

Witness Name:
Claire Raggett
Statement No.: 1
Exhibits: CR01- CR04
Dated: 13th June 2024

THIRLWALL INQUIRY

WITNESS STATEMENT OF CLAIRE RAGGETT

I, Claire Raggett, will say as follows: -

Personal Details

1. My name is Claire Elizabeth Raggett. I have been asked by the Thirlwall Inquiry to provide a witness statement providing information in response to questions asked of me by the Inquiry. I set out that information below.

Career and employment at the Countess of Chester Hospital (the "hospital")

2. I do not hold any professional qualifications. I have listed my qualifications and training below:
 - GCSES including English and Maths
 - European Computer Driving License (ECDL)
 - Level 3 Introductory Certificate in First Line Management (ILM)
 - Certified Data Protection Officer (The Knowledge Academy)
 - Training undertaken:
 - Executive PA Diploma (Pitman Training)
 - Effective recording of Board and Committee meetings (NHS Providers)
 - Introduction to Information Governance and additional modules (HSCIC)
 - Document Retention, Getting It Right (ICSA)
 - Records Management Levels 1 & 2 (PDP)
 - The Public Records Act 20 year rule (National Archives)
 - Emergency Preparedness and Response – Loggist course (Health Protection Agency)
 - Major Incident Decision Loggist Training Course (Public Health)

3. My roles since joining the Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Foundation Trust ("the Trust") are detailed below:

- **April 2008 to June 2010** – Appointed as PA to the Director of Nursing and Patient Services (Gaynor Hales) and the Risk and Clinical Governance Manager (Millie Bradshaw). This was a Band 4 Agenda for Change role.
 - Duties included providing an efficient and comprehensive, high quality administrative support; accurate co-ordination of diaries; preparation of draft agendas; distribution of meeting packs and minuting of meetings.

- **June 2010 to June 2013** – Appointed as PA to the Chairman (Sir Jim Sharples and subsequently Sir Duncan Nichol) and Director of Corporate and Legal Affairs (Stephen Cross) and Secretary to the Board. This was a Band 4 Agenda for Change role.
 - Duties included providing an efficient and comprehensive, high quality administrative support; accurate co-ordination of diaries to the Chairman and Director of Corporate and Legal Services; administrative secretary to the Board and Governors and their sub-committees;
 - Preparing draft agendas; collation and distribution of papers along with attendance at meetings to take the minutes;
 - Maintaining the register of interests; assisting in the compilation of dates and information for the annual report;
 - Administrative support of the Board Assurance Framework
 - Providing support to the Trust's silver control/emergency planning room and manage administrative cover with a team of appropriately trained staff as required for a major incident;
 - Supporting in collating responses to any Patient Advisory and Liaison Service (PALS) matters; complaints or MP letters received in the executive office in a confidential, empathetic manner, guiding and signposting as appropriate;
 - Assisting in the administration and planning of all Trust social events such as the Celebration of achievements; and
 - Supporting cover across both the executive PA team and legal team.

- **June 2013 to March 2017** – Appointed as Executive Office Manager and Executive Assistant to the Chairman (Sir Duncan Nichol) and Director of Corporate and Legal Services (Stephen Cross). During 2013/14 I did also support the Chief Executive (Tony Chambers) in the capacity of his PA during the maternity leave of his then PA. This was a Band 5 Agenda for Change role.

- Duties included providing an efficient and comprehensive, high quality administrative support, accurate co-ordination of diaries to the Chairman, Chief Executive and Director of Corporate and Legal Services;
- Full management of the executive PA team;
- Budget responsibility for the executive office;
- Facilities management of the executive office;
- Administrative secretarial support to the Board of Directors and Council of Governors;
- Preparing draft agendas, collation and distribution of papers along with attendance at meetings to take the minutes;
- Maintaining the register of interests, gifts and hospitality assist in the compilation of dates and information for the annual report;
- Point of contact for Non Executive Directors and Council of Governors for any general queries;
- Co-ordinating the recruitment process for non executive directors and senior staff within the executive office including arranging the advertisement of the role, recruitment packs and induction training;
- Co-ordinating the Council of Governor elections processes;
- Organisation of the Trust's Annual members meeting;
- Maintaining the Trust's membership database;
- Leading the Trust's corporate records management function
- Overseeing the management and compliance for the Trust's Freedom of Information requests and to provide advice and support;
- Providing support to the Trust's silver control/emergency planning room and manage administrative cover with a team of appropriately trained staff as required for a major incident; and
- From September 2016 to March 2017, I also covered the role of the Legal Services Manager during a period of extended sickness which included the role of the Patient Services Manager which included management of the

