



Report Title	YAS Together Culture Development Update
Author (name and title)	Dawn Adams, Associate Director of People Development
Accountable Director	Mandy Wilcock, Director of People and Organisational Development
Previous committees/groups	People Committee 17 March (verbal update)
Recommended action(s) Approval, Assurance, Information	Information
Purpose of the paper	Provide an update on the YAS culture development programme incorporating YAS Together, the People Promise Exemplar and the recommendations set out in the culture review of Ambulance Trusts.
Recommendation(s)	The Board of Directors are asked to note the progress made and next steps in the YAS cultural development programme of work.

Executive summary (overview of main points)

<p>Full advantage has been taken of the NHS England funded People Promise Exemplar initiative (cohort 2) to continue the YAS Together culture development journey. The NHS Staff Survey 2024 results show year-on-year improvements, improvements in all themes from the 2023 results and that YAS benchmarks as best in sector, or very close to best, in six of the nine themes.</p> <p>The paper summarises progress against the key areas for improvement as identified in the People Promise self-assessment. Strong progress has been made against all six of the Ambulance-specific recommendations of the Culture Review of Ambulance Trusts with evidence provided.</p> <p>The People Promise Exemplar has now formally concluded with an NHS England commitment to continue supporting the communities of practice. The paper sets out the next steps to further develop the culture in YAS in line with the YAS Together business priority and associated delivery plan milestones.</p>
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Trust Strategy Bold Ambitions Select the most relevant points from the bold ambitions.	Our Patients	
	Our People	<p>Ensure our culture is one where our people are listened to, encouraged and enabled to speak up when they have concerns about patient or colleague safety and wellbeing, or when they have suggestions for how the Trust might be better run.</p> <p>Become a great place to work and volunteer, with staff survey engagement and feedback scores above average for the NHS.</p> <p>Value difference and improve equality, diversity and inclusion of our people at all levels of the organisation, to reflect the population we serve. Improve progress towards Workforce Race and Disability Equality Standards and eliminating our Gender Pay Gap</p>

	Our Partners	
	Our Planet and Pounds	
Link to Board Assurance Framework Risks (board and level 2 committees only)	6. Develop and sustain an open and positive workplace culture.	

YAS Together Culture Development Update
Dawn Adams, Associate Director of People Development

1. Summary









- 1.1 This paper provides an update on the YAS culture development programme incorporating YAS Together, the People Promise Exemplar and the recommendations set out in the culture review of Ambulance Trusts.
- 1.2 The paper summarises progress against the key areas for improvement as identified in self-assessment activities and how this is reflected in the NHS Staff Survey (NSS) 2024 results. It provides evidence of progress against the national culture review recommendations and sets out the next steps to further develop the culture in YAS.

2. Background

- 2.1 The YAS Strategy 2024 - 2029 brought together a revised purpose, vision and bold ambitions and new Trust values with the YAS Together ways of working, developed in conjunction with Moorhouse consultancy following extensive consultation with staff.
- 2.2 This work recognises our people are what makes YAS great and includes YAS Together pillars (Care Together, Lead Together, Grow Together, Excel Together, Everyone Together), and enablers such as a talent management framework, succession planning, leadership behaviours, as well as a range of interventions to be used to foster team development and enable organisational development. The YAS Together culture development work included a Board-level Culture Maturity self-assessment.
- 2.3 In 2024 - 2025 YAS actively participated in an NHS England retention and employee experience initiative as a People Promise Exemplar that included a funded People Promise Manager role (9 months), webinars on a range of relevant topics and facilitated NHS-wide and Ambulance specific communities of practice. The People Promise Exemplar work included a self-assessment based on the NHS People Promise themes to inform the priority areas for improvement.
- 2.4 The People Promise Exemplar work was delivered through YAS Together as the way we work to achieve our vision. The YAS Together culture programme has brought together relevant programmes of work including the recommendations arising from the Culture Review of Ambulance Trusts and aligning to existing projects such as the IUC Case for Change, review of A&E Operations Team Based Working, multi-year planning for core workforce development programmes, and development of a 3-year Equality, Diversity and Inclusion action plan. This has provided a cohesive approach across all organisational change elements, putting people at the core of decision making.
- 2.5 The culture development work is managed through the YAS Together Programme Board with oversight from the People and Culture Group, the Trust Executive Group and People Committee. A range of cultural metrics, including the NHS Staff Survey results, are used to identify areas for improvement and to measure progress.

