



GIG
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Ymddiriedolaeth Brifysgol GIG
Gwasanaethau Ambiwlans Cymru
Welsh Ambulance Services
University NHS Trust

PEOPLE AND CULTURE COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

INTRODUCTION

1. The Trust's Standing Orders and Committee Terms of Reference require that Board Committees evaluate their effectiveness annually and present an annual report to the Trust Board.
2. As the factors underpinning effective governance can change, for example as people leave, organisations restructure, or strategy shifts, regular reviews of Board Committees ensure governance remains fit for purpose.
3. Standing Orders, Committee terms of reference, and Codes of Governance provide that Boards should routinely assess the effectiveness of their governance arrangements, of which the Board's Committees form an integral part.
4. The Committee met on 20 February 2024 and reviewed its terms of reference, responses to questionnaires completed by members and attendees, and its operating arrangements. Discussions were also held with the Committee Chair and Executive Lead ahead of that meeting. This Annual Report reflects on the effectiveness of the Committee in 2023/24 and proposes changes to terms of reference.

PURPOSE OF THE COMMITTEE

5. The Committee is established to enable scrutiny and review of the Trust's arrangements for all matters pertaining to its workforce, both paid and volunteer, and organisational culture and behaviour to a level of depth and detail not possible in Board meetings. The Committee will provide assurance to the Board of the Trust's leadership arrangements; behaviours and culture; training, education and development ; equality, diversity and inclusion; health, safety and welfare; people

and culture related partnerships and engagement; the Welsh Ambulance Services Partnership Team (advisory group); and Welsh Language, in accordance with its stated objectives and the requirements and standards determined by the Welsh Government, the NHS in Wales and other regulatory bodies.

MEMBERSHIP AND ATTENDANCE

6. The Committee met four times as scheduled in 2023/24 and was quorate on each occasion.
7. The Committee is supported by the Chair and three Non-Executive Directors as members, and several core attendees with good attendance.
8. The chart below illustrates attendance of members and prescribed attendees as listed in the terms of reference for 2023/24. The Committee welcomed non prescribed attendees at various meetings as well as external guests.

COMMITTEE ATTENDANCE				
Name	9 MAY 2023	8 AUGUST 2023	16 NOVEMBER 2023	20 FEBRUARY 2024
Paul Hollard				
Bethan Evans				
Joga Singh				
Hannah Rowan				
Angela Lewis	Liz Roberts			
Chris Turley				
Lee Brooks	Judith Bryce			
Estelle Hitchon				
Andy Swinburn				
Jonathan Turnbull-Ross	Liam Williams	Liam Williams		
Alex Crawford	Hugh Bennett			
Trish Mills				
Damon Turner				
Paul Seppman	Hugh Parry			Hugh Parry
Ian James				
Tim Chalane				
	Attended			
	Deputy attended			
	Apologies received			
	No longer member			

9. The Chair of the Committee, Paul Hollard, completed his eight year tenure on the Board on 31 March 2024. This Chair of this Committee will be Ceri Jackson from 1 April 2024.

10. The survey results indicated that the Committee meetings were well led with the Chair coordinating meetings with exemplary style.

COMMITTEE'S VIEWS ON EFFECTIVENESS

11. The Committee's effectiveness was assessed through a review of its terms of reference, responses to a questionnaire, discussion with the Chair and Executive Lead, and at the 20 February Committee meeting.

12. The questionnaires provided an opportunity to gauge opinion on areas of good practice and areas that require improvement. Twenty questionnaires were sent out with seven responses being returned (a 35% return rate which is slightly lower than 2022/23). This survey was sent out in December which may have affected the return rate.

13. Respondents were asked 27 questions and were encouraged to provide free text answers to explain or expand on their choices. It is often difficult to pinpoint the exact issue or example in mind when reviewing the free text, however all responses were discussed with the Chair and Executive Lead. The responses were also reviewed by the Committee on 20 February against the same questions from last year.

14. On the themes of the Committee's focus and quality of information there were several comments on the length of the agenda, meetings and papers. These included that this felt unmanageable and impacted the ability of members to have appropriate discussion, and that more focus was required to address this at agenda setting. This was discussed with the Chair and Executive Lead and the terms of reference were reviewed to see where reductions in remit could be accommodated. It was felt this was not appropriate but that the next iteration of the cycle of business would need to reflect any attempts to combine assurance reporting, particularly as it relates to the MIQPR and people and culture metrics which respondents felt were duplicative and needed to be more concise for the remit of the Committee. Agenda setting meeting take place with the Chair and Executive Lead well in advance of the next meeting to ensure that papers are commissioned in a way that focuses the agenda on risks and priorities. The length of the meeting is reviewed at that time as well as a separate meeting with the Executive lead a week before papers close to revisit timing, focus and flow.

