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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	26 September 2024
Committee Meeting Date	30 August 2024
Chair	Ceri Jackson

KEY ESCALATION AND DISCUSSION POINTS

ALERT

(Alert the Board to areas of attention)

1. The **2024-2030 Strategic Workforce Plan** was received and reviewed by the Committee. Some amendments were agreed, and the plan, which is on the Board's agenda was endorsed for approval. The Committee recognised the criticality of this work in aligning with our long term vision and IMTP.

2023/24 Annual Reports for approval by Board

2. The **Workforce Race Equality Standards (WRES) Report for 2024** was taken in private session due to the small numbers of individuals in these categories being potentially disclosive. 59 members of staff declared their ethnicity as Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic which accounts for 1.4% of the WAST workforce. This is under representative of the Welsh population of 6.2%. The main issues for the Board's attention include:
 - the low levels of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic recruitment into WAST
 - Black, Asian and Minority staff are less likely to be shortlisted for vacancies
 - there is a decreased likelihood of ethnic minority staff being appointed after shortlisting
 - Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff are five times more likely to be put through disciplinary processes than white staff.

The action plan was reviewed (much of which was already in train under the Strategic Equality Objectives work), and members were of the view that more attention is required on this and the equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) work by this Committee and the Board. The Chief Executive and the Director of People and Culture will meet with Prof. Emmanuel, the Lead for WRES NHS Wales and Social Care, to discuss the report and the actions proposed.

3. The **Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2023/24** was endorsed and is attached at **Appendix x** for approval by the Board. Of note there remains work to do to realise the Trust's ambition of



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becoming a truly inclusive organisation; notwithstanding this and the WRES report, there is positive traction particularly around networks being established for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues. It was acknowledged that the accessibility standards need to be considered more fully in the presentation of future reports.

4. The **Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2023/24** was endorsed and is attached at **Appendix x** for approval by the Board. Of note, challenges remain in key areas including incomplete monitoring data on ESR, limited participation in the NHS Staff Survey and time to engage in EDI initiatives due to operational pressures.
5. The **Gender Pay Gap Report 2023/24** was endorsed and is attached at **Appendix x** for approval by the Board. Of note, the gap remains consistent at 5.6% with fewer women in pay bands 8a and above. Flexible working often is disproportionate towards women in the workplace.
6. The **Welsh Language Annual Report 2023/24** was endorsed and is attached at **Appendix x** for approval by the Board. The report was presented bilingually, and the breadth and depth of the report was appreciated by members. The introduction of a standards baseline is a new feature for 2024/25 to more objectively report on and increase standards compliance.

ADVISE

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

7. **Kayleigh Wheeler, Operations Manager Ambulance Care**, shared her journey to her current leadership role at WAST. She has a wide and varied background, with her leadership journey beginning at McDonald's, where she was recognized for her contributions and leadership skills. She carried these skills into her roles at WAST, focusing on coaching and supporting her team. Kayleigh has faced challenges at WAST, including homophobia, misogyny, and bullying, which impacted her and her partner's experiences within the service. Despite these challenges, she found support from colleagues, leading to her involvement in the WAST Voices network. Kayleigh is focused on amplifying quieter voices within the organization and addressing issues like bullying and harassment. The network plans to engage in various campaigns and sessions to support staff. Kayleigh's presentation was a powerful testament to her resilience, leadership, and commitment to positive change at WAST. Elements of frustration and some barriers continue; however, Kayleigh felt the organisation is moving in the right direction with accessibility to, and transparency of, senior leaders improving.
8. The **Health and Safety Annual Report 2023/24** was approved and is attached at **Appendix x** for information for the Board. Members noted the maturing culture of health and safety at WAST and the focused attention the team has had on this throughout the year.
9. The **2024 NHS Staff Survey** will be released shortly. It was noted that concerns had been raised with HEIW who oversee the survey regarding that lack of sufficient time to make meaningful progress on actions since the 2023 results were published. However the importance of increasing engagement was emphasised, and a communications plan is ready to launch, aiming to



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increase participation rates and demonstrating actions that have taken place in response to the previous survey's feedback.

