitely was on leave between 16 October 2017 and 30 October 2017. This is reflected by my absence from the records of various meetings that occurred during that period.
9. The result of me being on leave between 16 and 30 October 2017 means that I was not present when the 20 October 2017 letter from the Department of Health's then Chief Social Work Officer and then Chief Nursing Officer was received into the Belfast Trust. It is therefore likely that, in my absence, the letter would have been brought to the attention of Dr Cathy Jack, the then Deputy Chief Executive. It is likely that Dr Jack will, in my absence, have taken the initial steps in relation to the necessary response.
10. In my oral evidence, I said that I raised the matter of MAH with the then Chairman of the Belfast Trust, Mr Peter McNaney, upon learning of the 20 October 2017 letter received from the Chief Social Work Officer and Chief Nursing Officer. Having reflected on the timing of my absence from work, I believe that the conversation with the Chairman of the Belfast Trust is likely to have taken place upon my return to work on Monday 30 October 2017.
11. I apologise again that it has been necessary for me to correct the record and wish to again thank the MAH Inquiry for the opportunity to do so.

Declaration of Truth

12. The contents of this witness statement are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signed: Martin Dillion

Dated: 25 October 2024

Martin Dillon Organisational Module 9 Exhibit Bundle "MD4"		
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**Minutes of the Executive Team Meeting held on
27 September, 2017 at 9.00 pm
Boardroom, Trust Headquarters, Belfast City Hospital**

Present:

Mr Martin Dillon, Chief Executive (Chair)
Dr Cathy Jack, Deputy Chief Executive/Medical Director
Mr Aidan Dawson, Director Specialist Hospitals and Women's Health
Mrs Maureen Edwards, Director Finance, Estates and Capital Development
Mrs Caroline Leonard, Director Surgery and Specialist Services
Mr Damian McAlister, Director Human Resources/Organisational Development
Mrs Bernie Owens, Director Unscheduled and Acute Care
Mrs Jennifer Welsh, Director of Performance, Planning and Informatics
Mr Cecil Worthington, Director Social Work/Children's Community Services/Adult, Social and Primary Care
Mrs Bronagh Dalzell, Head of Communications
Miss Brenda Creaney, Director of Nursing and User Experience
Mrs Marie Heaney, Director Adult Social and Primary Care

Apology:

Ms Claire Cairns, Head of Office

In Attendance:

Mrs Angela Muldoon, PA, Minute Taker

Mr Dillon noted that our thoughts are with Claire at this difficult time

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes held on 13 September 2017 were considered and approved.

2. Matters Arising – Action Log

2.3 PHA – Proposed Operating Model

Mr Dillon thanked colleagues for comments received on the draft PHA proposed operating model this will be discussed at the next TIG meeting on 4 October.

3.2 Assurance Framework Review Meeting

New date to be agreed

3.3 Meeting with Deborah McNeilly

Martin will update on the meeting with Deborah McNeilly

4.1 Performance Improvement Trajectories

Mrs Welsh advised the trajectories paper has been submitted

5.2 Accommodation on Knockbracken site

Mrs Edwards advised she has written to Mr Forde agreeing to a meeting.

6.3 Fire Safety Assessments

Cancer Centre and Fire Safety, paper being prepared for Trust Board on 5 October

3. Chief Executive's Update

New Appointment

The Chief Executive congratulated Mrs Jennifer Welsh on her recent appointment to the post of Director of Operations/Deputy Chief Executive with the Northern Trust.

3.1 Delivering Together

Mr Dillon advised that the presentation from Niall Herity regarding Elective Care would not be going ahead, as the report was commissioned by the TIG the recommendations would be presented at the next TIG meeting in October. Papers from the recent TIG meeting have been distributed to Executive Directors and NED's

3.2 Inspire Community Resilience Centre Invitation

Cecil Worthington or Marie Heaney to advise who should attend Inspire Community Resilience Centre event.

