

**Board of Directors (in Public)**  
**24 July 2025**  
**Agenda Item: 18**



Report Title	People and Organisational Development Highlight Report		
Author	Suzanne Hartshorne, Deputy Director of People Dawn Adams, Associate Director of People Development		
Accountable Director	Mandy Wilcock, Director of People and Organisational Development		
Previous committees/groups	N/A		
Recommended action(s)	The Trust Board are asked to note the contents of the paper.		
Purpose of the paper	The report provides a brief overview of the highlights, lowlights, and risks within the services in the People Directorate. The paper aims to update the Trust Board on key successes and outcomes and current/future projects.		
Executive Summary			
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The paper aims to update the Trust Board on key successes and outcomes and current/future projects.			
Recommendation(s)	The Trust Board are asked to note the contents of the paper.		
Link to Board Assurance Framework Risks (board and level 2 committees only)	6. Develop and sustain an open and positive workplace culture. 7. Support staff health and well-being effectively. 8. Deliver and sustain improvements in recruitment and retention. 9. Develop and sustain improvements in leadership and staff training and development.		

## People Directorate Highlight Report

Highlights	Lowlights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Top 100 Apprenticeship Employer:</b> improved ranking for 2025 at #12, up from #23 in 2024 and #36 in 2025. YAS is the second ranked Ambulance and NHS Trust in the list. This reflects our commitment to the use of apprenticeships to develop key workforce skills and capabilities.</li> <li>• <b>National Education and Training Survey (NETS):</b> increased response rate to n=74 (2023 was 17) showing positive placement experiences in YAS that benchmark well in the region and sector. The 2 areas below the sector average (raising concerns and wellbeing) have been addressed through the introduction of a Placement Induction.</li> <li>• <b>Recruitment:</b> A strong pipeline is in place for 2025/26, with 78 Ambulance Support Worker (ASW) course places already filled, and 43 new starters having joined the Trust since April. Recruitment for 2026/27 is also underway, with 93 ASW applicants completing pre-employment checks for a Jan 26 cohort and 26/27 places.</li> <li>• <b>Paramedic recruitment:</b> 108 candidates have been assigned to course dates for 2025/26, with 9 already in post. An additional 73 candidates have been successful at interview and will be placed in the offer reserve for 2026/27 course dates, pending availability. A&amp;E Operations are over-established with a waiting list for Newly Qualified Paramedics in some areas.</li> <li>• <b>Turnover</b> is showing a decreasing trend overall from 9.4% in March 2025 to 8.9% in June 2025. Integrated and Urgent Care (111 Call Centre) reduced from 25.7% to 22.0%, Emergency Operations Centre reduced from 18.1% to 17.6%. A&amp;E remained at 5.8%, while Patient Transport Service increased to 9.9% since March 2025.</li> <li>• <b>Agency usage</b> has improved significantly with a 90% reduction in usage since December 2024. The number of agency staff now sits at 31 from 305 in December 2024. This is due to the incredible work in 111 Call Centres to move their agency staff to substantive or bank worker contracts. The remaining agency staff sit, in the majority, in Fleet, recognising a national shortage of Mechanics. Strategies to attract this important role are being developed including the potential for apprenticeship programmes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sickness Absence:</b> the Trust sickness rate at June 2025 is 7.1% with short-term sickness at 3.1% and long-term absence 4.0% (end of May rates were 6.8% with 2.8% short-term sickness and 4.0% long-term absence). This is significantly above target (5%) and higher than previous years (6.3% in June 2024). A&amp;E (7.0%), EOC (7.6%), PTS (7.1%) and IUC (11.2%) are all above threshold. For long-term absence Stress / Anxiety / Depression/other psychiatric illness continues to be the highest reason for long term absence. There are specific mental health interventions within the 2025/26 Health and Wellbeing plan.</li> <li>• The OEG <b>Absence Group</b>, overseen by the Organisational Efficiency Group and People and Culture Group, is working through the approved Absence Reduction Plan, which focuses on 3 areas: Accountability/Monitoring, Person-centred support and absence prevention. The 7 interventions include local plans for Directorates to be held accountable for absence/action, Avoidance of Harm agenda, Workplace adjustments, HR case (new Employee Relations management system) and person-centred support from day one.</li> <li>• <b>Occupational Health (OH) and Specialist Service Provision:</b> Spend against OH and physiotherapy services is a challenge. Although monthly spend slightly reducing against OH, this is not enough. Impact of recently introduced changes to physiotherapy service will be closely monitored. Engagement and communication continue, challenge remains in shifting culture from a reliance on specialist services as the first point of action.