**Looking to the future: our areas of focus for 20/21**

I’d like to take the opportunity as we begin to look forwards to thank each and every one of you for the work you have put in over the last three months. To say it has been a difficult time is an understatement but it has been powerful to see how colleagues across the Trust and wider health and care system have come together to provide safe services to our communities under intense pressure.

Particularly now against the backdrop of coronavirus (COVID-19), things are changing very fast. Though the pandemic has put many things on hold and remains at the forefront of our thoughts, we must continue to move forwards in other equally important areas.

Usually at this time of the year, we have shared our priorities for the upcoming financial year so that all colleagues and our patients, visitors and local communities know about the areas that we are focusing on for the upcoming year.

This didn’t quite work out as it would usually and when the pandemic hit, we had to review the priorities we had planned for this financial year (2020/21) and tweak them to allow us to not only deal with the here and now but also identify the areas that we really did not want to lose sight of.

The quality and safety of care that we all provide remains our key priority. To ensure we remain focused, and services 'recover and improve' as we emerge from the Coronavirus pandemic, we have set four headline areas of focus to guide all that we do:

1. **Dealing with the current COVID-19 pandemic as safely and effectively as we can**

We will:

* Maximise the power of Bay Health and Care Partners to support our communities across Morecambe Bay. We will share learning and make the right decisions regarding when and how we start to deliver ‘normal’ elective activity again
* Ensure we maintain a high awareness of those most at risk and continue to have regular, wide engagement with our communities so they know we are here when they need us
* Follow government guidance to make changes to our hospital layout and services to make changes to our hospital layout and services to create the safest, most effective environment to ensure patients are well cared for and our colleagues can deliver that care safely
* Invest in rest areas for colleagues

1. **Focus on colleague psychological and physical well-being**

We will:

* Support colleagues through the launch of the four stages in the Employee Health and Wellbeing Support Pack
* Continue implementation of Flourish at Work – including rest breaks, nutrition and hydration
* Deliver high quality, high value appraisal conversations

1. **Continued emphasis on quality and safety of services**

We will:

* Strengthen and demonstrate consistently strong levels of clinical engagement and ownership of key clinical governance, risk and assurance processes across all teams
* Ensure post COVID engagement and clinical leadership to deliver transformation of clinical services
* Deliver against Care Quality Commission and external/internal reviews, such as in Urology and Trauma and Orthopaedics, to support the delivery of clinically-led high standards of practice across every clinical team

1. **Post COVID-19 future - the work of our Recovery Cell**

We will:

* Recover from the adverse impact of COVID-19 on our operational performance, e.g. our waiting lists for patient care
* Focus on a new exciting model of delivering Outpatient services.
* Transform how patients ‘flow’ through the Royal Lancaster Infirmary and maximise new opportunities for Medical Unit 1
* Embed seven day working, as well as the excellent work of our social care colleagues, with timely discharges
* Ensure Theatres are operating at optimal efficiency and productivity 52 weeks of the year
* Work to further improve our financial position by reducing net costs in all areas compared with 2019/20

There are obviously lots of things going on and they by no means capture everything that is going on across the Trust but these are the things that we are committed to putting a real focus on.

I would like you all to take some time to consider how the role of you and your team impacts on each of these and what support you need from your leadership team to allow you to do what you need to do to make these happen. We all have a key part to play in moving our Trust forward and it is our job as your executive team to give you the tools and support you need to further improve services for our patients and make the experience of working here as positive as it can be.

We will continue to review these areas as nothing is standing still at the moment and as we progress through the year, we will share updates on how we are getting on.

I’d like to finish by thanking you all, once again, for all you continue to do – not only to help our fight against coronavirus but also to make our Trust the best it can be. I am incredibly proud to be your Chief Executive and I look forward to what we can achieve together this year.

**Aaron Cummins**

**Chief Executive**