15. There was also a comment that not all members contribute to discussion or provide challenge. Whilst that could relate to the issue above on length of papers and agenda, the results relating to the leadership of the Committee indicates that those surveyed feel that Chair allows debate to flow freely without inhibiting contributions.
16. On the theme of Committee team working, whilst scores increased from last year, there was one comment that key risks are not discussed and that assurances providers are not necessarily held to account for late or missing assurances. Without understanding more about this comment, it is difficult to pinpoint the exact issue; however, the agenda is set with the highest rated risks set out on the draft agenda and the cycle of business prioritised around those risks, with relevant deep dives where required as can be seen from the work programme below. There is a risk management and BAF paper at each meeting with the detailed risk description, controls, assurances against controls, gaps, actions and progress against these. In that respect members and attendees have information before them to challenge progress and understand more fully the context of the risks and mitigations. Regular monitoring of the cycle of business, the action log and forward planner are in place to capture matters carried over. There is more work to be done on the monitoring report to make it clearer for 2024/25.
17. As with other Board Committees, the question related to visibility of Committee members scored poorly. Given that there is a Board visits Standard Operating Procedure in place which illustrates members visibility, it is anticipated that this question will be omitted from the 2024/25 survey. The rationale being that it is unlikely, no matter how visible a Non-Executive or Executive Director may be, that that will always resonate with each Committee.
18. Each meeting hears a lived experience of our people however there was a comment that these need to be more balanced on what went well and what did not go so well. A Trade Union Partner report was suggested to provide further context of partnership successes and challenges. The Director of People and Culture has recommended that a Trade Union 'spotlight' be included in her report to draw this out, and in addition to the WASPT AAA report, the approved minutes will also be part of the pack of papers for the Committee.
19. Good practice drawn out in responses included:

- Meetings are very well Chaired and run effectively.
- Chair is visible across the Trust.
- Reports / information given to the Committee are of high quality.
- Clear reporting and escalations to the Board via AAA report.
- Strong focus on appropriate business and activities which affect staff well-being, e.g. staff stories.

20. Areas to strengthen include:

- Reduce the volume and length of papers to give more focused content.
- Clarification for members re role / expectations on Trade Union Partners.
- Reporting on Trade Union successes and challenges.
- Understanding and resolving duplicative reporting around performance metrics.
- Greater balance for the Committee where things haven't gone well.
- Improving visibility – more visits / publication of visits to relevant stakeholders.

21. The Committee has a cycle of business that is aligned to its terms of reference. All matters scheduled for oversight and review have been brought to the Committee and in this respect it has discharged its responsibilities in providing assurance to the Board. The Committee's business in 2023/24 included:

21.1. The Committee welcomed the **change of name of the Workforce and Organisational Development Directorate** to the People and Culture Directorate, with Angie Lewis now known as the Director of People and Culture. This aligns to the Committee's remit and reflects the commitment of putting our people first and creating a positive workplace culture.

21.2. The **People and Culture Plan** was presented in May and subsequently approved by the Board. The year one priorities and the communications strategy to accompany it was discussed. Metrics, both quantitative and qualitative, have been shared with the Committee throughout the year as have cultural themes and trends.

21.3. The **culture review tool** was presented as a practical tool to deliver cultural change. It was thought to be particularly helpful for local managers.

21.4. **The lived experiences of our people** were shared at the meetings:

- In May the Committee heard from **Fatehullah Tahir** as a follow-up from the experiences he shared in November 2022 of the challenges working at an organisation lacking in diversity in terms of ethnicity and faith. Members heard that Fatehullah, who is our Organisational Development Manager, felt that whilst it was helpful to share his story, fundamentally nothing had changed, although he recognised that culture change can be slow to take effect and that several initiatives were in place and are planned under the people and culture plan.
- In August **Ian Cross**, Voluntary Car Service Driver joined the meeting. Ian has been volunteering for 40 years, more recently with his dog Buddy accompanying him, was recently awarded the British Empire Medal for services to WAST. Members heard of the regular runs Ian has in South Wales and his trips further afield to support patients to receive treatment. Improvements which could improve the experience of volunteers such as ease of access to PPE, in car communication methods and signage were discussed and the Committee will review progress on these at the November meeting. Members thanks Ian for his service and the comfort and support he and Buddy give to our patients and their families.
- In November rather than hearing from individual, **feedback** was presented that had been collected from our people after recent CEO Roadshow.
- In February **Darren Anthony** joined the meeting to share his story. Darren is a newly qualified EMT 2 who joined WAST in September 2020 after working in various private and public sector jobs, including the leisure industry. Darren completed the Level 4 diploma for Associate Ambulance Practitioners, which is an accredited education program for EMT 2 roles. He was determined to excel on the course and achieved the highest marks. He also won the Skills for Health Apprentice of the Year Award for his achievement.

21.5. The February 2024 the meeting had a deliberate focus on equality, diversity and inclusion, with the first part of the meeting exclusively given over to this important topic. The Chair welcomed other Board members to the meeting for this spotlight which included the endorsement of the **Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28**, the **Annual Workforce Equality Monitoring Report for 2022/23** and the annual **Gender Pay Gap Report 2022/23**.

- 21.6. A deep dive was conducted regarding **recruitment outcomes for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities** with a review undertaken of applications from April 2022 to March 2023. WAST receives a positive level of applications at circa 9% of all those received, against census data of 5%, but a significant number are not successful at shortlisting. There is recognition of the need to get upstream with some roles e.g. paramedics, and work with university partners on attracting a more diverse range of students or look at opportunities to link into other providers with a more diverse student population.
- 21.7. Members were assured on progress against the **Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan** in year, and were presented with the Welsh Government **LGPTQ+ Action Plan** published by Welsh Government in February 2023. The plan sets out an overarching vision to improve the lives of, and outcomes for, LGBTQ+ people. Whilst some elements await further direction from Welsh Government, the Committee was assured on progress.
- 21.8. The **Speaking Up Safely** Task and Finish Group completed its work, recommending the Trust adopt a speaking up safely guardian model and a confidential third-party platform to provide an alternative avenue to staff. This was a focus during the year with the All Wales speaking up safely framework adopted in November, and a self-assessment to Welsh Government demonstrating the work done in this area and links to wider culture work.
- 21.9. The **NHS Staff Survey** was released as was a **Pulse Survey** via the new tool Hive. A 'you said we did' will be collated to share with our people at CEO Roadshows.
- 21.10. The people and culture elements of the **IMTP 2024-27** were reviewed. Members welcomed the ambition of the people and culture team but sought to ensure that these were focused on key activities and priorities, align to our principal risks, financial envelope, and capacity.
- 21.11. An approach was endorsed to assess concerns over **skills development/skill fade of clinicians** due to handover delays and number of patients attended. This was communicated on picket lines during industrial action and whilst there is no clear clinical evidence of this, the work will enable the Trust to gain insight and intelligence on the impact handover delays have on clinical skills.

- 21.12. **Health and Safety updates** were received with a focus on RIDDOR compliance, risk assessment compliance, manual handling, the effects of diesel fumes on our people (which was also the subject of the advisory group WASPT discussions), and violence and aggression. Risk 199 was able to be closed off the corporate risk register, with the Committee noting an improvement in the cultural journey of the organisation regarding health and safety.
- 21.13. The **draft Health and Well-being Plan 2025-2029** was received in February 2024 for comment.
- 21.14. The Committee noted that the **Engagement Framework Delivery Plan** was paused earlier in the year due to realignment of timescales. Notwithstanding this, the Trust continued extensive engagement externally including with Llais (the new Citizens Voice Body). A presentation was provided on the **Reputation Audit** conducted of our stakeholders in Q3 2022/23 and it was agreed that more time will be devoted to the responses and the next steps at a Board development session.
- 21.15. The August meeting had a spotlight on volunteers, celebrating the successes and illustrating the ambition of the **Volunteer Strategy**. Members heard of the extent of the successful schemes introduced for volunteers and commended the team for the exemplar work. The benefit of volunteers in the challenging financial climate was emphasized and the Committee welcomed a further focus on volunteers at the Trust's Annual General Meeting on 27 September where the full extent of the advances was showcased.
- 21.16. The **Seasonal Influenza Campaign 2023/23** report was received following the close of the flu vaccination programme in March 2023.
- 21.17. The Committee received assurance on the processes in place for 2023 **registration and revalidation** with respect to the Health and Care Professional Council and Nursing and Midwifery Council.
- 21.18. **Updates are received from the Director of People and Culture** at each Committee, and these were changed in year to reflect a new look and a balanced view on both successes and challenges.

