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## PEOPLE AND CULTURE COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHT REPORT TO BOARD

This report provides the Board with key escalation and discussion points at the last Committee meeting. A full list of items discussed appears at the end of the report to enable members to raise any questions to the Chair which have not been drawn out in the report.

The papers for this meeting can be found by following this [link](#) to the Committee page on the Trust website.

<b>Trust Board Meeting Date</b>	25 September 2025
<b>Committee Meeting Date</b>	12 August 2025
<b>Chair</b>	Ceri Jackson

### KEY ESCALATION AND DISCUSSION POINTS

#### ALERT

(Alert the Board to areas of attention)

1. No alerts arose from this meeting.

#### ADVISE

(Detail any areas of on-going monitoring, approvals, or new developments to be communicated)

2. The committee heard from colleagues in the **Operations Directorate – Sonia Thompson, Ferdi Lashari, Ceri Wheeler and Paul Greatorex - regarding the facilitation of Quality and Support Days**. Quality and Support Days within the Operations Directorate are fostering direct engagement between managers and frontline staff, enabling real-time feedback and addressing operational and well-being concerns. Initially introduced to respond to safety issues, the initiative now covers themes such as health and safety, equipment use and staff welfare, with tailored approaches across EMS, Ambulance Care, and Integrated Care. Feedback is shared with staff on progress through a You Said We Did approach.

Staff feedback has been positive, highlighting improved morale, communication, and confidence in raising issues. The initiative has helped break down silos and reinforced the dual role of managers as leaders and sources of support.

The committee noted the importance of ensuring these days are seen as genuine opportunities for open dialogue. Triangulating insights from these sessions with other engagement activities was recognised as valuable for organisational development. Members commended the initiative as a meaningful tool for staff engagement, operational improvement, and cultural development.



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3. The **report from the Director of Culture Change** and the **Director of People** was received with the following of particular note:

- Due to funding and workforce planning constraints, only 21 of 80 newly qualified paramedics (NQPs) were initially offered roles, later increased to 52 through fixed-term contracts. This placed the Trust among the better-performing organisations in terms of intake who are all in an oversupply of NQPs. Concerns were raised about future recruitment pipelines. The Trust is working with partners including HEIW and NHS England to manage the situation. Alternative roles and internal movement are being explored to support newly qualified paramedics and maintain workforce balance. The committee will receive regular updates on workforce planning and the impact on newly qualified paramedics.
- Participation in the Aspiring Board Members Programme was noted, with positive feedback on the induction meeting and the contribution of aspiring members in challenging and enriching discussions on people and culture. Our member, Meshak Ezeadim attended today's meeting.
- The Trust received recognition for its anti-racist action plan and the digital team was shortlisted for the HSJ Digital Award.
- Reference was made to the upcoming Mastering Diversity Conference that is taking place in September where colleagues from across WAST will be hosting the "health zone"
- The initial phase of the Skills Mix Task and Finish Group has concluded. Further work is underway on quality improvement and EDI assessment, with updates expected by the end of August. Assurance was sought that financial pressures would not compromise frontline skill mix or care quality. It was confirmed that any changes would be clinically assessed, discussed with trade union partners, and follow governance processes. Mitigation strategies include seeking savings elsewhere, commercialising functions, and promoting internal progression to protect care quality.

It was noted that despite challenges, the report shows progress in shifting culture and embedding WAST behaviours and values Whilst culture change is often difficult to measure and there will be setbacks on occasion and these can be used for learning and improvement.

4. The **Q1 Operational Update** highlighted ongoing work to reduce shift overruns, which remains a priority. Internal measures are being explored in collaboration with Trade Union Partners, while external factors such as hospital handover delays continue to pose challenges. The Wait-45 initiative is expected to support progress. Concerns were raised about the pace of improvement and the need for more visible internal action, with recognition of the complexity of the issue and the importance of both internal and system-wide solutions. Members noted that the refurbishment at Llangunnor site had been completed and that the new Ty Elwy site had been officially opened on 12 June 2025 with the new Lifex control room solution implemented.

5. **Reflections** on the meeting focused on the quality and effectiveness of the papers, with participants noting that concise and well-written reports from the People and Culture Directorate enabled meaningful discussion and assurance. The Chair and others highlighted the value of intentional agenda structuring, which helped connect topics such as health and safety and EDI and noted that the deep dive into the violence and aggression risk was especially important. There was consensus



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that the meeting allowed valuable contributions, avoided information overload, and that the staff story presentation provided a practical example of positive impact, demonstrating the benefits of hearing directly from staff about initiatives that make a difference.

