

E-Meeting of the People Committee Meeting

minutes

Minutes of People Committee Meeting held on Monday 9th September 2024

Present:

Margaret Carney (MC) (Chair)
Justine Brislen (JB)
Nicholas Brooks (NB)
Peter Cook (PC)
Rachael McDonald (RMc)
Jane Royds (JR)
Joan Mathews (JM)
Manoj Kuduvalli (MK)
John Doyle (JD)
Emma Baker (EB)
Claire Quarterman (CQ)

Non-Executive Director
Clinical and Medical Education Lead
Non-Executive Director
Recruitment and Resourcing Lead
Deputy Chief People Officer
Chief People Officer
Director of Nursing & Quality
Medical Director
Non-Executive Director
HR Business Partner, Surgery Division
Director of Medical Education

Apologies for Absence:

Claudette Elliott (CE)

Non-Executive Director

Minutes typed by:

Natalie Hunter (NH) (Minutes)

Senior Executive Assistant

The Chair, Margaret Carney (MC) welcomed all to the meeting.

1. Apologies for absence/Matters arising

All meeting participants attended the Microsoft Teams meeting. There were no apologies noted.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of meeting held on 3rd June 2024

The minutes were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

4. Action Log

Action 1 - JR to review the sickness target with the Executives and bring back an update in September.

Update – This was discussed as part of the agenda. This action was closed.

Action 2 - Communications will follow with a link to an anti-racism page where staff can report any racism experienced and find support online such as HR teams, Freedom to Speak up and unions.

Update – This was discussed as part of the agenda. This action was closed.

Action

Action 3 - MC asked for a learning report relating to InPhase and other sources including themes and data to be brought back in December.

Update – This item is due in December. This action remains open.

5. Dashboard - SOF format/workforce KPIs

The appraisal window open until the end of September. The Trust are currently at 78.8% compliant with a target of 90%. Mandatory training compliance was scoring 94.9% with a target of 95%. Corporate, medicine and surgery are all compliant scoring over 95% for mandatory training and the Trust continue to target areas of low compliance.

For turnover, the Trust is at 10.36% with a target of 10%. For sickness, the Trust are scoring 5.7% which is an increase on previous months. Long term sickness is 3.6% and short-term sickness 1.8%. There is a deep dive into sickness planned for 30th September where each case will be looked into in more detail to ensure appropriate levels of support and that the policy is being implemented correctly.

MC thanked JR for the assurances provided.

NB questioned if staff members are offered phased returns or part time hours to support the transition back into work. JR assured the committee that phased returns are offered to staff following any period of long-term absence.

NB questioned whether NHS staff members are given priority on Trust waiting lists which has previously been seen in other Trusts. JR discussed this is not the norm when our staff require care in other Trusts but we would hope to support this regarding care in our own Trust. HR support staff wherever possible.

Sickness KPI review

The current sickness absence KPI is 3.4% and has not been revised for over 5 years, during which time the healthcare environment has evolved significantly. This report proposed a revision of the Trusts sickness absence KPI, suggesting the adoption of a new indicator of 4.5%. Following a benchmarking exercise within Cheshire and Merseyside, the Trusts sickness KPI is an outlier comparative to others in the region.

The committee were asked to agree the proposal.

MC shared support for the change in targets and thanked JR for the rationale provided. MC questioned whether the new target would change the practices regarding sickness absence. RMC discussed there will be a review of sickness absence as well as the managing attendance policy which will support staff further. There will be a focus on interventions with occupational health and wellbeing.

The committee **approved** the proposal.

6. Strategy

6.1 National workforce update

JR provided an update regarding national workforce. The Agenda For Change pay award was approved at 5.5% and backdated to April. Staff will receive this in October's pay. The Trust are awaiting confirmation on VSM pay. Junior doctors have been made an offer to settle their pay dispute which has been put to their membership, the vote closes on 15th September 2024.