10. The **partnerships and engagement** report received and welcomed, focusing on regional partnership Boards and the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, aiming to develop well-being objectives. The report signifies a move towards more strategic engagement and partnership working, aligning with broader organizational and national priorities.
11. The Committee commended Angie Lewis, Director of People and Culture on being named as one of the top **30 most influential HR Practitioners in the UK**. This recognition highlights the outstanding work we are doing at WAST and shines a light on our commitment to excellence and focus on our people.
12. There is a significant amount of **learning and development** taking place at all levels in the Trust. This ranges from essential digital literacy skills and critical thinking courses to our driver education and in house ILM coaching and mentoring qualifications. The introduction of the 'WAST Way' to enable a culture of compassionate, inclusive and collaborative leadership includes leadership behaviours which are drafted and engagement on these is underway.
13. The **Q1 Operational Update** highlighted the positive impact on meal breaks, sickness and overruns of the pods at Morriston Hospital. There is optimistic on recovery for reaching establishment on call handlers for 111 and teams were commended for the significant amount of piloting and trials that are ongoing to support progress on the evolving clinical model.
14. **Carl Kneeshaw will join WAST as the Director of People** from 1 November and will start engaging in several key events during October ahead of that date. Angie Lewis will continue in the role of Director of People and Culture until Carl arrives and will then move to .6 FTE as the Director of Culture thereafter.
15. **Reflections** on the meeting were that, despite technical issues with the hybrid meeting and its length, it was well chaired. Whilst there were a lot of positives, with highlights being the staff story and the progress shown in the Health and Safety Annual Report.

ASSURE

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

Quality and Performance

16. The Committee received the People and Culture Plan Metrics (focusing on qualitative data from the NHS Staff Survey), the MIQPR for June/July and the July Workforce Scorecard. Given the fact that the Board does not receive all these metrics, particularly those that are qualitative, the following areas of assurance will be of interest.
17. More than 200 individuals across Wales have completed Active Bystander training since May 2023, and the Trust recently won a HPMa Cymru Award 2024 for its Bystander to Upstander initiative.



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This is an important EDI initiative.

18. Free text comments from the 2023 NHS staff survey were reviewed, and whilst a large number of comments were negative in their tone, it is positive that our people are telling us their points of view and that enables us to act and ensure established programmes are reflecting issues raised.
19. Three monthly check-ins with newly recruited colleagues were positive with 90% recommending WAST as a place to work. This reduced to 80% of a smaller cohort who responded after 12 months. More work is to be done here with respect to the 12 months celebration for a larger cohort, but the Committee was assured that those check-ins are in place for new starters.
20. The cultural themes and trends paper reviewed the managing attendance at work programme and the key themes for sickness and absence reasons. Whilst the target of 6% has not been achieved, there is a general decrease in the number of employees starting long term sickness from January to May 2024. August is also showing a downward trend which is positive given that in the past this period has often seen a peak. Good use is being made of Health Assured by employees on sickness absence and there has been a reduction in physiotherapy referrals in the period. Training continues to be rolled out across WAST on best practices for managing attendance.
21. There is positive movement in the recruitment activity for 42 EMTs in central Powys and the Hywel Dda area. Pressure on the training school for these new recruits and EMTs transitioning to the higher banding will continue to be monitored and managed.

Cultural Themes and Trends

22. The Committee reviewed the data relating to employee relations cases, sickness and training and the impact that was having on the culture at WAST. The focus on creating an environment where wellbeing and compassion are at the heart of the experience of our people, and where their voices are heard was evident.
23. There has been an increase in employee relations cases, and the Board is reminded that this was predicted in line with our focus on ensuring colleagues feel safe to speak up. The data indicates that there is not a corresponding increase in sickness absence despite this rise which is a promising sign, suggesting issues are being addressed without adversely affecting overall employee health.
24. Inappropriate behaviour persists as the predominant reasons for disciplinary measures. Closure of respect and resolution cases has reduced significantly since the same time last year. However, 228 individuals have been trained in compassionate practices, and 70 have attended investigating officer training. Three full time investigating officers have now started in post. Training has also focused on the People Services Team to support their development.
25. **The Internal Audit on Disciplinary Case Management** relates to the above, and this received reasonable assurance. The purpose of the audit was to assess the adequacy of the arrangements in place for the management of the disciplinary process, and to focus on the demonstration of compassionate leadership principles, in addition to compliance with the Trust's defined disciplinary processes.