## ASSURE

(Detail here any areas of assurance the Committee has received)

6. The Board received metrics on violence and aggression as part of the MIQPR at each meeting. This committee undertook a deep dive on **violence and aggression** against staff remains a significant concern, particularly in contact centres, where most incidents are verbal.
- Under-reporting is an issue; there is a plan to pilot a #code system to simplify incident logging. Although data shows moderate and severe harm incidents are low and declining, vigilance is needed due to potential under-reporting.
  - Priorities include improving reporting mechanisms, ensuring timely and effective post-incident support, enhancing role-specific and flexible training, and extending support to volunteers and remote workers. Structured training for managers to conduct post-incident debriefs is in development.
  - Staff feedback highlights the importance of visible leadership, prompt follow-up, and relevant training.
  - The Trust is actively involved in national policy refreshes and benchmarking and is monitoring the impact of system changes such as Right Care Right Person on incident patterns.

The committee reinforced the need for a clear internal zero-tolerance message, proactive support for staff, and equipping managers to recognise and respond to the cumulative effects of repeated incidents.

7. The Committee scrutinises performance across several metrics within its remit. Whilst the Board receives the **Monthly Integrated Quality and Performance Report** (MIQPR), there are a range of additional metrics this committee receives, including wider **People and Culture Plan Metrics**. Given this, the following areas of assurance will be of interest to the Board noting the context our people are operating in and the good progress despite this:
- The first pulse (HIVE) survey received a 9 percent response rate and 843 free-text comments, providing valuable qualitative feedback. Results highlighted mixed experiences with regular conversations reinforcing the need for ongoing work on essential conversations, and involvement in decision-making remaining an area for improvement. The survey will serve as a baseline for future rounds, with efforts underway to improve engagement, address workload concerns, and ensure staff feedback informs planning and cultural progress. Plans are in place to increase engagement for future surveys.
  - There was Trust wide reduction in sickness absence in May – the lowest since March 2021, however June saw an increase to 7.50%. Members recognised that sickness metrics are closely monitored and used alongside qualitative feedback to inform organisational health and



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improvement actions.

- Staff turnover remains stable with a steady decrease since January.
- There was a slight decrease in PADR completion rates due to a pause for implementing Our WAST Way, but the process is being reviewed to ensure meaningful conversations and alignment with personal development
- Once again there has been an increase in statutory and mandatory training compliance (88%, against a Welsh Government target of 85%).

8. The following **2024/25 equality, diversity and inclusion related annual reports** were presented at the meeting.

- The Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report (at Annex 1).
- The Annual Gender Pay Gap Report (at Annex 2)
- The Annual Workforce Equality Monitoring Report (at Annex 3)
- The Welsh Language Annual Report (at Annex 4).

**All four annual reports were endorsed** by the committee and will be presented to the Board in September for approval, alongside key achievements, learning and forward plans. Progress was noted in staff engagement, leadership focus and the impact of staff networks, with continued attention needed on intersectionality, organisational culture and inclusion. The gender pay gap report prompted discussion on data limitations and support for all gender identities, while barriers to senior roles for women were linked to organisational factors. The Welsh Language Standards Annual Report showed positive developments, and work is underway to develop the clinical consultation plan, with completion targeted for Q4.

9. The **Cultural Themes and Trends** report and **Speaking Up Safely Annual Report 2024/25** were received (the latter in the reading room<sup>1</sup> at Annex 5). These provided insights into several areas including:

- Employee relations and disciplinary cases, which showed a downward trend from the previous period.
- A spike of 26 new Requests for Resolution linked to the roster reviews in April 2025.
- Less than 1% of new cases included sexual safety concerns; however, of the 71 current disciplinary cases only 18% include a sexual safety element which is down from 35% previously.
- An improvement in moving on conversations due to the new initiative.
- The speaking up safely concerns showed a reduction in the number of concerns raised with 48 in the first half of 2025 which is down from 60 previously.

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<sup>1</sup> This digital reading room hosts documents for additional information of Board members, not essential for scrutiny or decision-making. Access to the reading room is through the documents/shared folder in lbabs' main menu. Documents in the reading room will not be posted on the Trust's website with board papers, but copies can be accessed through the link to this committee papers above.