patient services team, overseas patients and private patient charges. This was an acting up role and was paid at agenda for change band 6.

- **April 2017 to January 2019** – Assistant Trust Secretary and Executive Office Manager. This was a Band 6 Agenda for Change role. The main duties are detailed below however, I have attached the job description for this role to this statement at **Exhibit CR/01.** INQ0102017 (Pages 1-7)

- Deputising for the Trust Secretary during times of absence. Trust Secretary was an element of the Director of Corporate and Legal Affairs role in respect of the Board;
- Providing effective governance and secretariat support to the Board of Directors and the sub-committees and the Council of Governors. Responsible for arranging venues, the preparation of draft agenda, collation of papers ensuring that deadlines are met and the distribution of papers. In addition, will attend the meetings and take the minutes and will also follow up agreed actions and ensure reports required are produced;
- Maintaining the register of interests, gifts and hospitality assist in the compilation of dates and information for the annual report;
- Point of contact for Non Executive Directors and Council of Governors for any general queries;
- Co-ordinating the recruitment process for non executive directors and senior staff within the executive office including arranging the advertisement of the role, recruitment packs and induction training;
- Co-ordinating the Council of Governor elections processes;
- Organisation of the Trust's Annual members meeting;
- Maintaining the Trust's membership database;
- Leading the Trust's corporate records management function
- Overseeing the management and compliance for the Trust's Freedom of Information requests and to provide advice and support;
- Providing support to the Trust's silver control/emergency planning room and manage administrative cover with a team of appropriately trained staff as required for a major incident; and
- Lead as the Patient Services Manager in the management of the patient services team, overseas patients, and private patient charges.

- From June 2017, as part of my role as Assistant Trust Secretary and to support Stephen Cross, I became the first point of contact in an administrative capacity for the police and Operation Hummingbird, this role is described in more detail in the Trust's disclosure statement dated 8th May 2024. This was an additional responsibility role and as such was paid at Agenda for Change Band 7.
- **February 2019 to September 2021** - I was reassigned by Dr Susan Gilby as Executive Office Manager and PA to the Chief Executive Officer (Dr Susan Gilby) and Chairman (Duncan Nichol and subsequently Chris Hannah). This was a band 6 Agenda for Change role with an additional responsibility allowance paid at band 7 Agenda for Change role until July 2019. There was an expectation that the salary would be reviewed for a substantive agenda for change band 7 role however, this did not happen until October 2021. There was no formal job description for this role.
 - Duties included providing an efficient and comprehensive, high quality administrative support, accurate co-ordination of diaries to the Chief Executive Officer and Chairman;
 - Management of the Executive PA team;
 - Administrative lead and initial point of contact between the police as required and specifically in relation to Operation Hummingbird; and
 - The single point of contact for staff in relation to Operation Hummingbird.
- **October 2021 to September 2022** - Executive Office Manager and Operation Hummingbird Liaison, from May 2022 this included the role of the Trust's Data Protection Officer. There was no formal job description for this role. This was a Band 7 Agenda for Change role.
 - Duties included being the administrative lead and initial point of contact between the police as required and specifically in relation to Operation Hummingbird;
 - Management of the Executive PA team;
 - Executive Office Manager duties including management of Freedom of Information (FOI) process, budgets, procurement, general queries and facilities management;