- 21.19. **Operational updates** are received at each meeting and often generate a good deal of discussion, particularly related to system pressures.
- 21.20. An update was received on the **Welsh Language Framework** which is included in the Integrated Medium Term Plan 2023-26 (IMTP). Members were assured that it included a combination of compliance with Welsh language standards, centralisation of translation, and the Welsh Government mwy na geiriau/More than just words action plan. In September the **Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2022-23** was presented bilingually for the first time by the Welsh Language Manager, Melfyn Hughes which was welcomed. In February 2024 the Welsh Government's annual report on the **More Than Just Words Action Plan for 2022/23** was presented to the Committee. Updates were also received on the Welsh Language plan for the IMTP 2024-27 and progress on initiatives in 2023/24. Members commended the work and the focus on Welsh language
- 21.21. The **MIQPR** and **Quarterly Workforce KPIs** were received at each meeting, with a particular focus on sickness absence levels, recruitment, PADRs, statutory and mandatory training, moving on interviews, and shift overruns.
- 21.22. A **deep dive into absences** due to anxiety, stress, depression/other mental health illness was presented. Identifying a source of stress within this absence code is highly subjective however potential drivers include missed meal breaks, overruns and hand over delays, and Datix reporting would support this. Support at WAST for colleagues with stress related issues include a range of in person and online options ranging from occupational health and clinical psychology to REACT training.
- 21.23. The **backlog of policies** – particularly those relevant to this Committee - was reviewed and escalated to the Board as an alert. A priority order of policies for review in 2023/24 was endorsed. The following policies were approved in 2023/24:
- Health and Safety Policy
 - All Wales Speaking Up Safely Framework
 - All Wales Flexible Working Policy
 - Homeworking Policy

- 21.24. In private session the Committee looks at **suspensions** over four months and **Employment Tribunal** cases.
- 21.25. **Reflections** are taken at the end of meetings and included:
- The volume of papers and consequently the length meetings.
 - The desire to better link and align performance reporting and deep dives on the agenda.
 - Positive discussion on additional actions in response to the feedback on Fatehullah's experience.
 - The hybrid meeting (November) was well managed and there was a desire to replicate this more often across all Committees.
 - Post meeting review of the volume of papers with the continued intention to look at reducing these and consolidating, particularly performance reporting, wherever possible.
 - In February [insert]
- 21.26. **Audit Wales** joined the November meeting to present the NHS Workforce Data Briefing and the Workforce Planning Audit, both of which were also presented to the Board also. Overall, this was a positive outcome with WAST demonstrating areas of good improvement and responding to some of the immediate operational challenges and diversity and recruitment challenges.
- 21.27. The Committee **cycle of business** was approved.
- 21.28. **Risks** relevant to this Committee are reviewed at each meeting and the agenda is driven by these risks. The highest rated risks, sickness absence (160), reputation (201) and latterly Trade Union relationships (163) were the focus and drive agenda setting
- 21.29. The **annual effectiveness review** was conducted in the February 2024 meeting.
- 21.30. The revised **Audit** tracker and process was reviewed, and good progress is being made to close management recommendations.
- 21.31. **The Senior Paramedic Role internal audit** (reasonable assurance) was presented.

- 21.32. The limited assurance **Trade Union Release Time internal audit** was received by the Committee and actions will be tracked in the audit tracker. The Director of People and Culture confirmed the outcome of audit was shared with Trade Union colleagues and realistic timeframes for management actions agreed.
- 21.33. The reasonable assurance **Health and Safety internal audit** was received with the Auditors recognising the Trust's commitment to improving health and safety and the work undertaken to date.
- 21.34. The reasonable assurance **Retention of Staff Internal Audit** report was received.
- 21.35. The **Committee's priorities for 2023/24** are reviewed at each meeting and a more detailed update appears later in this report. The Committee also reviews progress against its cycle of business at each meeting.
22. The Board received a highlight (AAA) report from this Committee by email circulation following each meeting which included alerts, advice, and areas of assurance. In November that report was provided verbally due to the proximity of the meeting and the Board meeting.
23. The Committee is serviced by one Sub-Committees, which is the Welsh Ambulance Service Partnership Team (WASPT). WASPT held its first meeting in April 2023 and the AAA Highlight Reports provided to each meeting set out the work of this advisory forum in the year which included:
- 23.1. The operational and corporate sub-structures that feed into WASPT, including local partnership forums were formed in 2023. These forums will provide opportunities for resolution and escalation at a more local level, focusing WASPT on strategic issues.
- 23.2. Discussion regarding portering of patients and diesel fumes were the subject of several meetings. Both were also discussed by the Committee in that report but also in the Health and Safety updates.
- 23.3. Meetings were constructive.
- 23.4. The joint Executive and Trade Union Partner Insights Training Day was well received.
- 23.5. Despite industrial action there is a lot of good work to celebrate and capture.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

