

E-Meeting of the People Committee Meeting

minutes

Minutes of People Committee Meeting held on Monday 3rd March 2025

Present:

Margaret Carney (MC) (Chair)
John Doyle (JD)
Claudette Elliott (CE)
Justine Brislen (JB)
Peter Cook (PC)
Rachael McDonald (RMc)
Manoj Kuduvalli (MK)
Jennifer Deeney (JDe)
Christina Chakalova (CC)

Non-Executive Director
Non-Executive Director
Non-Executive Director
Clinical and Medical Education Lead
Recruitment and Resourcing Lead
Deputy Chief People Officer
Medical Director
Deputy Director of Nursing & Quality
Organisational Development and Learning Lead

Apologies for Absence:

Nicholas Brooks (NB)
Jane Royds (JR)
Joan Mathews (JM)
Claire Quarterman (CQ)

Non-Executive Director
Chief People Officer
Director of Nursing & Quality
Director of Medical Education

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 2nd December 2024

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

4. Action Log

Action 1 - RMc agreed to work with the Data and Analytics team to address the presentation of the data within the SOF.

Update – The sickness has been separated within the dashboard. This action was closed.

Action 2 - RMc agreed to bring back a report on sexual safety and safeguarding with key actions from the working group.

Update – There has been a project set up regarding sexual safety and requirements within the organisation. This item was closed and discussed within the meeting.

Action

Action 3 - RMc will review the BAF to reflect the Liverpool collaboration work with risks as well as actions to mitigate those risks and circulate following the meeting.

Update – The BAF was updated and this action was closed.

5. Dashboard - SOF format/workforce KPIs

RMc provided an update of the Strategic Oversight Framework.

Voluntary turnover remains below 10% with a further reduction in January 2025.

Sickness absence remains an area of focus but has decreased by 0.37% in January 2025 sitting at 5.66%, but still exceeding the target of 4.5%.

Mandatory training compliance continues to improve with an upward trend in January 2025.

MC noted the impact from the safeguarding mandatory training is still prominent within the mandatory training figures. JB discussed seeing an upwards trend which will need a couple of months to recover from. A resuscitation lead has now been appointed which should support compliance in that area. A Mandatory Learning Oversight Group has been organised to support compliance.

MC thanked RMc for the update.

6. Strategy

6.1 Regional/ National workforce update

RMc provided Regional and National workforce updates.

National

A new VSM framework is due to be released and published in March 2025.

Pay increase figure is not available however this is predicted to be a 3.5% potential increase. Following this information there are some tensions regarding the proposal which has potential to cause industrial action in the future. In April 2025, band 2 and the bottom of band 3 will receive a pay increase, communications will be shared with colleagues.

Sexual safety remains a priority for the Trust as well as nationally.

Following a request from Royal Collage of Nursing, a review of all nursing and midwifery profiles will be undertaken to reflect current nursing practice. The RCN has issued all Trusts with guidance. Any updates will be brought back to People Committee.

Regional

Work has been ongoing regarding the submission of the workforce plan. A high level plan has been submitted which includes the digital disaggregation, targeted health lung expansion as well as cath labs.

Regionally groups set up around the LAASP such as the People Organisational Development Culture Board which is looking to create efficiencies and improve productivity.

A Cheshire and Merseyside Workforce Collaborative Group meeting has been set up to look at any pay affecting changes relating to national pay changes such as minimum wage and the effect on salary sacrifice. The group have agreed to work on a precision statement to ensure consistency with each Trust across Cheshire and Merseyside.

JDe discussed there are 150 job descriptions within the Trust but not 150 different roles therefore work is ongoing to look into job descriptions alongside the national job profiles and to standardise throughout the Trust but also add addendums to reflect specialities.

The committee discussed risks associated with the review of job descriptions within the Trust. JDe noted the biggest challenge will be the band 5 jobs which need uplifting to a band 6 to reflect their experience.

CC discussed annex 21 and annex 30 regarding qualifications and financial impacts.

An update regarding national job profiling including impact on the Trust as well as opportunities will be brought to the September People Committee.

RMc/
JDe

RMc provided the committee with assurance relating to workforce planning with each division to focus on the service with a 5-year plan. RMc suggested to bring back each divisions workforce plan and actions to the committee in September.