- Trust's Data Protection Officer; and
 - The single point of contact for staff in relation to Operation Hummingbird requests, co-ordinating witness support and psychological support.
- **October 2022 to present** - I am the Trust's Operation Hummingbird Liaison, Thirlwall Inquiry Lead and Trust Data Protection Officer. This is a secondment role at Band 8b Agenda for Change role.
 - Duties include being the administrative lead and initial point of contact between the police as required and specifically in relation to Operation Hummingbird;
 - The single point of contact for staff in relation to Operation Hummingbird requests, co-ordinating witness support and psychological support;
 - The administrative lead in respect of the Thirlwall Inquiry and disclosure requirements and day to day management of the Thirlwall Inquiry team;
 - Trust's Data Protection Officer;
 - Budget control;
 - Management of the Executive PA team – formally ceased October 2023; and
 - Executive Office Manager duties including management of FOI process, budgets, procurement, general queries and facilities management – formally ceased April 2024.

Work at the hospital and knowledge of events at the hospital

My role in relation to Stephen Cross

4. During June 2013 to March 2017, I was the Executive Office Manager and PA to Stephen Cross, Director of Legal Services and Duncan Nichol Chairman as described in in the email at **INQ0007842** and my Facere Melius interview at **INQ0012988** at page 1. In April 2017, I became the Assistant Trust Secretary and was no longer working as a PA to Stephen Cross or Duncan Nichol. I refer to '*looking after Stephen and the Board*' in the traditional PA role for Stephen Cross and Duncan Nichol up to April 2017 and administratively supporting the Board and Governors as detailed above.

5. I have been asked to describe the way in which I worked with Stephen Cross during the period January 2015 to June 2017 with specific reference to my interview with Facere Melius, where I stated:

"So he would if Stephen had been in, so the execs used to take turns, as you have seen, through these take turns. So Stephen's way is that he would ask me to go in the office with him and he would dictate what he wanted me to write, in those notes from the execs meetings" [INQ0012988 at page 3].

6. During the time period January 2015 to March 2017, I would administratively support Stephen as his PA in typing up any handwritten notes or dictation that he would request me to do. This included typing up the notes of the Executive Directors Group when it was Stephen's turn in the rota to take the notes. The executives had a rota as to when they would each take notes at the Executive Directors Group. Stephen would take handwritten notes in the Executive Directors Group meeting. I would prepare a blank template to type the notes into based on the agenda items. I would then sit with Stephen, where he would dictate from his handwritten notes what he wanted to put in the notes template.
7. With effect from April 2017, I moved into the role of Assistant Trust Secretary and no longer supported Stephen or Duncan as their PA. Following an expressions of interest exercise within the Executive PA team, Debbie Cleverley took on the role of executive PA team leader and PA to Stephen and Duncan. Debbie, as his PA, would then sit with Stephen, where he would dictate from his handwritten notes what he wanted to put in the notes template.
8. I have been asked, so far as I can, to identify all the occasions during the period June 2015 to May 2017 on which I typed up Stephen Cross's handwritten notes for meetings at which the neonatal unit ("NNU") was discussed and to provide the typed notes if I have copies.
9. I have reviewed my personal H drive computer file and to the best of my knowledge, I believe I typed up the following Executive Directors Group notes and attach copies accordingly as **exhibit CR/02**. As previously stated above, I no longer supported Stephen as a PA from April 2017 so do not hold any further sets of notes in my personal H drive.

- 10.06.2015 Exhibit CR/02 INQ0102017 (Pages 8-11)
- 09.09.2015 Exhibit CR/02 INQ0102017 (Pages 12-15)
- 25.11.2015 Exhibit CR/02 INQ0102017 (Pages 16-18)

- 10.02.2016 Exhibit CR/02 INQ0102017 (Pages 19-21)
- 17.02.2016 Exhibit CR/02 INQ0102017 (Pages 22-24)
- 04.05.2016 Exhibit CR/02 INQ0102017 (Pages 25-27)
- 15.06.2016 Exhibit CR/02 INQ0102017 (Pages 28-29)
- 19.10.2016 Exhibit CR/02 INQ0102017 (Pages 30-32)
- 23.11.2016 Exhibit CR/02 INQ0102017 (Pages 33-35)
- 11.01.2017 Exhibit CR/02 INQ0102017 (Pages 36-37)
- 01.03.2017 Exhibit CR/02 INQ0102017 (Pages 38-39)

