



Report Title	YAS Together Culture Development Programme Update	
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Previous committees/groups	People and Culture Group 27 June (presentation), People Committee 08 July (presentation)	
Recommended action(s)	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.	
Executive Summary		
<p>The YAS Together Culture Development Programme priorities are set out in Strategic Priority 5, Improve Organisational Culture: Drive cultural improvements embedding YAS Together as our ways of working. The paper summarises progress against the key milestones aligned to the delivery plan:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Embedding YAS Together as part of overall YAS Strategy 2024/2029.2. Engagement from key stakeholders within the Trust and collaboration with regional and national People Promise Communities of Practice, and sector working to drive improvement and culture change.3. Delivery and oversight of projects aligned to the Culture Review of Ambulance Trusts recommendations, and delivery against the People Promise retention drivers based on NHS Staff Survey result (2023 and 2024). <p>The paper summarises the progress made against key deliverables as set out in the delivery plan for Strategic Priority 5. It provides an overview of progress for Q1 and next steps for Q2/Q3 to further develop the culture at YAS in line with the associated business plan milestones.</p>		
Recommendation(s)	The Board of Directors are asked to note the progress made and next steps in the YAS Together Cultural Development Programme.	
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

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This paper provides an update on the YAS Together 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 the progress made against key deliverables as set out in the delivery plan for Strategic Priority 5, improve organisational culture: Drive cultural improvements embedding YAS Together as our ways of working. It provides an overview of progress for Q1 and next steps for Q2/Q3 to further develop the culture at YAS in line with the associated business plan milestones.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 YAS Together underpins our strategy and organisational values and is how we work to achieve our vision. It is a culture umbrella encompassing all our culture improvement projects and programmes. It provides robust governance through the YAS Together Programme Group with oversight from the People and Culture Group, the Trust Executive Group and People Committee. A range of culture metrics, including the NHS Staff Survey results, are used to identify areas for improvement and to measure progress.
- 2.2 The NHS England People Promise Exemplar programme has now concluded. NHSE has made a commitment to continue to facilitate an NHS and Ambulance specific communities of Practice that YAS actively participate in. The online forum on the NHS Futures site provides a further opportunity to share practice of what works and to share supporting resources. This is a valuable source of evidence-based practice.

3.0 Q1 PROGRESS

- 3.1 The April Trust Board YAS Together culture development paper set out the next steps for Q2 which have, in the main, been achieved. The two elements not achieved by the end of Q1 will be achieved in early Q2. The table below sets out the progress made:

Deliverable	Status	Comments
Conduct a Board-level Culture Maturity self-assessment taking account of the National Staff Survey 2024 benchmarked results (Q1)		Completed April. Assessment identified communications as a priority area for improvement, with further reach required through video clips and Pulse, and investment needed for tracking evaluation data and measurement of responses to formal communications and engagement. YAS Strategy and YAS Together communications and engagement to be delivered against the strategic priorities. Other areas requiring improvement are 'Workforce interactions and team working' and 'Management of desired behaviours'. No new actions were identified due to limited/no capacity to deliver anything in addition to the Business Plan. Projects linked to business priorities are built into the 25/26 programme plan.

Deliverable	Status	Comments
		Quarterly agenda item at YAS Together Programme Group.
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)		In progress with revised date of end of Jul. NHSE People Promise self-assessment not yet formally received. Requested and informally released. Leads for each section/themes identified, and meetings scheduled to collate current position and agree ratings.
Work with the Strategy Team and Internal Communications to further embed YAS Together as our ways of working (Q1 & Q2)		Round 3 engagement pack and engagement calendar signed off and ready for go live. The target audience for the engagement pack is team leads so they can disseminate information and gain feedback within their teams. The focus for Round 3 includes available resources under YAS Together, a staff survey update, case studies from staff around the NHS Pathways Introduction, and provides an opportunity for staff to feedback on how Trust Strategy impacts them directly.
Finalise and publish the Culture Dashboard (Q1)		Final stages of development with revised date of end of Jul. The dashboard brings together key culture metrics, already available in the BI Portal, into one dashboard. It will enable managers to use data more effectively and see trends and correlations. The dashboard has been developed and is in the final stages of review and refinement before publication.
Review, redevelop and launch revised flexible working procedures, guidance and support aligned to the updated policy (review in Q1, collating best practice)		Best practice collated from Ambulance sector and People Promise community of practice. YAS flexible working processes mapped out and support is available from NHSE Retention Team. The revised YAS Flexible Working Policy based on the NHSE Flexible Working policy framework is expected to be endorsed at the July Policy Development Group and will then be presented to the Joint Steering Group and the People and Culture Group for approval.
Consider the outcomes and recommendations of the Inclusive Recruitment Review and develop plan for implementation (Q1)		Completed. Comprehensive paper developed to summarise the exploration work undertaken for 5 key roles (Ambulance Support Worker (ASW), Health Advisor (Call Handlers), Emergency Medical Dispatcher (EMD), Ambulance Care Assistant (ACA), and Ambulance Vehicle Preparation (AVP)) recruited to, with recommendations for implementation. Meetings with the key

Deliverable	Status	Comments
		business areas leads to discuss the outcomes/recommendations have taken place.
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)		Team Based Working Steering Group established. A series of listening events are being delivered over June and July. TBW Review Report recommended workstreams will be reviewed on conclusion of these sessions. YAS Leadership Development Pathway is in place with an animation developed to promote.

