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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.

Trust Board Meeting Date	27 November 2025
Committee Meeting Date	13 November 2025
Chair	Ceri Jackson

KEY ESCALATION AND DISCUSSION POINTS

ALERT

(Alert the Board to areas of attention)

1. A request to **extend the People and Culture Plan 2023-26 until April 2027** was endorsed by the committee based on its continued relevance, alignment with strategic priorities, and timeframes to refresh the Trust's Long-Term Strategic Framework. There were no concerns from the committee about this approach, and the Trust Board is asked to approve the request for extension.

ADVISE

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

2. The committee heard from three tutors in the recently formed **Essential Skills Team: Richard Lewis, Sara Morris, and Yvonne Walker** who showcased their work in supporting staff development across the Trust. The team outlined their role in delivering personalised learning in literacy, numeracy, and digital skills, enabling staff to achieve qualifications equivalent to GCSEs and fostering career progression, confidence, and resilience. They highlighted collaborative curriculum development with operational teams, the successful integration of mentoring qualifications for Emergency Ambulance Practitioners, and the positive impact of peer support networks. The presentation included feedback from staff who benefited from these programmes, emphasising increased confidence and motivation.
3. The team described ongoing and future initiatives, such as digital skills for business, higher level apprenticeships, and tailored support for diverse and rural communities, demonstrating a commitment to widening participation and supporting the Trust's well-being and inclusion objectives. Members expressed strong support for the programme, recognising its value in



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promoting inclusive staff development and widening participation across the Trust. The discussion emphasised the need for flexible learning opportunities, clarity on abstraction and funding, and ongoing review of training metrics, with a shared commitment to further enhancing the programme's reach and impact. Members thanked the tutors for their presentation and commented that it brought the initiative to life and provided valuable insight into its benefits for staff development and organisational goals.

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

- NHS Staff Survey response rate is 34% with two weeks remaining, and confidence expressed in surpassing the 40% target. WAST's rate is already well above other NHS Wales organisations.
- The Mastering Diversity Conference was positively received, bringing people networks together and reinforcing commitment to inclusivity.
- Speaking Up Safely Month saw strong leadership support, raising awareness and encouraging staff to speak up.
- A powerful story from the Volunteer Conference illustrated the profound impact of volunteer contributions.
- Continued focus on sharing best practice in cultural change through locality visits and engagement initiatives.
- National recognition included the Culture Pioneers Award (for Angie Lewis) and HPMA shortlist for work on compassionate practice and employee safety.
- Long-serving staff were honoured, and senior leaders are engaged in the NHS Tackling Inequalities Leadership Programme.
- Apprenticeship programmes are expanding in call handling, patient care, and Emergency Medical Technician roles, with consultation underway to embed staff feedback.

5. The **Q2 Operational Update** highlighted the following people and culture related issues:

- The update reported investment in training for new senior Emergency Medical Dispatch roles, progress in operations quality with more auditors in post, and ongoing Emergency Ambulance Practitioner training, although abstraction for training has created staffing challenges. It also noted a review of the Advanced Practice Paramedic roster and changes to Integrated Care management roles.
- A task and finish group is working to reduce overruns, with improvements seen in cases exceeding 60 minutes. Staff and ambulance care roadshows received positive feedback, and the collaborative approach with Trade Unions was highlighted.
- Members recognised the success of the Volunteer Conference, the value of the Operations Directorate leadership event, and the strong teamwork within operations. They noted improvements in staff experience, particularly efforts to get crews home on time and the supportive culture among staff and managers.



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- The committee discussed the upcoming phase 2 go-live of the clinical model transformation, focusing on staff readiness, particularly for those most affected in Control Rooms and Integrated Care. Extensive training has boosted staff confidence, supported by toolkits for managers and additional resources during implementation. Positive feedback was attributed to effective communication and involvement throughout the process.
6. The following **policies were approved**:
- Anti-sexual harassment policy is an All-Wales policy. The implementation plan accompanied the policy and demonstrated a genuine commitment to embed the policy across the organisation.
 - Lone working policy
 - Carers Policy
 - All-Wales Flexible Working Policy
7. **Reflections** on the meeting included an appreciation for the focus on culture and the respect shown within senior teams; as well as recognition of the efforts made to improve staff experience, a focus on training initiatives as heard through the Staff Story, and a demonstrable focus on improving the position with overruns and handover delays. The feedback from staff indicated a growing confidence in ongoing changes, and the importance of triangulating information from various sources was emphasised.