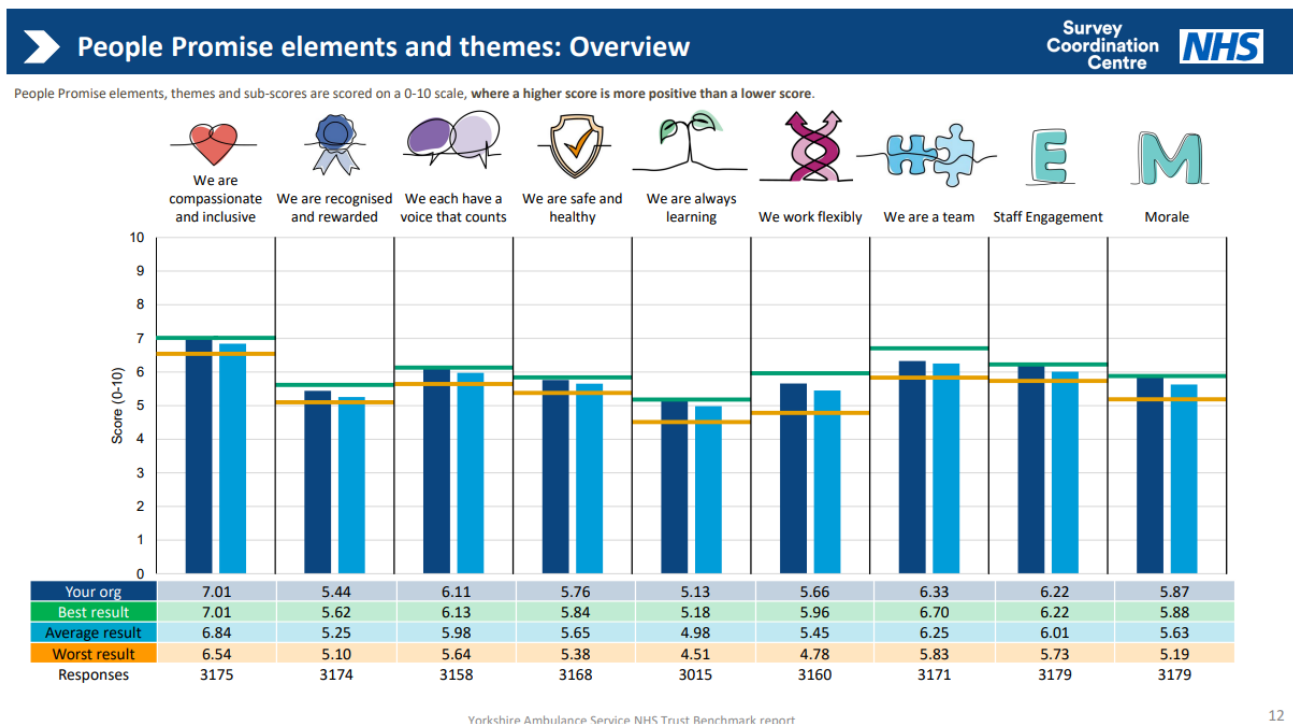
3. Culture Development Highlights

- 3.1 The People Promise Exemplar self-assessment 2024 highlighted four priority improvement themes:
- We are compassionate and inclusive (National Staff Survey 2023 score 7.0, sector best 7.39)
 - We are recognised and rewarded (National Staff Survey 2023 score 5.39, sector best 6.03)
 - We each have a voice that counts (National Staff Survey 2023 score 6.10, sector best 6.87)
 - We work flexibly (National Staff Survey 2023 score 5.5, sector best 6.15).
- 3.2 The graphics below show the National Staff Survey 2024 score for the People Promise themes and benchmarked data for the Ambulance sector. The scores for all themes show year-on-year improvements with the improvement priority of 'we work flexibility' showing a statistically significant increase. The National Staff Survey 2023 results showed significant improvements for 'we are compassionate and inclusive' and 'we are recognised and rewarded'. YAS are above the sector average across all themes and are best in sector, or close to best, in six of the nine themes.