Following recent tragic events in the North West, there is a focus on poor behaviours and how some colleagues are feeling across the country. A clear message from the Executives was immediately

shared relating to racism in the work place and to reassure staff. The Trust are providing listening rooms as well as “A Cuppa With A Copper” where Merseyside Police attend the site to reassure staff. An international employee network is being set up and the “Be Civil, Be Kind” campaign is being re-launched.

There is a current focus on sexual safety which will be discussed at the Clinical Leaders Away Days in further detail.

Collaborative work is being undertaken throughout the region and LHCH is a key part of this work. RMc is a member of the Workforce Collaboration Meeting and JR is the SRO for Occupational Health and Wellbeing workstream.

The Trust are financially behind plan in month but are forecast to reach the annual target set. As a C&M system there is a large deficit which will have implications for workforce and finances. The deficit is primary care costs, undelivered CIP and industrial action. The current run rate shows a deficit. Following this, the Trust have oversight over all jobs which are non-patient facing which are reviewed weekly by the Executives via People and Activity Group.

Price Waterhouse Cooper were commissioned to undertake a review of spending and workforce costs across all Trusts in Cheshire and Merseyside, and a report will be released imminently.

The overall focus currently is on workforce and temporary staffing spend, non-pay costs and undelivered CIP.

MC thanked JR for the updates provided.

MC questioned if there was an impact of any posts being turned down. JR advised that each post is reviewed to assess if the post is needed, could be an apprenticeship etc.

6.2 People Delivery Group – update

People Delivery Group was due to take place in August 2024 but due to annual leave this was rearranged to September 2024 with a reduced meeting. The meeting was well attended with 25 members and representation from all Divisions. There was a strong focus on staff survey launching again in September. The Divisions offered to conduct a joint walkaround to promote the survey further. The Manager’s Essential Programme has been launched and met with favourable reviews. This training was developed in line with a national document around managing expectations. In addition, the flexible working and Anti-racism campaigns were shared with a request for support to make these a success.

MC thanked RMC for the updates.

6.3 Safer Staffing Annual Report

The report provided assurance on staffing numbers within the Trust in line with NICE guidance and National Quality Board guidance utilising the Safer Nursing Care Tool (SNCT) and professional judgement models to assess staffing required across clinical areas. The information is collected to ensure staffing, as well as knowledge and skill base, are representative of care to patients. Staffing is looked at daily to ensure safe staffing throughout the day. Ward managers support rosters on a daily basis too.

The report provided assurance that the Trust have accurate staffing levels on wards including a good mix of knowledge and skills to provide care to patients.

MC thanked JM for the report and updates provided.

JD noted the Trust having 62 more staff than the SNCT suggests and questioned if this was the correct benchmark. JM discussed this is a tool, but the Trust provide professional judgement alongside this to ensure the safety of all patients. The tool outlines how many staff are rostered and how many staff are budgeted for. The tool does not take into account acuity of patients.

NB questioned if the stroke service was exclusive at the Trust or combined with Liverpool University Hospital Foundation Trust. JM confirmed that this service is predominantly within the Knowsley community with a registered GP in Knowsley.

JM advised that the Trust receive more compliment letters from patients than complaints.

6.4 Quarterly HR and L&D Assurance Report

The report provided assurance on the progress against the People Strategy. The report incorporated compliance with key HR, learning and development activity and highlighted associated work and mitigation to support delivery.

Fit testing is at 72.53%. The current fit tester is on maternity leave and cover is being provided by departmental fit testers in critical areas only.

Mandatory training compliance improved to 94.9% in August, just below the Trust target of 95%. Oliver McGowan mandatory training is 92% compliant. Work is ongoing with managers and Executive leads to support improvements in the non-clinical support division.

The appraisal window is still open until 30th September. The compliance target for appraisals is 90% with the current compliance rate is 60.6% complete with 20% in progress. There has been an increase in bank staff mandatory training compliance from 65% to 85%.

A RAG rated action plan has been developed which will replace this report and be presented from December 2024.

MC thanked JB for the updates provided.