RMc

6.2 Quarterly HR & LD Assurance Report & Strategy Update

The report provided assurance on the progress against the people strategy. The report incorporated compliance of key HR, Learning and Development activity and highlighted associated risks and mitigations to support delivery.

New Health & Safety Executive guidance has removed the requirement to retest fit testers every two years and changed to every five years.

Mandatory training compliance is 93%. Lead Employer Mandatory Training is at the expected benchmark of 85%. Bank mandatory training is at 73% which is a 2% decrease in the past month. The mandatory training will be monitored and bank staff will have shifts paused if they do not complete the training.

There has been a steady and positive trend with appraisals completion and shows 92.4% compliant, a 0.6% improvement since November 2024. While Corporate Divisions have improved by over 2%, they remain the only division below the 90% benchmark.

The professional nurse advocate is the first clinical model of restorative supervision for nurses in England. The Trust is working towards target of 1 PNA for every 20 nurses (Total of 32 required). Plans are in place to increase the pool of PNA's, there are currently 7 trained PNA's and a further 9 staff are attending training this year.

Sickness absence remains an area of focus but has decreased by 0.37% in January 2025 sitting at 5.66% but still exceeding the target of 4.5%.

In both December 2024 and January 2025 voluntary turnover was below the Trust target of 10% which is the lowest voluntary turnover since November 2023.

Bank & Agency usage increased in January 2025 by 19%, and agency use increased by 19%. Bank & Agency use is 12% lower in January 2025 compared with January 2024.

PC discussed the occupational health tender has been started again due to a company appealing the original decision. PC provided assurance that the Trust will have occupational health at all times whilst in the tender process.

The committee discussed working collaboratively with other Trusts regarding campaigns such as staff networks and anti-racism.

CC discussed Sexual Safety Policy which addresses relationships between patient and staff however this policy will be updated to address other sexual safety issues. National e-learning regarding sexual safety will be shared to all staff.

The committee **noted** the report.

6.3 Sickness Absence Deep Dive

Sickness has been steadily increasing along with a national trend. It was agreed to hold quarterly review and deep dives to prove the Board and People Committee with assurance. The deep dive is an opportunity to review all data and trends, review each case collectively and agree actions going forward.

From 1st January 2023 to 21st December 2024, the main reason for sickness is anxiety/ stress/ depression or other psychiatric illnesses at 35.37%.

JD questioned the age profile of those off with stress and anxiety. RMc discussed these were complex cases around sickness absence with a mixed age profile.

PC undertook an audit around return to work. The return to work is a digital form which needed to be cross matched to ESR. There were errors within the return to works such as the dates of sickness within the online and ESR did not match. The return to work form will be refreshed and business HR colleagues will support all areas of low compliance. There will be a relaunch of the updated digital forms as well as an audit on a monthly basis.

CE questioned if there had been a decline in the Covid vaccinations. RMc discussed an increase in cases of flu and covid and a decline of vaccinations undertaken. Work is ongoing with risk team and national guidance will support.

The committee discussed the data collated from colleagues who are regularly off sick has supported the new policy.

MK noted the 35% with stress, anxiety and depression are longer term sickness rather than short term sickness. MK questioned how the Trust benchmark compared to other Trusts. RMc to look into this further and bring an update to the next meeting.

MC noted the compliance with return to work forms being low and questioned how to assess the qualitative nature of the return to work forms. PC provided assurance that the audit will analyse the nature of the return to work forms and pick out themes and date. Further training will be provided to managers to support them further.

The committee discussed training will be provided for online training forms.

MC thanked RMc for the update.

6.4 LAASP update

RMc discussed the new appointment of the Chief Executive Officer and Chair – James Sumner and David Flory which will commence in April 2025.

6.5 Learning Lessons to Improve People Practice

The report highlighted learning lessons to improve people practice and provided assurance against the IPP recommendations. The Trust shows good compliance against the 7 IPP recommendations.

The report provided a summary of live Employee Relations (ER) cases. Notably, a number of cases have been concluded, including one under the MHPS framework. Despite making good

RMc

progress, there has been a recent spike in cases, largely attributable to an Information Governance Breach, which has introduced additional volume to the caseload. Additionally, the Trust have received notification of an Employment Tribunal claim which requires a significant amount of work. The report showed data from the closed disciplinary cases split by division. The longest case took 209 days to conclude, and the shortest case took 8 days.