Meeting with HSCB

A meeting has been arranged with the HSCB for this Friday at 3.30 pm, Jennifer Welsh etc attending. Mr Dillon thanked everyone for their efforts in attending the sessions with the various groups that have been taking place over the last few weeks. Special thanks were noted for Ann McBrien, Bernie McQuillan and Orla Barron for the outstanding work that has been going on, gives a great sense of collective working.

Savings Plans/Meeting with Deborah McNeilly

Mr Dillon updated Executive Team in relation to the on-going dialogue with the Department of Health

Mrs Welsh advised that there are a range of reports/recommendations coming out the Public Consultation including the EQIA. A brief report will summarise the Consultation, EQIA, Commissioning Plan etc.

Jennifer noted that the meeting taking place this Friday is a follow up to the individual meetings with the PHA etc to look at regional implications. Jennifer to liaise with Michael Bloomfield regarding how the meeting will be managed.

Mr Dillon advised that the Medical Director, Executive Director of Nursing and Executive Director of Social Work had been invited to attend the Chief Executive's meeting on 2 October for discussions around savings plans.

Contract for the New Maternity Hospital

Martin advised the Contract for the new Maternity Hospital had been signed earlier today, this will provide facilities for looking after mothers and babies from across Northern Ireland.

5. Continuous Improvement

5.1 Definition Top 20% UK Trust safe, health, quality, compassionate care

Dr Jack advised that this resulted from a conversation with George Findley from the Western Sussex Trust that was voted the Safest Hospital at the recent Patient Safety Awards. Western Sussex has clarified their 7 metrics which they compare against all UK acute Trusts including family and friends test, budget, staff engagement etc. We now need to agree measurement of this which should include markers of quality, safety, experience and effectiveness.

Damian McAlister expressed his support for this initiative which is timely as the paper for Divisional Development [and accreditation] Process was agreed at the Collective Leadership Operational Group meeting yesterday. This will come to Executive Team meeting next week for approval. Damian advised that 25 October has been agreed as the date for the first workshop for Tier 3 and above.

Corporate Plan

Jennifer Welsh gave an update on the ongoing work with the corporate plan. The 3-year Plan has to go to the Department by January 2018. Jennifer is working on the four objectives that will shape the Corporate Plan.

It was agreed to identify a date for a further Executive Team workshop in November

Mrs Leonard asked would it be useful to have a programme check at the weekly Executive Team meeting in relation to the Assurance Framework/Collective Leadership/Organisational Culture/Performance Management/Corporate Plan

Circulate the report from the Executive Team Workshop earlier this year

Arrange a further meeting with Irene Hewitt for Martin and Damian

Check out who has a list of all the new appointments for Divisional Nurses etc

Discussion took place when Executive Team were advised of the suggestion yesterday that there would be 14 divisional e-mail addresses that can be

accessed by individuals when colleagues are on leave etc, further exploration required regarding the practicalities of this.

5.2 External Duties

Dr Jack advised that The Trust recently received correspondence signed by the Presidents of Royal Colleges and the Chief Medical Officer, encouraging the Trust to support medical staff in various external professional roles. These would traditionally include attendance at College meetings, examining, or roles with the regulators.

The Senior Medical Leaders in the Trust discussed this matter and agreed an approach that included no change in the 5-days discretionary leave and that all expenses must come from the college or external bodies.

5.3 Job Shadow Day

Mrs Welsh advised that this is a European initiative regarding supported employment with various agencies and requested agreement from Executive Team that we are content to support. Executive Team content to support.

5.4 Positive Action – Learning Disability

BHSCT currently has a number of ring-fenced posts specifically for Mental Health Service Users through our Exemplar Employer Scheme. This has been developed in partnership with HR, Occupational Health and externally with the Equality Commission's support from. The proposal is to replicate this initiative in Learning Disability Services and secure a number of posts specifically for those with a learning disability. The initiative will start with a 10 – 12 week training programme where potential applicants will get taster sessions for posts and then will have the opportunity to go through a selection process for permanent positions. Executive Team agreed Proposal should go forward.

5.6 Snapshot of Trust activity

This was requested recently, Mrs Welsh advised that the infographic outlines the Trust's monthly activity and can be added to or changed as required. This shows us the top 10 metrics, Executive Team agreed we should proceed with this on a regular basis. Bronagh Dalzell to liaise with Jennifer Welsh's team.