</li> <li>• <b>Employee Relations:</b> The rate at which casework is increasing has stabilised, though total numbers remain high with a total of 55 Disciplinary cases open at month end, 15 of which are Sexual Safety cases. We successfully recruited 4 Case Investigators on a bank basis; they have each picked up at least one investigation so the impact on timescales of this approach remains under review. There are 3 more disciplinary skills education sessions planned for the summer months and there has been an emphasis on increasing the number of Corporate Services managers developed in this area so we can better support operational areas in the Winter months. We continue to work through issues raised by Trade Union colleagues</li> </ul>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sexual Safety Charter:</b> The current compliance for the mandatory NHS England 'Understanding Sexual misconduct in the workplace' eLearning is 70.46% (16 April 2025 release date). This is one of the most successful rates of compliance for a new learning module that the Trust has seen. Following attendance at a national conference, the communications strategy is being reviewed to incorporate more varied ways we can engage with staff more regularly using a range of formats.</li> <li>• <b>Inclusive Recruitment Review:</b> Phase 1 of the review has now concluded with a summary and action plan to be shared across service lines. A scoping exercise to review Phase 2 will be explored with relevant stakeholders, expected to commence in August 2025 with support from the People Promise Manager and the Project Management Office (PMO) Team.</li> <li>• <b>Health &amp; Wellbeing:</b> quarter one position against the Trust Health and Wellbeing Plan has been positive with delivery against all priorities on track. Delivery against the two respective sub-plans (Mental Health and Occupational Health Services Engagement) are progressing well. Focus on increasing visibility to improve engagement and awareness continues. Several Greatix praises have been received by the team. Delivery of the Personal Exercise Programme (PEP) pilot project has concluded. Eight individuals took part, all successfully completing the programme with health improvements captured. Monitoring is in place to track behaviour change.</li> <li>• <b>Avoidable employee harm through investigations:</b> This work relates to reducing harm or negative impact on people as a result of investigations. The evidence-based model, developed by NHS Wales is now being rolled out across of NHS Trusts. Internally a Task and Finish Group is working at pace to finalise content for delivery, with the aim to have this ready for September, roll-out to commence thereafter.</li> <li>• <b>People and Culture Group</b> this group that originally met bi-monthly to discuss people issues, now meets monthly to discuss this important agenda.</li> <li>• <b>Appraisals and Career Conversations</b> the development of the online appraisals and career conversation is complete with over 1,000 appraisals completed to date. The Robotic Process</li> </ul>	<p>regarding the approach taken to the management of disciplinary caseload through the undertaking of a deep dive into over 80 case files.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Workforce development pipeline oversupply:</b> the in-year reduction in workforce development new starter requirements has resulted in a larger pipeline of Ambulance Support Workers and external Paramedics than now needed. Alternative job roles are being offering, a holding pool managed, and expectations managed with partner Higher Education Institutes.</li> <li>• <b>Apprentice progress Learners Past Planned End Date (PPED):</b> 33.67% of ASW and AAP apprentices (133) are past their planned end date where the Education Skills and Funding Agency threshold is 15%. This presents a compliance risk and of financial clawback. Data analysis shows that apprentices with special educational needs or a disability are disproportionately represented (15% in total apprentice population but 30% in PPED learners). A wide range of actions and interventions are in place managed through a specific project group, with data tracking and engagement with A&amp;E Operations and Trade Unions.</li> <li>• <b>Appraisal and Career Conversations:</b> Trust compliance rate is at 69.0% (June 2025) from 69.9% at end of May 24 (target is 90%). Senior Leadership Community (SLC) compliance as at 63.6% in July 2025 (target 100%). It was anticipated that compliance may fall during the transition to the online tool and the implementation of the Robotic Process Automation. Reminders are in place of responsibilities to complete appraisals and of the support available to navigate the new approach.</li> <li>• <b>Essential Learning:</b> although below the 90% target at 89.39%, the compliance rate is showing a steady improvement trend since Mar 2025. Six directorates are above 90% with 3 above 88%. One is below 65%.</li> <li>• The Trust's <b>Workforce Equality Standards</b> and <b>Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES)</b> data has been submitted. The <b>WRES</b> data showed a notable improvement in representation of BME staff in the workforce (8.8%). White staff are 1.3 times as likely to be appointed from shortlisting (decreased from twice as likely, 2.0, where parity is 1.0). Data highlights issues with bullying, harassment and abuse from patients/relatives and managers widening the</li> </ul>