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- Members reflected positively on the Trust's progress to foster a culture where staff feel safe and confident to raise concerns including appointing full-time Lead Guardian, national collaboration, awareness campaigns, and addressing concerns related to workplace behavior and wellbeing.
10. The Welsh Ambulance Services Partnership Team (WASPT) is the Board's local partnership advisory forum. The **WASPT highlight report** sets out the ongoing projects, upcoming challenges, and the steps being taken to address them in partnership. The following was noted from the May and July 2025 WASPT meeting:
- There are indications from TU Partners that industrial action with a focus on ambulance service members is likely because of the 2025/26 NHS Pay Review Body recommendations, confirming a 3.6% consolidated pay increase for Agenda for Change staff. Not all ballots are closed, and further updates will be provided as matters progress.
  - The ACAS action plan was progressing with some items delayed due to resource constraints, including the publication of Welsh Government e-learning materials and development of case studies. Planning is underway for a WAST partnership conference later in the year.
  - Since 1 July, UCS crews have begun co-responding to the highest acuity calls - purple arrest - providing basic life support and becoming first on scene in about half of the 30 incidents, with positive outcomes and improved confidence due to revised dispatch protocols and safety measures. Ongoing discussions continue about future UCS roles and their integration with ambulance care services.
  - Discussions continue in WASPT and in the Senior Leadership Team/Trade Union Partner forum regarding TOIL and overruns, with working groups formed to focus on these issues.
  - A deep dive was conducted on risk 558 - deterioration of staff health and wellbeing in the face of continued system pressures because of workplace experiences – with particular focus on whether, from Trade Union colleagues' perspectives it was framed accurately and constructively.
  - The 2024/25 Social Partnership Report, the first of its kind, was received by the committee.
11. The **People Development Plan** continues to progress well as part of the Trust's People and Culture Plan, supporting University Trust Status and long-term workforce sustainability. Key developments include the launch of a Learner Management System, mapping of professional groups and progression ladders, and delivery of Trust wide programmes such as leadership training, coaching qualifications and expanded apprenticeships. Staff engagement has been strong, with feedback highlighting the need for individual development plans, equitable CPD access and clearer progression routes. The next phase will pilot development plans, finalise professional group frameworks and identify transferable skills to support internal mobility. The committee endorsed the next phase and commended the approach.
12. The **End of Season Flu Report for 2024/25** provided a summary of vaccination uptake, engagement levels and key lessons to inform the Trust's 2025/26 campaign. There was a 28.9% vaccination rate, which was lower than the previous year, and a 35.2% engagement rate, possibly influenced by the use of flu voucher incentives. CEO Roadshows again proved effective in facilitating staff vaccinations and will be retained in future campaigns. Positive feedback from WAST Volunteers supports continuing vaccine access for this group. Key issues identified include inconsistent attendance at



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campaign meetings, limited availability of regional flu leads, a mid-campaign vaccine change, and challenges with data input and peer vaccinator numbers. Members heard how these insights have shaped improvements for the next campaign which begins in October.

13. The **Q1 Audit Tracker** was reviewed and the Committee noted that whilst no actions were closed this quarter, members were satisfied that the extensions were necessary and that the risks raised in the reports were not exacerbated by further extensions.
14. In the private session the committee reviewed progress against eight **suspensions over four months**, which is an increase from seven reported in the last quarter. Three cases are with the **Employment Tribunal** (same as the previous quarter). Members were assured on actions in place to manage these cases.
15. The committee received the **cycle of business monitoring and committee priority report**. The Workforce Race Equality Standard and Revalidation and Registration reports have been deferred to November 2025. Committee priorities around equality, diversity and inclusion, and people development were evident throughout the meeting.

## RISKS

### Risks Discussed:

Committee received a deep dive on Directorate Risk 400 *Violence and Aggression Against Staff* which highlighted ongoing challenges, especially under reporting in Clinical Contact Centres, and emphasised the need for improved incident reporting, targeted training, and timely post incident support.

The committee discussed four relevant risks, all of which were reviewed during the period and previously presented to the Trust Board in July. Further consideration is scheduled by the Executive Leadership Team on 27 August. Members noted that the risks inform agenda setting and that discussions throughout the meeting aligned with the key areas of each risk:

- Risk 160 (high absence rates) remains static at 20 but is expected to reduce in the next review.
- Risk 201 (reputational harm) remains at 20, with plans for a detailed review in August to consider separating stakeholder confidence and patient experience into distinct risks.
- Risk 163 (Trade Union partnerships) remains at 12 and was reviewed by the Welsh Ambulance Partnership Forum in May.
- Risk 558 (staff health and wellbeing) remains at 15 and was considered by the Welsh Ambulance Partnership Forum in July.



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**New Risks Identified:** No new risks identified at this meeting for the register.

COMMITTEE AGENDA FOR MEETING		
Directors Update	Operations Quarterly Report Q1	Staff Story and Staff Story Update
People and Culture Metrics	MIQPR	Violence and Aggression Deep Dive
People Development Plan Progress	End of Season Flu Campaign Report	WASPT Highlight Report and Terms of Reference
Cultural Themes and Trends Report	Speaking Up Safely Annual Report	Strategic Equality Reports (SEP annual report; annual gender pay gap report; annual workforce equality monitoring report)
Welsh Language Annual Report	Risk Management and BAF	Audit Tracker Q1
Cycle of Business and Monitoring Reports	WASPT Minutes and Social Partnership Report	Committee AAA from May 2025

COMMITTEE ATTENDANCE				
Name	15 May 2025	12 August 2025	13 November 2025	10 February 2026
Ceri Jackson				
Bethan Evans				
Hayley Hutchings				
Hannah Rowan				
Angela Lewis				
Carl Kneeshaw				
Chris Turley				
Lee Brooks	From item 6	Sonia Thompson		
Liam Williams	Penny Durrant	Penny Durrant		
Estelle Hitchon				
Andy Swinburn		Greg Lloyd		
Alex Crawford		James Houston		
Trish Mills				
Damon Turner				
Marcus Viggers				
Christian Fox				
Tim Cahalane				

	Attended
	Deputy attended
	Apologies received
	No longer member