5.7 Delayed Discharges

Correspondence was sent to the Directors of Performance from the HSCB following a meeting chaired by the Chief Nursing Officer in September. It was agreed that Trusts would develop initial transformational proposals for discussion including what services are currently in place and what, within current resources, will be subject to change and improvement by January 2018 and service transformation initiatives which can be delivered on the ground by January 2018. Meetings will be set up with each individual Trust to prepare for submission of the proposals to the Department of Health at the end of October 2017. Marie Heaney has a meeting arranged for Thursday 28 September.

5.8 Trust Board Workshop

Discussion took place around the agenda items for the Trust Board Workshop on 5 October. Work on the Trust Development Plan is on-going, Corporate Plan, Performance Management, emerging issues 6 South, Update on Domiciliary Care, EI/Neuro, Fire Safety update, Finance verbal update, Safetember update.

6. Resources – Finance

a. 2017/18 Financial Planning/Savings Plans

Discussed during Chief Executive's update.

b. Request for Accommodation on Knockbracken Site

Mrs Edwards advised she has written to Mr Gerry Ford, and agreed to meet to discuss the proposal in more detail

c. Internal Audit Catering Report

Miss Creaney advised she had brought this report to Executive Team meeting to agree who will lead on the Directorate actions in relation to external catering orders and to ensure we have appropriate arrangements in place. The paper will be presented at the next Audit Committee and Miss Creaney is keen that we write a Hospitality Policy outlining our process that covers food safety. Miss Creaney advised that catering staff can support most functions given the appropriate notice.

8. Safety and Excellence

a. HCAI Recovery Plan

Miss Creaney updated Executive Team in relation to this week's report. Cdiff is showing a slight downturn in incidents, we are slightly below target, still concerns with the multiple transfer of patients. MRSA is showing the worst performance this year and since last February. The outbreak in Children's has not been certified by the PHA. It is thought that one of the 4A cases may have potentially contributed to the death of a patient. There has been an increased incidence in Meadowlands. We are seeing some improvement in Cdiff performance but MRSA is a concern. Still some concerns around contamination of samples. There is increased incident of CPO in CS ICU and 2 North. ASPC has one new case. Specialist Hospitals and Women's Health no new cases of Cdiff, 1 case of MRSA. Overall for September 3 cases of Cdiff and 4 of MRSA.

b. USC Hot Update

Mrs Owens advised that we continue to be under significant pressure at the RVH, last week there were over 1600 attendances, this is slightly higher than in the corresponding week last year. Mrs Owens noted that the 4-hour performance has dipped. Fractures are still under pressure. A meeting has been arranged for 4.00 pm today with Neuro and Fractures that Mrs Owens is chairing regarding outliers etc. Bernie noted that the pressure on staff is immense

9. Media/PR Round-up

Mrs Dalzell updated Executive Team on this week's media interest including contact from the Nolan show in relation to two of our patients. Bronagh will discuss with Marie Heaney. It was noted that a new Director of Communications has been appointed to the Department of Health. The lanyards for various staff have been received, thought that the white version should be changed to a darker colour

10. Any other business

Domiciliary Care

A paper is being prepared for next week's Executive Team. Marie Heaney advised that there are serious concerns regarding the effect of the procurement process. Mrs Heaney advised she has been liaising with colleagues in Scotland and Wales and is seeking legal advice with regard to procurement.

Mrs Owens advised that Seamus McGirr is here for a Winter Resilience Plan workshop on 16 October.

Marie Heaney advised Executive Team in relation to a serious incident in the PICU ward in Muckamore.

Martin Dillon noted that this is Mr Worthington's last Executive Team meeting before his imminent retirement. Everyone agreed that Cecil will be greatly missed, a reception has been arranged to pay tribute to his contribution over the years in HSC immediately after the ET meeting.

11. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place at 1.00 pm on Wednesday 4 October, in the Boardroom, A Floor, Belfast City Hospital.