- 3.2 The Closure Report for the People Promise Exemplar Programme was submitted to NHSE Retention Team in June. The report highlights include the Leadership development pathway, the NHS Staff Survey improvements, high engagement with wellbeing campaigns, Sexual Safety Charter development work, self-assessment completion and launch of e-Learning, national platforming of YAS Chief Executive and leadership team 'Ask Peter' recognised by NHS England as good practice. Sustainability of the programme was also recognised due to alignment of the programme to YAS Together, YAS Strategy, with strong governance rigour, and culture dashboard and digital resources to support long-term integration.
- 3.3 A critical review of the YAS Together workplan and objectives was completed in June at the YAS Together Programme Board, with agreement to continue 24 priority projects for 25/26 with project objectives updated where required. The Stay Interview project has made significant progress in Remote Patient Care with questionnaires embedded in both IUC/EOC where data is reviewed quarterly and interventions in response to feedback enacted e.g. better support for middle management required resulting in the implementation of a peer to peer mentoring scheme (IUC), and better recognition required resulting in bringing back badges that celebrate staff who have delivered a baby remotely, saved a life, etc. Work is ongoing to create a streamlined questionnaire for both areas, working with Business Intelligence to enable reporting in the culture dashboard.
- 3.4 A key component of our culture development is work to improve the sexual safety of our staff, students and volunteers. The Safeguarding Allegations Support Group (SASG, established Nov 2023) providing subject matter expertise and oversight, has reviewed over 200 cases to date. It shows a clear trend of managers seeking centralised and consistent support rather than addressing cases locally.
- 3.5 To build capacity and raise the level at which decisions are made in sexual safety cases, 35 senior managers have been trained by our external specialist legal services partner. Case outcomes are reviewed quarterly through a local assurance group to ensure consistency. Since launch, 46 cases have been commissioned, with a further 17 commissioned in 2025/26 to date reflecting increased reporting and willingness to challenge behaviour.
- 3.6 A deep dive is underway to ensure a Just and Restorative Approach, using case learning to prevent avoidable harm and improve how cases are managed. Over 50% of concluded cases resulted in a final written warning or dismissal, with the remaining cases resulting in informal outcomes, often due to 'no case to answer' or insufficient evidence.

- 3.7 The NHS England eLearning module, Understanding Sexual Misconduct in the Workplace, was approved as mandatory learning and made available to staff to complete in April 2025. The current compliance rate is 70.46% which is one the fastest completion rates for new eLearning. The requirement to complete is supported by a communication plan with targeted campaigns ahead of winter to further embed the uptake in operational areas.
- 3.8 A Culture Development Approach (CDA) is used to provide targeted support to teams, business areas and directorates on request or in response to identified culture concerns. The information gathering and diagnostic phase uses a variety of data sources to scope the required culture development requirements and put in place the conditions for effective change. Facilitated by the Leadership & Organisational Development Business Partners the application of the CDA approach is ongoing for eight teams across both operational and corporate functions.
- 3.9 In response to concerns raised in a People Pulse Survey, triangulated with other data sources, a culture review was commissioned into a specific operational team. This rapid review was commissioned in late June and is scheduled to conclude in late July. The review has involved a multi-channel anonymous listening and feedback exercise, including site visits to engage directly with staff. Its aim is to gather honest insights to guide local improvement and development approaches, while also identifying any broader Trust-wide considerations that are contributing to cultural issues. A dedicated Non-Executive Director (NED) has been assigned to support and engage with this review process.

4.0 RISKS

- 4.1 There is a risk that IF culture development initiatives are undertaken in isolation, THEN opportunities to embed the YAS Together pillars (Lead Together, Care Together, Grow Tother, Excel Together, Everyone Together) will be missed RESULTING IN a lack of cohesion across the Trust and reduced impact. The YAS Together Programme Group brings together stakeholders from all directorates with project groups established to ensure a collaborative and joined-up approach. A workplan is developed with all stakeholders to identify opportunities for collaboration.
- 4.2 There is a risk that IF YAS Together is not embedded as our ways of working and not communicated to all who work in YAS (staff, student and volunteers) THEN employee engagement, experience and retention will be detrimentally impacted RESULTING IN lower NHS Staff Survey results, lower staff morale, higher absence and reduced retention rates. A strong and collaborative relationship exists with the YAS Strategy, Planning and Performance Team and Corporate Communications. The YAS Together Pulse page has been revamped and the YAS Together interventions and resources available now, is currently under review to ensure this reflects all available opportunities.