10. I have been referred to my interview with Facere Melius, where I stated that Stephen Cross did not really use a computer and rarely used emails. I stated that I would print out emails for him and type his replies [INQ0012988 at page 3]. I have been asked if this approach resulted in any emails being overlooked by Stephen Cross and if so, did this have any impact upon events relating to the NNU during the period June 2015 to May 2017.

11. During the time period June 2015 to March 2017, I would administratively support Stephen as his PA and as such we would go through emails he had received either directly or via myself. I would print out those emails that required a response or action, Stephen would then review them, and I would join Stephen in his office and he would dictate the replies or alternatively he would make notes on the emails I had printed and I could then go and respond or action according to his instructions. Unfortunately, due to an issue with my laptop during 2016 I have limited access to emails during this period. I have reviewed my outlook data files for the time period above and I don't have any emails in relation to the events relating to the NNU.

12. However, I would like to add that during this time period, Stephen did start to use his email more and more so I would not have needed to support him as much with his email.

13. I have been asked about my comments in my interview with Facere Melius, where I stated that I did work that Stephen Cross "badged" as his own [INQ0012988 at page 4] and whether any such work related to the NNU during the period June 2015 to May 2017.

14. This was in response to a question about what was 'Stephen like a boss'. He was a very supportive manager, however, as is the case for anyone who is someone's deputy, I felt that sometimes the work I did in my role for the annual report, Stephen would share and not acknowledge openly that I had pulled all the detailed information together. Whilst I

acknowledge that at the time I personally found this frustrating, this is one of the areas as a deputy that I needed to learn to deal with and accept. I am not aware of issues of this nature relating to the NNU during the period. I referred to this issue in relation to my work on the conflicts of interest policy, annual report, and governor elections.

15. I have been asked to expand on my comment in my interview with Facere Melius, where I stated that Stephen Cross "didn't do detail" [INQ0012988 at page 12].

16. I have reviewed the transcript of my interview and I refer to Tony Chambers CEO not doing detail and that he was more strategic as he trusted his executive team to be in the detail of matters. I am not aware if there was any impact on the events relating to the NNU during the period June 2015 to May 2017.

Attendance at meetings

17. I have been asked about a series of meetings where my initials appear in the body of the notes/minutes.

18. I confirm that I attended the following meetings in my capacity as minute taker for these meetings. The minutes are a true reflection of the discussion and decisions made at each of these meetings and detail is recorded in relation to any discussion or decision in relation NNU as per the minutes:

- 7 July 2015 [INQ00014812 at page 4]
- 1 September 2015 [INQ0014813 at page 4]
- 2 February 2016 [INQ0014816 at page 5]
- 3 May 2016 [INQ0014817 at page 3]
- 5 July 2016 [INQ0014818];
- 14 July 2016 [INQ0004216];
- 6 December 2016 [INQ0014820 at page 4]
- 10 January 2017
 - There are handwritten notes at INQ0003277 page 11 onwards which are my handwritten formal minutes which were for a member of the pa team to type up for me to support my workload at the time.
- 7 February 2017 [INQ0014821 at page 4]
- 13 April 2017 [INQ0003236];