Directorate of Legal Services
2 Franklin Street, Belfast, BT2 8DQ

Orla Henderson
Assistant Solicitor MAH Inquiry
1st floor, The Corn Exchange
31 Gordon Street
Belfast
BT1 2LG

11 October 2024
REF: MPIB006 00001

Dear Orla

RE: MAHI and evidence of Martin Dillon

I write on behalf of Martin Dillon, former Chief Executive of the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (Belfast Trust), who gave oral evidence to the MAH Inquiry Panel on Wednesday 9 October 2024.

At paragraph 53 of the third witness statement from Mr Dillon (STM-272-19), and during his oral evidence, Mr Dillon confirmed that, to the best of his recollection, he first became aware of concerns at MAH on 20 October 2017 when he received a joint letter from the Department of Health's Chief Social Work Officer and Chief Nursing Officer (STM-272-335).

Since providing his oral evidence to the MAH Inquiry, Mr Dillon has had the opportunity to see the minutes of an Executive Team meeting that occurred on 27 September 2017 (disclosed to the MAH Inquiry on 2 May 2024). Mr Dillon was the Chair of that meeting. The minutes confirm, under "Any Other Business" (see page 6 of the



minutes), that “*Marie Heaney advised Executive Team in relation to a serious incident in the PICU ward in Muckamore.*”

Having had the opportunity to consider the minutes of 27 September 2017, Mr Dillon wished to immediately express both his apology and his embarrassment to the MAH Inquiry. It is now clear to Mr Dillon that he must have known about concerns arising in Muckamore Abbey Hospital from at least 27 September 2017. Mr Dillon puts the date of his knowledge as being at least 27 September 2017, because, as he explained in his evidence, his recollection is that he first became aware on 20 October 2017. Mr Dillon is now clear that his recollection on this issue cannot be right, and so, while clear that he must have known by 27 September 2017, he also cannot rule out having been informed on some earlier date.

Having considered the matter further, and in the absence of his electronic diary, Mr Dillon believes that it is unlikely he was on annual leave in September 2017, but was on annual leave from 16 October 2017 until 30 October 2017. Mr Dillon considers this will mean that Dr Jack, then Deputy Chief Executive, will have had the 20 October 2017 letter from departmental officials brought to her attention in Mr Dillon’s absence, and it will have been Dr Jack who circulated the letter and instituted the initial actions in response, and that Mr Dillon will have been briefed on the issues on his return to work in and around 30 October 2017 in advance of the Trust Board meeting on 2 November 2017.

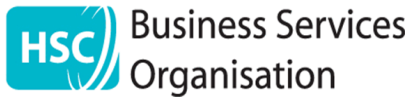
Mr Dillon is embarrassed that his recollection on the chronology of this issue is flawed, and sorry that he gave inaccurate evidence to the MAH Inquiry as a result.

Mr Dillon would be grateful if this letter could be brought to the urgent attention of the MAH Inquiry Panel.



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Directorate of Legal Services
2 Franklin Street, Belfast, BT2 8DQ

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'JMcManus'.

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PLEASE ENSURE THE DLS CASE REF IS PUT ON ALL CORRESPONDENCE WITH THIS OFFICE



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14 October 2024

By Email Only

Ms Jane McManus
Solicitor Consultant
Directorate of Legal Services
2 Franklin Street
Belfast
BT2 8DQ

Dear Ms McManus

Re Muckamore Abbey Hospital Inquiry: Evidence of Martin Dillon

I refer to your correspondence of 11 October 2024 relating to the evidence of Martin Dillon and I confirm that a copy of your letter has been provided to the Inquiry Panel as requested.

I would be grateful if Mr Dillon could prepare a short supplementary statement to clarify the position as set out in your correspondence.

Please note that there is some urgency to this request owing to the Inquiry's current timescale for evidence. I would therefore be grateful if the supplementary statement could be provided by no later than **Thursday 17 October 2024.**

Should you have any queries in respect to the above please do not hesitate to contact solicitor@mahinquiry.org.uk.

Yours faithfully,



Orla Henderson
Assistant Solicitor to the Inquiry