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<p>Automation (RPA) to update ESR records is in place and fully operational, saving managers significant time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Statutory and Mandatory Training:</b> The new 3 days of face-to-face StatMand training have been developed, quality assured, trialled and is now in delivery to meet the Training Plan 25/26 agreed timescales. The 3 one-day events are Supporting every Mind (mental health, learning disabilities and neurodiversity), Safer Working Practices (Moving &amp; handling people and basic life support) and Safer Responding (Conflict resolution and Violence Prevention and Reduction).</li> </ul>	<p>disparity in experience compared to white staff. For the <b>WDES</b> data there is an improvement in the representation of staff living with disabilities within the workforce (9.75%). Bullying, harassment and abuse, from patients/relatives, is also an area of concern. This metric has improved from managers and colleagues but highlights a gap between experiences of non-disabled staff. There is a 2.3%-point increase of staff living with disabilities reporting adequate adjustments were provided (71.1%). This has continued to increase over the last 3 years due to the ongoing work supporting reasonable adjustments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs):</b> significant pressure experienced due to a high volume of urgent requests requiring approval within a 2/3-day timeframe prior to submission to the Trust Executive Group or Board Level Committees. Ongoing work to promote the best practice of completing EIAs during policy/procedure reviews with early engagement of the Diversity &amp; Inclusion Team. The 360 Assurance audit and quality improvement process aims to improve efficiency and clarify expectations.</li> </ul>

Key Issues/Risks to Address	Actions Implemented	Further Actions to be Undertaken
<p>Sickness Absence – this continues to increase and stands at 7.1% for June 2025. Given the normal trend is for absence to reduce during the spring/summer months, the Trust is unlikely to meet this year's target reduction.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absence reduction plan has been approved with 7 interventions being progressed.</li> <li>• Move to person-centred day one absence process is being implemented on 5 August 2025 with the move from Empactis to GRS.</li> <li>• HR Case, a system to manage absence cases has been implemented with clear reminders on actions to be taken in accordance with the Attendance Management Policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance Management Policy to be updated to cover changes to absence management systems</li> <li>• Data from the HR case system to be reviewed to understand trends and patterns.</li> <li>• Phase 2 of the move from Empactis to GRS to be implemented post-5 August which includes more training on person-centred care for staff as well as a review of phase 1.</li> <li>• Discussion to take place at People and Culture Group, on the requirement to increase the risk on the Corporate Risk Register from 12 to 16 and the impact that could have.</li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussions also need to take place on other potential health and wellbeing interventions can be explored to support staff.</li> </ul>
Over-reliance on Occupational Health provision (risk).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement and awareness raising continues in partnership with Optima Health.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued efforts to secure engagement across key service lines. Escalate where appropriate.</li> </ul>
Number of apprentices past their planned end date above the 15% threshold monitored by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (currently 33.67% increasing trend) resulting in workforce not progressing through the pipeline and financial risk of levy clawback.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>YAS Academy Apprenticeships Team resource requirements built into Training Plan 25/26</li> <li>BI dashboard of individual apprentice performance against expected completion</li> <li>Use of alternative duties staff to contact apprentices and enable portfolio and assessment completion</li> <li>Apprentice survey to better understand challenges to completion</li> <li>Standing agenda item at Heads of Ops meetings to review data and actions</li> <li>Revisions to terms and conditions in collaboration with trade unions</li> <li>Implemented revised Progress Measures with apprentices put at risk of withdrawal for lack of progress, staged supportive process</li> <li>Worked with regulatory body IFATE to enable removal of 16-week consolidation period to enable AAP to pass through the End Point Assessment quicker</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learner satisfaction survey currently open to gather more specific data; workload is a known issue</li> <li>Tracking specific data including average time on programme, number of knowledge tasks outstanding, SEND trends</li> <li>Onboarding of new Awarding Organisation in readiness for autumn registrations and streamlined assessment</li> <li>Build in-house Dyslexia Assessor capability to support SEND learners and reduce reliance on external provision</li> </ul>