



Report Title	People and Organisational Development Directorate Highlight Report		
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Previous committees/groups	People and Culture Group - 16 October 2025		
Recommended action(s)	Information		
Purpose of the paper	The report provides a brief overview of the highlights, lowlights, and risks within the services in the People Directorate.		
Executive Summary			
This paper updates the Trust Board on the key achievements and ongoing work of the People and Organisational Development Directorate, focusing on mitigating four principal risks from the Board Assurance Framework: workplace culture, staff health and well-being, recruitment and retention, and leadership and training: • Workplace Culture: Progress includes high compliance with sexual safety training, increased reporting of cases indicating greater staff confidence, the development of a community of practice for managers, and the publication of an anti-discrimination statement. Employee relations casework has risen, with a focus on consistent management and additional training. • Staff Health and Well-being: Initiatives such as ‘My Wellbeing Plan’ and improved Occupational Health referral processes have led to better support for staff and significant cost savings. Sickness absence remains above target, but person-centred support and data analysis are underway to identify trends and potential underlying factors. A clear absence reduction plan has been presented at People Committee. • Recruitment and Retention: Recruitment is progressing well, with high course fill rates and a stable overall turnover rate, though some service areas remain high. Paramedic recruitment processes are being reviewed, and retention is supported by increased permanent staffing. • Leadership and Training: Appraisal compliance and cost savings have improved through automation; a leadership development programme has begun; and statutory and mandatory training is broadly on track. However, apprentice completion rates present a compliance risk, particularly affecting those with additional needs, with interventions in place. The Directorate’s efforts are wide-ranging, aiming to support the Trust’s strategic ambitions and the NHS People Plan by fostering a positive work culture, supporting staff well-being, ensuring robust recruitment and retention, and enhancing leadership and training.			
Recommendation(s)		The Trust Board is 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 and Organisational Development Highlight Report

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This paper updates the Trust Board on the key achievements and ongoing work of the People and Organisational Development Directorate, focusing on mitigating four principal risks from the Board Assurance Framework: workplace culture, staff health and well-being, recruitment and retention, and leadership and training:

- Workplace Culture: Progress includes high compliance with sexual safety training, increased reporting of cases indicating greater staff confidence, the development of a community of practice to support consistency of best practice application, and the publication of an anti-discrimination statement. Employee relations casework has risen, with a focus on consistent management and additional training for managers.
- Staff Health and Well-being: Initiatives such as 'My Wellbeing Plan' and improved Occupational Health referral processes have led to better support for staff and significant cost savings. Sickness absence remains above target, but person-centred support and data analysis are underway to identify trends and potential underlying factors. A clear absence reduction plan has been presented at People Committee.
- Recruitment and Retention: Recruitment is progressing well, with high course fill rates and a stable overall turnover rate, though some service areas remain high. Paramedic recruitment processes are being reviewed, and retention is supported by increased permanent staffing.
- Leadership and Training: Appraisal compliance and cost savings have improved through automation; a leadership development programme has begun; and statutory and mandatory training is broadly on track. However, apprentice completion rates present a compliance risk, particularly affecting those with additional needs, with interventions in place.

1.2 The Directorate's efforts are wide-ranging, aiming to support the Trust's strategic ambitions, YAS Together and the NHS People Plan by fostering a positive work culture, supporting staff well-being, ensuring robust recruitment and retention, and enhancing leadership and training.

1.3 The Trust Board are asked to note the contents of the paper.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 The NHS People Plan sets out the agenda, which supports how the NHS workforce can enable improvement of the patient experience. The Trust Strategy 'Great Care, Great People, Great Partner' supports the NHS People Plan and has a bold ambition 'Our People', that guides our work locally.

2.2 The above two plans guide the work the People and Organisational Development Directorate as well as the day-to-day operations of managing a workforce within the Ambulance Service.

2.3 The Board Assurance Framework also sets out four key risks concerning the Our People bold ambition; hence the Directorate work is directed to be able to mitigate and resolve these. The four risks are:

#6 Ability to develop and sustain an open and positive workplace culture.

#7 Ability to support staff health and well-being effectively.

#8 Ability to deliver and sustain improvements in recruitment and retention.

#9 Ability to deliver and sustain improvements in leadership and staff training and development.

3.0 People and OD Directorate Highlights

3.1 The following sets out the work of the directorate which aims to mitigate and reduce the above risks.

#6 Ability to develop and sustain an open and positive workplace culture.