	People Promise Element	2022 score	2022 response	2023 score	2023 response	2024 score	2024 response	Statistical change
	We are compassionate and inclusive	6.8	1991	7.0	3125	7.1	3175	Not significant
	We are recognised and rewarded	5.1	1980	5.4	3125	5.5	3174	Not significant
	We each have a voice that counts	6.0	1984	6.1	3110	6.2	3158	Not significant
	We are safe and healthy	5.4	1986	5.7	3120	5.9	3168	Significantly higher
	We are always learning	4.7	1898	5.1	2948	5.2	3015	Not significant
	We work flexibly	5.4	1974	5.5	3109	5.8	3160	Significantly higher
	We are a team	6.1	1987	6.3	3120	6.4	3177	Not significant
	Themes							
	Staff engagement	6.0	1992	6.2	3128	6.3	3179	Not significant
	Morale	5.4	1992	5.7	3128	5.9	3179	Significantly higher

*Predicted statistical significance. Statistical significance is tested using a two-tailed t-test with a 95% level of confidence

Figure 1: NHS Staff Survey 2024 data results with comparison to previous years



12

Figure 2: NHS Staff Survey 2024 Benchmark Report

3.3 The embedding of YAS Together ways of working and YAS Together Pillars has included:

- a series of roadshows delivered jointly with the Strategy Team
- development of services, interventions and support tools available now; all hyperlinked to existing content on Pulse (see below)
- alignment of STARS Awards to YAS Together pillars
- digital assets developed to visually connect YAS initiatives to the relevant pillar, e.g., branded leadership development programmes to Lead Together
- revised Pulse pages to curate existing support and highlight development work ongoing.

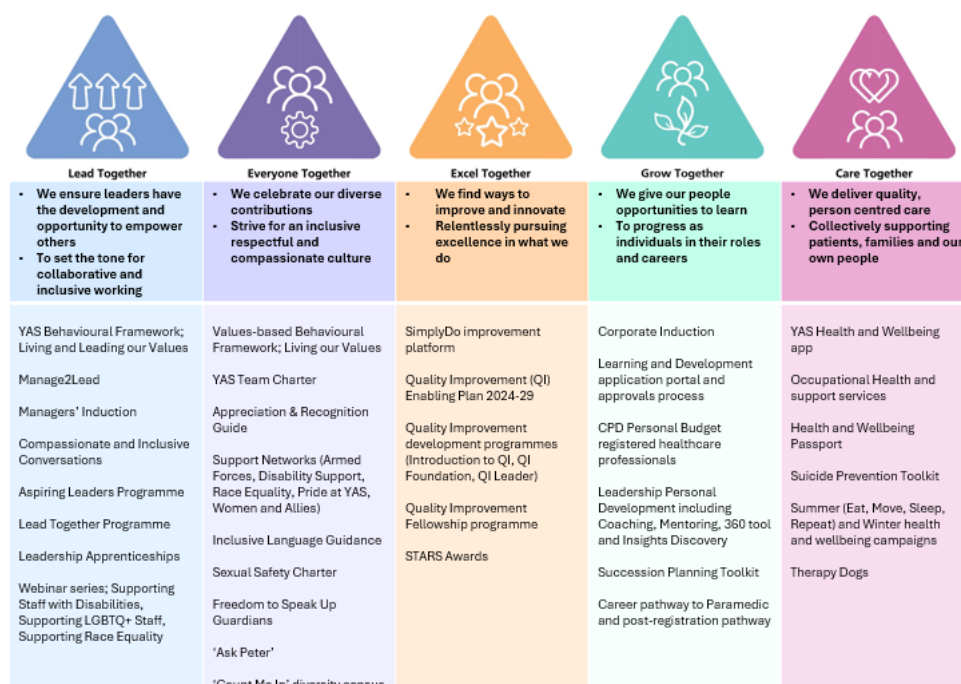







Figure 3: YAS Together interventions and support available

3.4 Examples of the developments achieved in 2024 - 2025 as part of the YAS Together culture development programme include:

