

# My first month as your new Chief Executive

AARON CUMMINS, CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Hello and welcome to my first blog as Chief Executive (CEO) at UHMBT.

I want to start my first blog by saying a huge thank you to all our colleagues. I've been overwhelmed by your hard work and commitment to continue to provide outstanding care for our patients over what has been an incredibly difficult winter, and also for the 'welcome' (I know I've been here a while!) I've received since starting as CEO on 1 April. I have been truly touched by the support and messages of congratulations and wishing me luck from so many of you.

I feel really proud and privileged to be your CEO, and I'm looking forward to working together over this next phase of our improvement journey.



So, 'what is he going to say?' I hear you ask! Well, for those of you that follow me or the Trust on social media, you will know I have been giving an update on my comings and goings every day since my appointment using the #NHSCEOFirst100days hashtag. I know that the world doesn't all revolve around social media but given the amount of staff and partners who use it, I felt this would be a good way to give people a daily snapshot of what my days look like. This followed some feedback I had upon appointment from some colleagues who wanted to know what the difference would be moving from being the Deputy CEO to CEO role or what being a CEO in the NHS was like. The daily tweets are meant to give a small insight into my daily work/focus, and I wanted to use my first blog to expand on this a little and reflect on what I've seen, heard and felt over my first month.

I'm on Day 32 at the time of writing and you can continue to follow that journey on Twitter @aaroncumminsNHS or @UHMBT. Before you ask, yes, I include my weekends as well so you can see what I get up to in my downtime and the importance I place on time away from work.

When I started my new role, I set out with a number of personal aims, which included:

- Maintaining my personal presence around our hospitals
- Being as accessible to all as possible
- Championing improvements to patient and staff experience
- Upholding and supporting the Trust's Behavioural Standards Framework

I'd love to hear from you. Get in touch at:  
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Time will tell how I am getting on with these aims, and I guess the true measure would be whether or not you believe I am? I'd be very pleased to receive any comments via email or social media using the details in the footer of this blog - on these or any other other matters that you feel need my attention.

Just before I share some of my reflections, here are-some numbers from my first month in post:



Some highlights for me of the last month have included:



- Opening our 'We Value You' conference for our non-clinical colleagues
- Meeting with over 150 of our community colleagues in north Lancashire ahead of them joining UHMBT later this year,
- My first Trust Board session to discuss the year ahead and our improvement ambitions



- Meeting with colleagues from Bay Health and Care Partners
- Participating in the open day for our Helme Chase maternity unit at Westmorland General Hospital on the International Day of the Midwife

Each of these sessions, and my 'walkabouts' have given me a fantastic opportunity to meet colleagues from across our organisation and beyond and take the time to really listen to what they have had to say - and I've been really pleased that people have taken the time to let me know whats on their mind, both the positives and areas we still need to improve.

I also felt privileged to meet with our new nursing apprentices at the University of Cumbria in Lancaster last week. It gave me time to firstly introduce myself and welcome them but also to allow them to ask me questions, I came away feeling confident having just met our new leaders of the future. I really do believe in the apprenticeship programme.

So, what have I seen or heard over the last four weeks? Generally awesome stuff would be my answer. What is obvious to me is that there is a real sense of optimism and opportunity amongst our staff to continue to improve our organisation for both patients and colleagues in the future. Some examples of this in practice include seeing our teams across the Bay supporting each other when under pressure to ensure our patients receive the best care possible; hearing compassion and empathy when colleagues support patients and families who may be worried; feeling proud as our Care Groups talk about their ambitions to improve our patients experience; and being excited after talking about our opportunities from research, innovation and digital agendas.

In meeting after meeting, conversation after conversation, and from just walking down our corridors and popping into wards and departments, I get a real sense of the atmosphere we have - the 'feel' of our organisation. My first impression in my new role is that we are in a good place to take advantage of that sense of optimism and opportunity, and continue to work together to ensure our Trust is a great place to work and a great place to be cared for.

However, that's not to say that we don't have work to do. From talking to staff, I have heard really clearly about the areas we still need to improve further, and some problems we need to address. Whether that be the issues we are currently having with our payroll and the impact that is having; the relentless operational pressure you and your teams have been under over winter; still operating shifts with less staff than we'd like despite some successful recruitment; and the feedback we had in our recent National NHS Staff Survey that we have colleagues who are not having a positive experience in work with bullying and harassment still an issue in some areas. I'd like to assure you that these issues are being picked up, and our teams will be working hard over the coming weeks and months to address them. We'll make sure we keep you all informed as the work progresses and how you will be able to get involved in designing potential solutions.

### **Keeping connected**

It's hard to reflect on all I have been up to in my first four weeks in a short blog but it's been an interesting month! I've tried to maintain contact with many of our wards and departments and have continued to regularly join the daily site safety meetings. However, there are still lots of areas I haven't been to yet and colleagues I'm yet to meet, which I will be making sure I do over the next few months. If you want me to try to call in to your area whilst I am out and about during May and June, please do not hesitate to drop me an email, and I will do my very best to do so.

To be as accessible as possible, I will also soon be sharing a number of dates and times where you can find me at each of our main hospitals for what I am calling my Tea and Talk sessions. You don't need to book an appointment - just turn up and have a chat with me about anything you want. I want to know how it is for you all working at UHMBT. I can read the staff surveys but it's not the same as hearing it from you in person. Every one of you has something important to say, and I really want to hear it.



Before I sign off for this month, I wanted to express my sincere condolences to the family of Russell Curwen, one of our blood biker volunteer colleagues, who tragically died last Saturday following a road traffic collision. The blood bikers provide an incredible service to our hospitals and the local NHS, and Russell will be missed by all.

Thank you again for making my first month a positive one, and I will share another blog at the end of month two! Please let me know what you think and if you have found this useful!

**Aaron Cummins**  
**Chief Executive**

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