- 2 May 2017 [INQ0004221]
19. It was usual practice for me to either handwrite notes or type rough notes during the above meetings and to then type up formal minutes in a blank template. The draft would be reviewed by Stephen Cross, amended if required and submitted in draft for final approval at the next Board of Directors meeting. However, during the period July 2016 to May 2017, there had been some discussion as to whether formal minutes of these specific private Board meetings needed to be approved by the Board and they were subsequently taken in draft to a private meeting of the Board of Directors in October 2017.
20. I understand that the Inquiry have already received all the above Board of Directors meetings formal minutes, however I attach my rough typed notes for the following meetings as **exhibit CR/03**: [INQ0102017 (Pages 40-60)]
- 7 July 2015; and [Exhibit CR/03 INQ0102017 (Pages 40-51)]
 - 2 February 2016 [Exhibit CR/03 INQ0102017 (Pages 52-60)]
21. I am unable to locate typed rough notes for any other Board meetings listed above, I would not have routinely kept the original handwritten rough notes of the meeting as I would destroy them in the confidential waste bin the executive office once the draft minutes had been approved by Stephen Cross to go to the next Board of Directors meeting.
22. As the minutes of the above meetings already shared with the Inquiry detail the discussion and decisions made by the Board during the meetings. I have nothing further to add as I was only there to take the minutes and do not recall any additional details save for what is already included within the minutes.
23. I attended the 29 June 2015 Executive Directors Group meeting in my capacity as Executive Office Manager with budget control responsibility to provide an update on cost savings for the executive budget and left once these had been discussed.
24. In respect of the Executive Directors Group meetings held on 9 September 2015 and 16 November 2016, I did not attend the meeting and my initials appear in the notes as there was an action on each set of notes for me to take forward.

25. I attended the following silver control meeting in my capacity as Silver Control/Emergency Planning Admin Manager to support the staffing of the incident room requirements. Unfortunately, due to it being nearly 8 years ago now I am unable to recall any details of discussions held during these meetings, save for the requirement to arrange a rota to cover phone lines and staffing of loggist support as needed:

- 8 July 2016 at 09:30
- 8 July 2016 at 12:30

26. I did not attend the meeting held on 26 January 2017 [INQ0003523]. I recall that I administratively assisted Stephen Cross to type his handwritten notes up. I believe I created a draft template and Stephen dictated what he wanted included in the minutes.

27. In my capacity as administrative secretary to the Board and subsequently as Assistant Trust Secretary, I would have attended the Board meetings, Audit Committee meetings and Council of Governors meetings. I do not recall attending any other meetings where the NNU was discussed during the time period June 2015 to May 2017. I have checked my electronic diary in outlook and unfortunately this does not hold the information back that far to 2017.

Reports/documents prepared in relation to the NNU

28. During the time period June 2015 to May 2017, I only became aware of the Thematic Review of Neonatal Mortality in which Stephen Brearey was involved during discussions at the Board of Directors meetings.

29. I became aware that there was to be a review in relation to the NNU during the 8 July 2016 silver control incident room meetings. I cannot recall any detail or further information on what data this would have involved.

30. I became aware that there was to be a review in relation to the NNU during the 8 July 2016 silver control incident room meetings and that this was being led by Dr Gibbs and Anne Martyn with support from Ruth Millward. I cannot recall any further detail or information as to what this would have involved.

31. As part of my role as PA to Stephen Cross and Secretary to the Board during this period of time, I was aware that it had been agreed that the Royal College of Paediatrics and

Child Health would undertake a review into the Neonatal Unit. This visit was co-ordinated by Ian Harvey and his PA, Debbie Dodd. When the report was received I believe during October/November 2016, I recall that there were a number of meetings with the executives to discuss the outcome of the report. However, I did not attend the meetings as I was not required to minuted the meetings. During this period of time, I had little knowledge of how the NNU worked and its procedures and processes, I believed that the report had found some issues in the unit in terms of relationships, potential poor care of babies and processes in NNU and had not come to the agreement that there was an individual responsible. I believe that further reviews were needed and were arranged via Ian Harvey and his PA Debbie Dodd at the time. I cannot recall the specific time, it was either late 2016 or during early 2017, I was asked to help support the distribution of the report to paediatricians and families involved.