 <p>Lead Together</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YAS Behavioural Framework (Living our Values and Leading our Values) embedded in learning programmes such as the leadership development pathway (Manage2Lead, Aspiring Leaders, Lead Together and Developing Leaders) and 'Welcome to YAS' corporate induction. Posters have been developed in collaboration with Internal Communications to promote at all YAS sites. Included as part of visual displays at YAS Academy training venues. • YAS Leadership Development Pathway fully developed including promotional animation to show the leadership and management opportunities available for leaders at all levels. Manage2Lead critically reviewed including user feedback and reshaped with an interactive map of topics and bite-sized learning resources to enable ease of access. Level 7 senior leadership apprenticeships aligned to the NHS Leadership Academy now available.
 <p>Everyone Together</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive Recruitment Review conducted focusing on five new starter roles (Ambulance Support Worker, Call Handler roles (111 and 999), Ambulance Care Assistant and Ambulance Vehicle Preparation). Relevant stakeholders engaged in three workstreams (job descriptions, advertising and application process) with a summary report and recommendations to be presented in April 2025. • YAS Induction for Placement Students strengthened to promote professional standards and boundaries, support available and referral routes to ensure learner safety. Worked with partner Higher Education Institutes to deliver Induction immediately prior to first placement block. Professional boundaries also included in the Practice Educator learning programme.
 <p>Excel Together</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture Dashboard developed in the YAS Business Intelligence (BI) Portal that draws together existing culture metrics into one user friendly dashboard at directorate and team level, with easy links back to the source dashboards. Metrics include NHS Staff Survey key measures (Engagement and Morale), sickness absence, appraisal and essential learning compliance rates, turnover and employee relations cases. The dashboard will enable managers to use existing data more effectively and see trends and correlations. • Stay interviews process developed and implemented for Remote Patient Care Teams providing insights into what is working and enabling staff to stay in their role and what could be 'even better if...' to enable positive action to be taken to retain staff.
 <p>Grow Together</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive Talent Development Model co-designed with a representative group of stakeholders across services lines, based on evidence-based practice from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. NHS England Talent Development Team engaged in the work to self-assess and identify two priority areas for 2025 - 2026: Workforce Planning and Career Pathways. • Appraisal and Career Conversation Senior Leadership Community (SLC) Quarter 1 appraisal window implemented to ensure alignment of strategic priorities to senior leader objectives. A new online appraisal has been developed and implemented for the SLC in 2025 using the existing YAS247 learning management system providing a user-friendly platform and visibility of talent development needs across the Trust. Automatic upload of completed appraisal data to ESR is in development.
 <p>Care Together</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Wellbeing Summer and Winter campaigns adopting a monthly themed approach to promoting all elements of mental, physical, emotional and financial wellbeing. The summer campaign (June-August) featured 'Eat, Move, Sleep, Repeat' and the winter campaign (December-February) was 'Mind, Money, Move'.

3.5 Strong progress has been made against all six of the recommendations arising from the culture review of Ambulance Trusts. The report set out recommendations for NHS England and the Integrated Care Boards. Progress against the Ambulance-specific recommendations are set out in the table below:

Theme	Recommendation	YAS Actions
People Functions; Prioritise, support and develop HR and OD functions	Ambulance Trusts to implement appropriate infrastructure for effective speak up culture, including trained investigators for the most complex cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR and People Services strengthened with significant investment • FTSU Guardian model reviewed with permanent role being established • Core group of senior leaders developed to manage complex cases • Funding prioritised to commission external fact find investigations • Critical review of the management of investigations to reduce timescales involved to meet policy expectations • Embedding of Just and Learning Culture started with further upskill of People Professionals.
Bullying and Harassment; Target bullying and harassment, including sexual harassment and enable freedom to speak up	Ambulance Trusts to uphold policies and provide training to all staff including managers, and ensure effectiveness of FTSU functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant work to implement Sexual Safety Charter, new Professional Standards Panel and Safeguarding Advisory Support Group including referral routes and Management of Safeguarding Allegations Against Staff policy. • Self-assessment against NHS England Sexual Safety Charter to meet all requirements, with mandated 'Understanding Sexual Misconduct in the Workplace' eLearning implemented for 25/26. • Sexual Safety Climate and Domestic Abuse Task and Finish Group established with oversight of the ongoing learning needs analysis. • Robust Allyship campaign ready to launch in 25/26 featuring a range of resources (custom MS Teams backgrounds, educational resources, eLearning module and posters). A promotional video has been produced with all Trust Support Networks.
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion; Translate NHS EDI Improvement Plan into a bespoke Plan for Ambulance Trusts	Ambulance Trusts to deliver EDI priorities, include tackling barriers to recruitment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active participant in the development of the Ambulance specific high impact actions (EDI improvement plan) with the National Ambulance Diversity and Inclusion Forum. Actions fully mapped to the YAS EDI Action Plan 2024-27. • Inclusive Recruitment Review conducted as reported above in 'Everyone Together', with a summary report and recommendations to be presented in April 2025. • YAS Support Networks enabled through adoption of AACE (Association of Ambulance Chief Executives) protected time guidelines, training for Chairs and Deputy Chairs and Executive Sponsor and Non-Executive Director Champion providing support and a voice at executive and board levels.
Governance; Balance operational performance with	No specific Ambulance Trusts actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working closely with Integrated Care Boards and regional colleagues particularly on how they will "routinely review workforce culture alongside operational performance". Regular YAS culture