24. Extensive changes to the Terms of Reference for this Committee were made during the effectiveness reviews held in 2022. The changes this year are therefore minimal and include feedback from the Committee following the survey and the meeting on 20 February. The changes in the Terms of Reference are marked up in [Annex 1] and include:

- A change in the narrative on assurance to provide clarity on approach.
- Changes in the narrative on risk and audit to streamline responsibilities.
- Specific chair's action provision inserted, particularly given the significant number of policies which are due for approval in 2024/25.

25. Changes in operating arrangements in 2024/25 will include:

- Reflections targeted more on what went well/not so well rather than what was discussed during the meeting.
- WASPT approved minutes to be included in meeting bundle as well as the AAA report.
- Next iteration of the cycle of business would need to reflect any attempts to combine assurance reporting, particularly as it relates to the MIQPR and people and culture metrics which respondents felt were duplicative and needed to be more concise for the remit of the Committee.
- Revised monitoring report for the cycle of business.
- Trade Union Partner and Committee Chair induction session to be held.

COMMITTEE PRIORITIES

26. The Committee received an update on progress against its priorities at each meeting. The 2023/24 priorities were:

Priority	Progress
<p>Carry over the Committee priority from 2022/23 to support the implementation and championing of the strategic equality objectives, including Welsh Language, to promote an inclusive organisation.</p>	<p>As set out above focus on this priority during the year has been good. Consideration of equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) matters are the golden thread throughout all discussions held at the Committee. Diversity metrics were included within the 'culture' theme of the 'People and Culture Plan Metrics and Success Factors', which the Committee received at its meeting in August.</p> <p>The Strategic Equality Objectives have been in development throughout the year and the final version was endorsed by the Committee in February.</p> <p>In August, the Committee received the Welsh Language Annual Report for 2022-23 (before its progression to Trust Board for approval in September), and they also received an update on the More Than Just Words action plan</p>
<p>Development and implementation of the Speaking Up Safely Framework.</p>	<p>The Cultural Trends and Themes Learning Report was received by the Committee at its meeting in August. This included an update on Speaking Up Safely and other cultural indicators identified.</p> <p>The revised Speaking Up Safely Framework, the All-Wales Speaking Up Safely Policy was received by the Committee in November for endorsement (subsequently ratified for adoption by the Trust Board).</p>
<p>Development and Progress of the People and Culture Plan</p>	<p>The People and Culture Plan was approved by the Trust Board at its meeting in May 2023, and the Committee received an update by way of 'metrics and success factors' at its meeting in August.</p> <p>The Committee are receive qualitative and quantitative updates against the Plan.</p>

27. It is good practice for Committees to set priorities for the forthcoming year when they review their effectiveness. Accordingly, the Committee has agreed the following priorities for 2024/25:
- (a) Impact of wellbeing initiatives on our people.
 - (b) Culture of conversations with a focus on communication and conversations with managers and their people.
 - (c) A continued focus on equality, diversity and inclusion and the implementation of the strategic equality objectives.
- The Trust's approach to development of our people.
28. Progress on priorities will be reported to the Committee quarterly and to the Board through its highlight report.

NEXT STEPS

29. The next steps are as follows:
- (a) Ensure changes to operating arrangements are cycled into work programme for review in 2024/25
 - (b) Update the cycle of business with revised terms of reference

RECOMMENDATION

30. The Trust Board is requested to
- (a) Receive and note the contents of the Committee Annual Report for 2023/24 and analysis of its effectiveness; and
 - (b) Approve the changes to the Terms of Reference and operating arrangements.