32. In my capacity as Executive Office Manager and PA to Stephen Cross, I became aware that Jane Hawdon was to undertake further reviews of the babies as Ian Harvey's PA Debbie Dodd had to arrange for the babies' records to be sent securely to Jane Hawdon. However, there were issues with the quality of arrangement of the documentation and packaging undertaken by Debbie Dodd and this was brought to my attention. I recall I had to speak to Debbie Dodd about this and ask her to pay appropriate attention to detail should there any future requirements for physical files to be sent out to a clinician in the future.
33. In my role as PA to Stephen Cross and Secretary to the Board at the time, I was aware from attendance at the board meeting and discussions in the executive office that there was a need for a further review of a small number of babies, but I do not recall knowing who would be undertaking that review or any further details in relation to Jo McPartland.
34. I have been asked to comment on the document entitled "Rationale" dated 3 April 2017 [INQ0003226] by Stephen Cross.
35. I had been recently appointed as the Assistant Trust Secretary which was a very busy role with a number of different strands of responsibility. Debbie Cleverley had been appointed as the PA to Stephen Cross so I did not have any involvement in the writing of this paper or its content. I have reviewed records that we hold, and I confirm that this document was typed by Debbie Cleverley.

36. I have been asked about Simon Medland QC's (now HHJ Simon Medland KC) involvement.
37. During this time, in my role as PA to Stephen Cross and during the end of 2016 and into 2017 I had been covering for the Head of Legal Services due to a long period of absence, I was aware that Simon Medland had previously supported the Trust or had worked with Stephen Cross previously. Whilst I do not recall having direct contact with Simon Medland, I have been able to locate the attached email (exhibit CR/04) sent on 12 April 2017 to Simon Medland from Stephen Cross's email which was sent by Debbie Cleverley.

Involvement of the police

38. I have been asked about my comment in my Facere Melius interview on 1 July 2020 [INQ0012988 at page 10] that Stephen Cross had told me not to tell the police that he was a former police officer.
39. I cannot recall the specific date or any further details as this was over 7 years ago. During a one-to-one meeting I had with Stephen Cross, we were discussing a visit to the police and I asked if anyone had known him from his previous police days. I believe he replied that they had not and that he did not want the police to know about his police career as he did not want them to treat him differently based on his existing knowledge so that they could be clear about what needed to happen in terms of the investigation going forward.
40. I have been asked about my comments in my interview with Facere Melius on 1 July 2020 where I stated:
- "I just don't think they knew what to do. Instead, I think so, I think they just blindly led because Stephen had been quite high up in the police. They went with his experience and his advice" [INQ0012988 at page 10].*
41. Having reviewed the notes of my interview with Facere Melius to aid my recollections, this was a response to a question about why the execs did not go to the police based on information from Stephen Cross. My personal thoughts were that as Stephen had been quite high up in the police, they thought he would know what the police would need to be able to undertake an investigation and that they listened to his view based on his experience as they did not have the experience that Stephen had regarding police investigations.

42. Upon reflection, with hindsight and based on knowledge I have gathered through my roles over the last few years and facilitating the information gathering for the Facere Melius Report – ‘Hidden in Plain Sight’, it is my view is that the police should definitely have been called as soon as the triplets were harmed at the latest. There was an opportunity to go to the police following the meeting with Alison Kelly, Ian Harvey, the paediatricians and Eirian Powell, NNU Manager in May 2016.

Contact with Lucy Letby’s (“Letby”) parents

43. I can recall that there were a number of phone calls from Letby’s parents to a number of executives including Tony Chambers, Alison Kelly and Stephen Cross during late 2016. I would have been involved with putting the calls through to Stephen Cross. I would also have gone to collect Letby’s parents from main reception when they came into meet with Tony and Stephen. I cannot recall the dates of these meetings. I recall that there seemed to be a considerable number of calls across the executives from Letby’s parents, but I am aware of how many. I believe that these meetings were requested by Letby, and her parents based on the outcome of the grievance. However, I was not party to any of the meetings with Letby’s parents.

Deaths on the NNU between 2016, whether suspicions should have been raised earlier and whether Letby should have been suspended earlier

44. Prior to July 2016, the only knowledge I had of any deaths on the NNU were if I needed to print out an email for Stephen Cross in relation to an inquest or legal claim from the Head of Legal Services.