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26. The **Volunteers Governance Internal Audit** was presented and received reasonable assurance. The purpose of the audit was to review the adequacy and effectiveness of the Trust's governance and operational management of volunteer activities.
27. The **WASPT highlight report** was received following their meeting on 2 May 2024 and a verbal update from the July meeting, with no issues to escalate to the Board. Trade Union Partners at the People and Culture Committee noted the excellent partnership working at WAST and recognised that the structures are embedding well to enable WASPT to be a more strategic forum. The issue of diesel fumes remains an important topic at these meetings. Workshops post WASPT meetings are now a regular feature with July looking at the outcome of workshops on the evolving clinical model.
28. The Trust's final uptake of staff vaccinated for the **Seasonal Influenza Campaign 2023/24** was 36.5%, which is a decrease of 8% from last year's campaign. Lessons learnt from this campaign have informed an extensive list of areas that require continued development for future flu campaigns.
29. In private session the Committee reviewed progress against seven **suspensions over four months** which is an increase from four reported in the last quarter. Five cases were lodged with the **Employment Tribunal** (an increase of one from the previous quarter) and by the end of the quarter this is expected to reduce to three. Members were assured on actions in place to manage these cases.
30. The **Audit Tracker** was reviewed, and the Committee noted the update with a reduced number of actions closed in quarter, but with plans to do so in Q3.
31. The **Professional Regulation Policy** was approved by Committee, and the **NHS Wales Respect and Resolution Policy** formally adopted. It was acknowledged that the HR Starting Policy has been reclassified as a Standard Operating Procedure.
32. Members received the Cyle of Business **Monitoring Report, and the Committee priorities update** with no issues to escalate.

RISKS

Risks Discussed: The four risks within the remit of this Committee were reviewed as below:

160 – High absence rates impacting on patient safety, staff wellbeing and the Trust's ability to provide a safe and effective service; whilst it remains at a rating of 20 (5x4) an improvement is beginning to show in specific areas of the business and there are early indications of a positive downward trajectory across the organisation against a backdrop of increasing concerns and disciplinary cases. Committee acknowledged that elements of the risk had been discussed throughout the agenda linked closely to the People & Culture Plan performance metrics and cultural themes and trends. Two areas of focus were discussed in that EMS are setting a benchmark for the rest of operations; however, Ambulance Care has an off trend increase in sick absence.

201 – Damage to the Trust's reputation following a loss of stakeholder confidence which remains at a



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score of 20 (4x5). The risk is inextricably linked to several of the metrics measured and discussed at PCC.

163 – Maintaining effective and strong Trade Union partnerships remains at a score of 16 (4x4). The risk was presented in detail to the Welsh Ambulance Services Partnership Forum for the first time in May 2024.

558 - Deterioration of staff health and wellbeing in the face of continued system pressures as a consequence of workplace experiences) remains unchanged at a score of 15 (3x5).

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

COMMITTEE AGENDA FOR MEETING		
Director of People and Culture Update	Operations Quarterly Report Q1	Staff Story
People and Culture Plan Metrics	Workforce scorecard	MIQPR
Cultural themes and trends report	Annual health and safety report	WASPT highlight report
Strategic Workforce Plan	Partnerships and engagement report	End of season flu report 2023/24
SEP Annual report 2023/24	Annual workforce equality monitoring report 2023/24	Annual gender pay gap report 2023/24
Welsh language annual report 2023/24	Risk management and BAF	Audit tracker Disciplinary Case Management Internal Audit Volunteers Governance Internal Audit
Policies for approval: Professional Regulation Policy and NHS Wales Respect and Resolution Policy	Committee cycle of business, monitoring report and priorities	Staff story diagram

COMMITTEE ATTENDANCE				
Name	9 MAY 2024	8 AUGUST 2023	16 NOVEMBER 2023	20 FEBRUARY 2024
Ceri Jackson				
Bethan Evans				
Joga Singh				
Hannah Rowan				
Angela Lewis				
Chris Turley		Until item 13		
Lee Brooks	Sonia Thompson			
Liam Williams	Jonathan Turnbull-Ross			
Estelle Hitchon				
Andy Swinburn				
Rachel Marsh	Alex Crawford	Alex Crawford		
Trish Mills	Julie Boalch			
Damon Turner				
Mark Marsden				
Christian Fox	Hugh Parry			
Tim Cahalane				

	Attended
	Deputy attended
	Apologies received
	No longer member