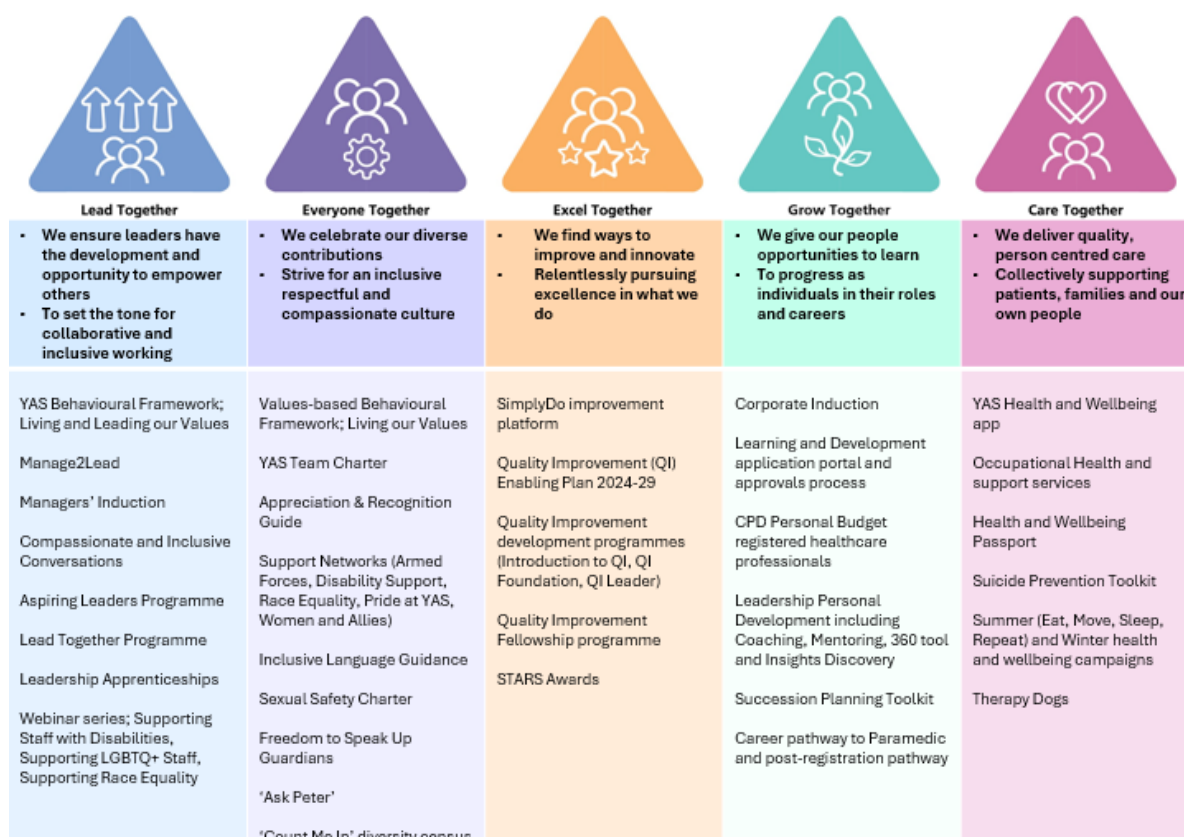


Figure 1: YAS Together interventions and support available

5.0 NEXT STEPS Q2/Q3

5.1 The next steps for the YAS Together culture development programme is to:

- Work with key stakeholders to complete the NHS England People Promise self-assessment (2025/2026 version), reflecting on the successes to date and revise workplan priorities accordingly to also include the priorities identified in the Culture Maturity Framework (Q2).
- Work with the Strategy Team and Internal Communications to launch the Round 3 engagement pack using a variety of approaches including engagement roadshows at Ambulance stations in all areas (Q2/Q3).
- Publish the Culture Dashboard and develop an engagement plan to enable managers to make best use of this resource, ensuring alignment with the metrics identified by Culture and Leadership Network for Ambulance Trusts (CALNAS) (Q2).
- Establish a Flexible Working Project Group with key stakeholders to plan for the implementation of revised flexible working procedures, guidance and support aligned to the updated policy (Q2/Q3 design).
- Agree implementation workplan based on the outcomes and recommendations of the Inclusive Recruitment Review phase 1 (Q2).
- Scope and launch Phase 2 of Inclusive Recruitment Review: review of advertising and marketing processes for new starters and existing staff (Q2).
- Develop workplan for Inclusive Talent Development priority areas of Workforce Planning and Career Pathways (Q2).

6.0 RECOMMENDATION

6.1 It is recommended the Board of Directors note the progress made and next steps in the YAS Together Cultural Development Programme of work.