ASSURE

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

8. 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** (focusing on quantitative measures this quarter), **Workforce Scorecard** metrics and those related to **Health and Safety**. Given this, the following areas of assurance will be of interest to the Board:
- Membership of people networks continues to grow, showing strong engagement with Equality, Diversity and Inclusion initiatives and peer support, and actively promoting participation in the NHS staff survey.
 - Disciplinary cases and formal resolution requests remain stable. Members noted this may be an early indication that embedding the WAST Way and promoting early, constructive conversations is having an impact on reducing formal processes and supporting a positive culture.
 - Staff turnover is trending downward, and absence rates, while slightly higher, remain improved compared to last year, reflecting the impact of well-being initiatives. The RSV and flu season coming early this Winter will have an effect on sickness absence in the coming months.
 - Statutory and mandatory compliance has reached 90%, exceeding Welsh Government requirements and demonstrating commitment to learning and standards.
 - PADR compliance remains below target, with members emphasising the need for meaningful, regular check-ins rather than a compliance-driven approach. Feedback from staff and managers



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is shaping a more accessible PADR process, with a pilot planned in selected areas to make reviews more relevant for a dispersed workforce. Members also explored recognising other touchpoints, such as ride-outs with senior paramedics, as part of PADRs and agreed to review how these could be incorporated.

- With respect to health and safety, members received assurance on progress with compliance and training, particularly around violence and aggression incidents, which remain the main reported risk but are mostly verbal and low harm. Reporting has increased among control room and NEPTS (Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service) staff due to greater confidence in follow-up. Improvements were seen in COSHH (control of substances hazardous to health) compliance, and noise levels in new electric vehicles were confirmed as safe.
 - Health and safety plans have been reprioritised to focus on high priority actions and essential business as usual given reduced capacity in the team, and these now align with IMTP objectives, supported by a new risk assessment tracker. Staff absence has had an impact on RIDDOR reporting, which is down in Q2 to 72%.
 - Three re-rosters will start in quarter four – NEPTS, 111 and Advance Practice Paramedics affecting c.1,000 staff .
9. Members received the **2025 Workforce Race Equality Standards Report (WRES)** which forms part of the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan. The board will see from the attached paper and WRES data that WAST has low ethnic workforce diversity, with only 1.63% of the workforce (70 staff members) declaring on ESR that they are Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic. The committee discussed the actions implemented since the last WRES report that are set out in the attached paper, noting the actions underway include replicating successful inclusive recruitment initiatives in other departments, embedding allyship and active bystander training in induction programmes, enhancing data quality, expanding the BEAM staff network, and increasing community engagement. The Welsh Government has recognised WAST's progress and invited Angela Lewis, Director of Culture Change. to share best practices at a national leadership symposium. The committee commended the progress made and recommended continued focus on board representation, recruitment outcomes, and data quality to further advance equality, diversity, and inclusion across the organisation.
10. The reasonable assurance **Organisational Change Internal Audit Report** focused on the OCP (Organisational Change Process), with actions underway and deadlines considered realistic given current resources. Lessons learned will be captured through three-month post-OCP reviews, assessing achievement of objectives and identifying areas for improvement. Assurance will be provided via regular people and culture metrics, including turnover, absence, and staff survey feedback on change management. Recent roadshows have focused on understanding change from an individual's perspective, and the Trust is working to embed people-focused change practices beyond the OCP process.
11. 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 23 September



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2025 WASPT meeting, nothing there is another meeting on 20 November:

- The Welsh Government has accepted the 2025/26 NHS Pay Review Body recommendations, confirming a 3.6% consolidated pay increase for Agenda for Change staff from 1 April 2025. Trade Union partners updated the meeting on the position of their respective unions on potential industrial action over the pay award, with further updates at the upcoming meeting.
- A risk management workshop was held after the meeting which was well received; however, the meeting also raised a number of risks in discussion on overruns and the impacts to both patients and our people.
- The group discussed issues with regards to the industrial injuries process and received assurance that the Executive Leadership Team would review the process and return it to WASPT for further consideration.
- The issue of overruns was thoroughly discussed, with acknowledgement that the issue continues to affect operational hours, increase TOIL accruals and contribute to a very poor working experience. It was noted at our meeting today that the urgent action agreed at this WASPT meeting have positively prioritised the issue.
- The pace of change within Integrated Care was discussed. Specific concerns were followed up with the Executive Director of Operations to ensure they are taken holistically with those closely impacted.

12. The Committee held the first part of its **Quality Governance Review** (formerly effectiveness review) for 2025/26. The committee is valued for its inclusivity, active participation, and high-quality reporting, which foster a collaborative environment and effective assurance. There is a desire for the committee to focus more on strategic priorities and to measure the tangible impact of its work, ensuring that discussions address the most pressing and relevant issues for staff and the organisation. While the current membership and terms of reference remain broadly appropriate, amendments were agreed to include broader education and training, related partnerships and collaboration, and membership changes to reflect these updates.
13. The **Q2 Audit Tracker** was reviewed and the Committee noted good progress with no escalations to board. There are two actions on their final revised date and the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee will review these also.
14. In the private session the committee reviewed progress against four **suspensions over four months**, which is a decrease from the eight reported in the last quarter. Three cases are with the **Employment Tribunal**. Four staff members have been on alternative duties for over four months under the Disciplinary Policy, a decrease from three cases since the last report. Members were assured of actions in place to manage these cases.
15. The committee received the **cycle of business monitoring and committee priority report**. The Revalidation and Registration reports have been further deferred to January 2025. Committee priorities around equality, diversity and inclusion, and people development were evident throughout the meeting.



RISKS

Risks Discussed:

The committee discussed four relevant risks, all of which were reviewed during the period and previously presented to the Trust Board in September. 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) reduced in score from 20 to 16 given the year on year reductions in sickness.
- Risk 201 (reputational harm) has been disaggregated into two risks, one related to relationships with stakeholders and another for poor patient experience affecting reputation. These are both scored at 16 with a target score of 12. Given the reach of these risks, it is recommended they are overseen by the board directly, rather than this committee.
- The risks related to Trade Union relationships (Risk 163) and staff health and wellbeing (Risk 558) remain static.

Members noted some action dates had shifted and sought assurance on progress. Directors confirmed a December deep dive into People and Culture risks to ensure they remain fit for purpose, with consideration of combining risks and refreshing actions.

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

COMMITTEE AGENDA FOR MEETING		
Directors update	Operations quarterly report Q2	Staff story and staff story update
People and Culture metrics	MIQPR	Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan update, including WRES
People and Culture Plan extension	All-Wales Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy and Implementation Plan	WASPT AAA Highlight Report
Health and safety, and violence and aggression bi-annual report	2025/26 quality and governance review and terms of reference	Risk management and BAF
Audit tracker Q2	Organisational Change Internal Audit report	Policies for approval
Cycle of Business and Monitoring Reports		

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				



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COMMITTEE ATTENDANCE

Name	15 May 2025	12 August 2025	13 November 2025	10 February 2026
Carl Kneeshaw				
Chris Turley				
Lee Brooks	From item 6	Sonia Thompson	From item 5	
Penny Durrant				
Estelle Hitchon				
Andy Swinburn		Greg Lloyd		
Alex Crawford		James Houston	Hugh Bennett	
Trish Mills				
Lizzie O'Shea				
Damon Turner				
Marcus Viggers			Left for items 9-13	
Christian Fox			Hugh Parry	
Tim Cahalane				

	Attended
	Deputy attended
	Apologies received
	No longer member