45. As referred to above, I did not have any additional knowledge concerning deaths on the NNU during 2015/16.

46. I believe I became aware of the suspicions and concerns of the paediatricians, a couple of days before we initiated the silver control incident room on 8 July 2016. I recall there being a number of discussions with senior nursing staff and Alison Kelly in relation to an individual on the NNU. I was not aware of the individual at that stage and what the suspicions or concerns were.

The relationships, culture and atmosphere of the NNU at the hospital in 2015 and subsequently

47. In my role as Executive Office Manager and PA to Stephen Cross and Duncan Nichol during this time period, I was not aware of any specific issues with the staff groups referred to i.e. (a) clinicians and managers (b) nurses, midwives and managers and (c) medical professionals (doctors, nurses, midwives and others) during 2015/16 as this was not part of my administrative role.
48. My first interactions with the team on the NNU was in July 2016 when the issues of the death of the triplets had occurred. We then subsequently opened the silver control incident room. During the following months, at several meetings I felt that there was a split between the nurses and the paediatricians on the unit and their views. There were frank and open discussions at the Board meetings I attended about culture on the NNU, and I believe that this was also referenced in the RCPCH. At this stage, I had no experience outside of the Board meetings with the paediatricians or NNU nursing team to be able to provide any further information in relation to this question.
49. I have been asked if I think the quality of relationships on the NNU affected the quality of care being given to the babies on the NNU in 2015-2016 or subsequently and if so, which relationships and what was the effect. I feel I am unable to respond to this question as I am not clinically trained.

The Board of Directors

50. The executive team appeared to have a good working relationship with each other and were able to constructively challenge each other when needed.
51. In my administrative role at the time, I was not party to the large number of meetings held by the executive directors in response to the concerns raised by the NNU consultants. However, as I have referred to in my Facere Melius interview there seemed surprise about the concerns and disbelief of the allegations that Letby had intentionally harmed babies. There were lots of meetings with executives behind closed doors that I was not party to.
52. The executive directors and the non-executive directors appeared to have a good working relationship with each other and were able to constructively challenge each other when needed.

53. The executive directors and the Chair appeared to have a good working relationship with each other and were able to constructively challenge each other when needed.
54. My personal view is that the professional relationships had some effect on the management and governance of the hospital in 2015-2016 and subsequently. I have this view as it seemed to me that the nurses stuck together and the clinicians stuck together. The clinicians felt their views should be heard over the nurses and the NNU management. The senior nursing team felt that the nursing opinions should be heard over the clinicians. I felt that Alison Kelly and the senior nursing team and NNU manager were very much of the opinion that Letby had done nothing wrong. They seemed to protect her and have 'arms wrapped' round her. However, Ian Harvey did not do the same for the clinicians. They were left to deal with the suspicions and concerns and their realisation that Letby was intentionally harming babies, without any emotional support and not being really believed by the executives. The executives I feel, were unable to comprehend that an individual let alone a nurse would intentionally harm neonatal babies.
55. I am aware that elements of roles were moved around the executive team if an executive expressed an interest in a specific area of another executive's portfolio. This was known as the scheme of delegation and changes were made regularly over the years. This led to governance changes which were not clear to the organisation and hampered escalation of risks at appropriate times.

Reflections

56. I refer to the paragraph above and my Facere Melius interview. The clinicians were not supported in raising their concerns and suspicions. They were portrayed as trying to blame Letby rather than admit there had been some failings in the care of the babies. I feel this was then reinforced by the RCPCH report and the grievance process. Letby was treated with care in all aspects, such as being moved off the unit. This was not the case for the clinicians.
57. When any clinician, nurse or any other member of staff are to raise any concerns, they should be listened to and their concerns treated with impartiality and without prior judgement based on bias toward specific staff groups or just because your 'face fits' better than others do, which sadly can still happen in organisations. I have personally witnessed the impact on doctors, nurses and other staff including myself, both from a work

perspective and personal perspective and the impact this has had on the psychological wellbeing of us all in ensuring that the families get the answers that they need. Those staff still in the organisation have continued to do their jobs to the best of their ability for the benefit of patients and their colleagues whilst supporting a murder investigation and participating in a trial convicting a former nurse of intentionally harming babies in her care.