A review of the disciplinary process and policy will be undertaken.

The committee **noted** the report.

6.6 National Staff Survey Update

RMc shared a presentation following the National Staff Survey.

A total of 119 questions were asked in the 2024 survey, of these, 113 can be compared to 2023 and 101 can be positively scored. 1159 staff members completed the survey, which is a score of 62%, 2% lower than the previous year. The average response rate for similar organisations was 59%.

83% of staff would recommend the organisation as a place to work.

93% of staff would be happy with the standard of care provided by the organisation if a friend or relative needed treatment.

92% of staff agreed the care of patients/ service users is the organisations top priority.

The committee **noted** the presentation.

6.7 EDI Steering Group – Key Issues

The report provided an update on the key developments to the Trust's Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EDIB) steering group and provided assurance on the Trusts commitment to developing the EDIB action plan.

Staff networks continue to grow with the Menopause Café and LGBT+ networks becoming established. The carers network was relaunched in January 25 which was well received with a good attendance. The first meeting of the Disability and Chronic Illness staff network took place in February 25, which will look to become more established moving forward.

A reasonable adjustment policy is currently in development with aim to go live in April 2025. The current draft policy is being cross matched with other local Trusts Policies to support the development.

The initial review of the WRES staff survey data showed improvement in previous years results and will be shared when the national results have been collated. The WDES staff survey data shows areas where improvement is required, and it is hoped the new Disability and Chronic Staff Network will be able to support in the development.

The committee **noted** the report.

6.8 People Delivery Group Update

RMc shared a verbal update on People Delivery Group. RMc noted all issues discussed within People Committee are taken through People Delivery Group to socialise and discuss. The meeting is well attended with good engagement.

The committee **noted** the update.

7. Governance

7.1 Board Assurance Framework

The Board Assurance Framework was included within the pack.

RMc discussed reviewing the BAF and including timescales.

The committee discussed the risk appetite scoring a 12 and agreed this was an accurate score.

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

7.2 Staff Constitution Pledges

This will be brought to the next meeting.

7.3 Trainee Doctor Survey Action Plan/DME Update (GMC Survey)

The committee **noted** the presentation.

7.4 People Committee TOR – for review

The committee **approved** the terms of reference.

7.5 People Committee Draft Business Cycle 2025-2026

The draft business cycle was included within the pack.

JB noted the apprenticeship update is to be added within the March meeting and the Student Evaluation Feedback to be added to June.

JDe suggested for the Safer Staffing Programme report to be shared with the committee on a bi-annual basis. The committee agreed to add this to the business cycle in April/ September.

RMc noted the Learning Lessons to Improve People Practices could be incorporated within the Employee Relations annual report.

The committee **approved** the business cycle following the above changes are made.

7.6 People Committee Annual Assurance Report

The People Committee annual assurance report was circulated for information. MC noted good attendance for the committee. The report will be shared at Audit Committee.

The committee agreed the RAG rating was a true representation.

The committee **noted** the annual assurance report.

7.7 People Delivery Group minutes and slides – For information

The committee **noted** the People Delivery Group minutes.

7.8 People Committee Effectiveness Survey

The committee **noted** the effectiveness survey results.

8. Evaluation of Meeting

MC thanked the committee for their attendance and discussion.

9. Any other business

PC noted receiving substantial assurance on the MIAA audit of the payroll ESR process.

Apprenticeships update

CC shared an update on apprenticeships.

17 apprenticeships across 8 specialities completed their qualification in the past year. 69 colleagues are currently studying across 30 different qualifications.

As part of agenda for change new pay deal, the NHS staff council agreed to amend the terms and conditions of service to ensure that existing NHS staff will not suffer a detriment to their basic pay when they undertake a formal apprenticeship as part of their agreed career development.

The NHS staff council considered amendments proposed by a partnership task and finish group and agreed to implement changes from 1st July 2024.

MC thanked CC for the update.

The committee thanked MC for her support throughout People Committee meetings as well as the support of the Trust.

MC thanked all for the support throughout the People Committee meetings.

10. Date and Time of Next Meeting:

Monday 2nd June 2025, 10:00-12:00. Microsoft Teams