Theme	Recommendation	YAS Actions
people performance at all levels		<p>development updates provided to the West Yorkshire ICB (commissioning ICB), Humber and North Yorkshire ICB and strong engagement in the South Yorkshire People and Culture Programme Board, e.g. asked to showcase YAS Inclusive Talent Development at a future meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People performance measures included in the Performance Review meetings as part of the YAS accountability framework.
Leadership and management; Focus on leadership and management culture and develop the ambulance workforce	Ambulance Trusts to develop clear vision and values, have a registered Paramedic on the Board, and provide protected time for individuals to receive leadership and management training and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YAS 5-year Strategy developed including the framework for success: purpose, vision, values, bold ambitions and YAS Together ways of working. The Strategy has been actively promoted and embedded. • Behavioural framework developed for all staff (Living our Values) and for managers and leaders (Leading our Values). • Chief Paramedic appointed as Board member. • Leadership development pathway with a diverse range of leadership and management development opportunities for leaders at all levels, including bite-sized self-directed learning resources, leadership development programmes including apprenticeships, coaching and mentoring, Insights Discovery psychometric and 360-degree feedback.
Workforce pressures and wellbeing; Improve the operational environment, line management and undergraduate training	Ambulance Trusts to review Paramedic operating environment and management models, and ensure all staff have access to line managers and health and wellbeing schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Team Based Working conducted working to University of Bradford research ethical principles. Report presented in January 2025 with recommendations accepted and Steering Group Lead appointed. • Implementation of health and wellbeing teams in IUC and EOC to provide targeted support to staff in work (e.g. successful 'swap to stop' smoking cessation scheme and use of under desk cycles and walking pads) and those not in work to manage sickness absence and return to work. • Seamless implementation of Occupational Health and specialist services (Employee Assistance Programme and musculoskeletal health) following a robust procurement exercise. • Participating in funded pilot to use micro exercises to improve health and wellbeing working in partnership with a Danish company Pleaz, an acute, mental health and a community trust. The micro exercises are accessed through MS Teams and offer a range of breathing, stretching and mindfulness activities of various lengths.

4. Next steps

- 4.1 The NHS England People Promise Exemplar Cohort 2 has now formally concluded with a commitment to continue the communities of practice. The Ambulance specific communities of practice will link to the existing Culture and Leadership Network for Ambulance Trusts (CALNAS) chaired by the YAS Associate Director of People Development. The People Promise Manager role has been extended until 31 March

2026 to ensure continued momentum and capacity to lead the 2025 - 2026 YAS Together business priority and associated delivery plan.

- 4.2 The measure of success of the People Promise Exemplar work was highlighted as an issue throughout the duration of the scheme. Although the National Staff Survey 2024 results show positive improvements across all themes and measures, the impact of many of the updates provided in this report will not be realised until 2025 - 2026 and beyond.
- 4.3 NHS England has published the evaluation of Cohort 1 [NHS England » People Promise Exemplar Programme: Cohort 1 close of programme evaluation report](#) recognising the success factors as:
- bundle approach against themes (YAS Together pillars used)
 - self-assessment and knowing your data (culture maturity and self-assessment conducted, and dashboard developed)
 - listening culture important ('Ask Peter' recognised as excellent practice by NHS England)
 - importance of communication (collaborative working with Internal Communications to embed YAS Together as the YAS way of working)
 - value of evaluation and celebrating success (NSS results shared and celebrated).
- 4.4 Board support has been an integral part of the success of the culture development work. This was recognised by NHS England during a visit in the autumn and led to our Chief Executive being invited to be part of a panel discussion on the formal celebration session to mark the conclusion of Cohort 2.
- 4.5 The next steps for the YAS Together culture development programme is to:
- conduct a Board-level Culture Maturity self-assessment taking account of the National Staff Survey 2024 benchmarked results (Q1)
 - work with key stakeholders to complete the NHS England People Promise self-assessment (2025 - 2026 version due in May 2025), reflecting on the successes to date and revise workplan priorities accordingly (Q1)
 - work with the Strategy Team and Internal Communications to further embed YAS Together as our ways of working (Q1 & Q2)
 - finalise and publish the Culture Dashboard (Q1)
 - review, redevelop and launch revised flexible working procedures, guidance and support aligned to the updated policy (review in Q1, collating best practice)
 - consider the outcomes and recommendations of the Inclusive Recruitment Review and develop plan for implementation (Q1)
 - work with the Team Based Working Steering Group to establish a co-design group to introduce a management and leadership pathway for Team Leaders based on the YAS Leadership Development Pathway (Q1).

5. Recommendation

- 5.1 It is recommended the Board of Directors note the progress made and next steps in the YAS cultural development programme of work.