

Key governance considerations for Audit Committee Chairs as NHS organisations move to Covid-19 recovery and monitoring phase

Decision Making and Accountability

- How do the command and control arrangements continue to impact upon organisational accountability?
- Has a unitary Board been maintained during the pandemic and through to recovery?
- Where more autonomy was granted to the Executive Directors, what mechanisms were put in place to ensure good governance?

Board and Committee Operation

- If Board/Governing Body committees have been suspended/ reduced how are we receiving assurance (e.g. financial decision making)?
- How are Governors being kept informed?
- Is the Board/Governing Body spending enough time on non COVID issues?
- Is there sufficient focus on constitutional standards?
- What are Audit Committee Chairs doing to ensure the effectiveness of the Audit Committee?

Risk Management, Incident Reporting, and Raising Concerns

- Have we assessed if incident reporting, complaints and safeguarding referral level have reduced and considered any system issues?
- Has risk management and risk appetite been given sufficient focus?
- How has the pandemic impacted upon the raising of concerns? Is the organisation assessing which communities in the organisation are / aren't raising concerns?

Forward looking

- How is the organisation preparing for the next phase?
- Have governance arrangements been reviewed to support the recovery phase? Have requirements for working with partners been adequately captured in arrangements?
- The pandemic has generated further opportunities for cross system working – how do we ensure these opportunities are not lost?
- What is the new normal going to look like for the NHS? More central control? Extension of the FT model? Can we help shape this?
- Has the increased visibility of NED/Lay Members been considered as part of the recovery phase?
- Is there sufficient focus on staff well-being?

These questions bring together the thoughts of a wide range of NHS Trust and CCG Audit Committee Chairs from MIAA's webinars over the last few months.