6.5 Key Issues EDIB Steering group

PC provided an update on the Anti-Racism commitment which is being focused on within the Trust. A banner has been produced to support the commitment and support staff who want to report any racism behaviour. The QR code on the banners will bring up a website of information including how to report racism and obtain advice. The website provides email addresses and telephone numbers for the Patient and Family Support team as well as the Freedom to Speak Up team. PC gave a demonstration of how this worked.

MC thanked PC for the report and updates.

MC questioned how the campaign effectiveness will be monitored and if this will be triangulated into the reporting of incidents at work and the data collected from this. RMc confirmed the anti-racism commitment will link in with the relaunch of 'Be Civil, Be Kind' campaign and assured the committee on interventions that will be put in place to support staff, patients, and their families.

7. Governance

7.1 Board Assurance Framework

The Board Assurance Framework was included within the pack. Dates were added into the BAF to show timelines.

The committee **approved** the Board Assurance Framework.

7.2 Trainee Doctor Survey Action Plan/ DME update (GMC Survey)

The 2024 GMC National Training Survey ran for a period of 8 weeks from March 2024 to May 2024. 90.2% of eligible doctors in training in the Trust completed the survey for trainees, along with 65.9% of Consultants registered with the GMC as an Educational Supervisor who completed the trainer survey. Responses from the surveys have allowed teams to develop action plans to take forward within each department. The next local training survey is due in October 2024.

The Trust, with support from Broadgreen Hospital, now offer a 24-hour food service which was noted as part of the survey. Feedback has been positive from staff who have used the food service.

MC thanked CQ and MK for the updates and assurances provided within the report and presentation.

NB noted progress with the training of doctors within the Trust year on year.

MC noted the action plans with relation to RAG rating not being reflective throughout the report. CQ noted to bring the RAG ratings to the next meeting. CQ discussed all actions are achievable for each group.

7.3 Employee Relations Annual report, including 6 months IPP

The report highlighted a review of Employee Relations activity undertaken within the HR department between 1st September 2023 to 31st August 2024.

There has been a decrease in overall volume of employee relation cases over the last 12 months however, in relation to grievance activity, complexity has intensified. Stage 4 sickness hearings have also increased but the Managing Attendance at Work Policy has been reviewed recently and it is hoped that the Trust will see a decline in the requirement for staff to attend a stage 4 hearing. HR also support a significant number of informal cases.

MC thanked EB for the report and updates provided.

NB advised that he believed the increase in grievance activity is a positive thing and a reflection on the changing culture and willingness of staff being prepared to speak up about behaviour. EH confirmed that she thought the relaunch of 'Be Civil, Be Kind' campaign would also encourage staff to speak up more.

JD questioned if the Trust are dealing with fraud cases or MIAA. RMc discussed fraud cases go through MIAA for further investigation and there is a precautionary exclusion where a staff member will still be paid during this period.

MK discussed fraud cases may have two parallel investigations.

7.4 NHS Standard Contract Equality Reporting requirements

The report provided assurance that the Trust met all reporting requirements as set out in the NHS Standard Contract and compliance with national EDI requirements.

The delivery of the EDIB Strategy is supported by an operational action plan with the monitoring and review of equality related activities for both our patients and workforce is undertaken through the Trust's established EDIB Steering Group.

MC thanked RMc for the report and assurances provided.

8. Evaluation of Meeting

MC thanked all for the reports and assurances provided throughout the meeting. MC noted challenges Nationally and Regionally as well as managing sickness levels.

9. Any other business

PC advised that the Occupational Health contract with Optima Health expires on the 31st January 2025. The tender is active and joint with Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust. Once the process has been concluded, the contract is anticipated to be in place by December 2024.

The Payroll Services contract will be renewed with Merseyside and West Lancashire NHS Trust for 12 months. This is to allow the Trusts across Cheshire and Mersey to consider moving to this contract which will result in a price reduction per pay slip.

10. Date and Time of Next Meeting:

Monday 2nd December 2024, 10:00-12:00. Microsoft Teams