58. Upon reflection, with hindsight and based on knowledge I have gathered through my roles over the last few years and facilitating the information gathering for the Facere Melius Report – 'Hidden in Plain Sight', it is my view that the police should definitely have been called as soon as the triplets were harmed at the latest. There was an opportunity to go to the police following the meeting with Afison Kelly, Ian Harvey, the paediatricians and Eirian Powell, NNU Manager in May 2016.
59. I believe that if the babies had been monitored by CCTV, some of the crimes of Letby could have been prevented however, not all of them as where an individual is intent on causing harm and committing a criminal act, they will look for ways to evade detection.
60. I feel that it is important that the NNU teams, in fact all teams across the NHS, including clinicians, nurses, managers and other staff work together as a team being empowered to raise, discuss, and challenge issues and concerns without the fear of reprisal which sadly today still exists. Where steps need to be taken to remove a member of staff, this needs to be done with open and honest conversations and appropriate, balanced support from the organisation. Where there is a suspicion of intent to cause harm and/or commit a criminal act, there should be an appointed independent person in each organisation who has a direct link/relationship into the police and can discuss concerns in a timely manner. This would not be the local police station who support the Trust's security team. This person, following initial timely information gathering, should be able to approach the police without seeking approval from others to form an independent view and seek advice and guidance on potential next steps which can then be discussed with the appropriate executive, senior manager, HR, and other appropriate teams involved. I believe had such a role been in place, the discussion with police would have happened sooner and an investigation started much earlier.

Any other matters

61. Whilst I was undertaking the role of facilitating the information in response to the police requests, some of the clinicians were not sure that the information would be passed to the police so started sending the information directly to the police. I understand now why they felt the need to do this at that time. During the gathering of information, I was met with negativity when requesting information and equipment on behalf of the police from the then NNU Manager Eirian Powell. On one occasion, Eirian Powell complained to Karen Rees about the length of time the police had taken to collect an item and how I had to (at the request of the police) ask her how a piece of equipment connected to a machine/or was used with. I was with an officer when I had made the call, and this was a formal request from an investigating officer. Eirian Powell subsequently sent an email to Karen Rees and complained about this, she referred to me as a secretary who should not be asking such questions and Karen Rees had to speak to me following the email. I was very upset about Eirian Powell's dismissive attitude towards me and my role at the time. I recall I was very emotional when Karen Rees spoke to me, as I was simply doing a job I had been asked to do. I personally felt this challenged my integrity and professionalism.
62. I have worked hard over the last few years to build relationships and trust with all of those involved in the police investigation. I have worked on ensuring that staff are fully supported both psychologically and from a witness perspective even to my own personal detriment. However, I remain committed to supporting the team. Staff subsequently knew that I was the single point of contact for any police matters. I have listened and shared their feedback openly with the Board and been able to build a support package with the police and psychological support which staff have feedback they would not have been able to get through the last few years without. I have been commended on my commitment and hard work in supporting the police investigation and staff by the Board, the police, and staff.
63. I feel that when investigations or similar issues arise in the future in any NHS organisation, it is important that staff have a place where they feel able to ask the hard questions in a safe and supported environment and be given honest answers with care and compassion. I feel passionate about ensuring that the support continues even in the face of those who may have issues with an organisation or investigation, making dismissive and negative comments when there are legitimate reasons for the investigation to be able to take place in an impartial and without prior judgement way, so answers can be found.
64. I have not given any interviews or otherwise made any public comments about the actions of Letby or the matters of investigation by the Inquiry.

Request for documents

65. I believe at this stage that I have nothing further to share as the majority of my administrative role was post June 2017. However, if I do locate anything that may be relevant, I will ensure it is shared as a matter of urgency with the Inquiry team.

Statement of Truth

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true. I understand that proceedings may be brought against anyone who makes, or causes to be made, a false statement in a document verified by a statement of truth without an honest belief in its truth.

Signed:

Personal Data

Dated: 13.06.2024