- **Sexual Safety Charter:** The Charter has been in place for almost 2 years. The NHS England 'Understanding Sexual misconduct in the workplace' locally mandated eLearning compliance is at 83.74% (16 April 2025 release date). This is one of the most successful rates of compliance for a new learning module, with only 1351 staff yet to complete. The training and communications including the 'Let's Talk Sexual Safety' campaign has contributed to the rising number of cases; currently 34. This indicates that staff are feeling more confident that complaints will be taken seriously. Cases are highly complex, emotive and challenging for all those who are investigating and hearing cases, hence a community of practice to include welfare support is in development. A significant number of cases that proceed to a disciplinary hearing, result in dismissal hence there is an increase in employment tribunals for this area of work. Future work includes communicating a summary of case outcomes, numbers of staff dismissed and stronger messages regarding behavioural tolerance levels.
- **Employee Relations:** Casework levels are increasing with now 69 open disciplinary cases at month end, 34 of which are Sexual Safety cases. The HR Team ensure any learning and consistencies are identified in our approach to the management of Sexual Safety cases, particularly at Disciplinary Hearings. Continuing this the next development will be to establish a Community of Practice amongst Hearing Chairs to further embed consistency in approach; this in turn will support future communications to staff to improve understanding and awareness of the tolerance of such conduct. The Directorate winter plan is in place which includes training more managers to investigate and hear disciplinaries in order to ensure 999 and 111 managers can concentrate on the delivery of patient care.
- **Anti-Discrimination statement:** published in September setting a clear position statement that discrimination will not be tolerated in YAS. It also emphasises that everyone has the right to work and receive care in an environment free from bullying, harassment and abuse (BHA), and to be treated with dignity and respect. The latest Workforce Race and Disability Equality Standards data and action planning shows that ethnically diverse and disabled colleagues are subject to a higher levels of BHA than their white and non-disabled colleagues. Action plans aligned to the 2024-27 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan objectives are in place, working with our Equality Support Networks.

#7 Ability to support staff health and well-being effectively.

- **Health & Wellbeing:** 'My Wellbeing Plan' is increasing in recognition and use to support staff experiencing mental ill health. Awareness of, and greater understanding of, the appropriateness and quality of Occupational Health referrals is seeing a reduction of repeated and unnecessary referrals. This has not only benefited the individual with receiving timely and the most appropriate support but has contributed to cost savings across the Occupational Health (OH) contract. Spend against the contract for the first six months of 2025/26 was £250,310 compared to £369,287 for the same period in 24/25; a cost saving of £118,977 (32% reduction) of which £22K was attributed to savings achieved through the reduction in 'did not attend' and 'short notice cancellations'. The Personal Exercise Programme (PEP) has now been implemented as business-as-usual with the programme currently supporting eighteen individuals from PTS attracting excellent feedback.
- **Sickness Absence:** The Trust sickness rate has remained stable, but well-above the Trust threshold at 7.3%. A further increase in absence rates is expected across the winter months, which could bring risks to patient safety, however, the person-centred conversation approach introduced alongside the use of GRS, the system used to record sickness, aims to ensure staff are supported to return to work as quickly as possible. The future work programme in this area, supported by the Quality Improvement and Business Intelligence teams, is commencing with an initial data analysis of 12 data sources to understand trends and themes which impact sickness absence. A full plan was presented to People Committee on 18 November and further updates will be presented to the next meeting.

#8 Ability to deliver and sustain improvements in recruitment and retention.

- **Recruitment:** Recruitment is on track to deliver the 2025/26 training plan Ambulance Support Worker (ASW) requirement, with 88 of 96 (92%) course places filled. Since April, 76 new starters have joined, with 12 more in the January cohort. For the 2026/27 requirement, 78 applicants are currently completing pre-employment checks and will be allocated to course dates once the requirement across operational areas and the associated course dates are finalised. For Paramedic recruitment, 122 candidates have been assigned course dates in 2025/26, with 42 already in post and 34 currently being allocated to induction dates. Recruitment trajectories are strong with the exception of Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) call handling numbers. Work is ongoing to address this.
- **Paramedic Oversupply:** a critical review of the current external Paramedic recruitment and selection practices to ensure the process is fair and consistent and reliably identifies the best candidates and differentiates sufficiently between candidates has been scoped for rapid improvement with a task and finish group prior to the 2026/27 recruitment round.
- **Turnover:** Total turnover has remained stable at 8.3% for October 2025. EOC remains high but steadily improving at 13.3%, (from 16.6% in August 2025) and Integrated Urgent Care (IUC) (23% to 22.2%) over this period. The number of estimated vacancies across the UK has continued to fall month on month over this period, which may in part explain the reduction in turnover, in addition to positive impact of retention initiatives such as the increase in permanent staff and reduction in agency staff in IUC. Our assumptions and forecasts on which the new

workforce planning framework is predicated, particularly in our frontline roles, dictates our monitoring of this area.

#9 Ability to deliver and sustain improvements in leadership and staff training and development.

- **Appraisal and Career Conversations:** Appraisal compliance is steadily improving to sit at 75.7% in October 2025. There are notable cost savings realised following the implementation of the Robotic Process Automation (RPA) in April 2025, to upload appraisal completion data directly into Electronic Staff Record (ESR). The latest cost benefit statement from Northern Ambulance Alliance RPA control room for September shows £17,632.80 savings regarding managers' time in recording appraisals on ESR.
- **Developing Leaders programme:** Cohort 1 has been successfully launched in October to further support the Leadership Development Pathway and provide opportunities for individualised leadership and management development.
- **Essential Learning:** currently our compliance for essential learning is at 89.68% (13th November 2025). Five directorates are above the 90% target, 6 Are between 80% and 90% compliance and one directorate is less than 80% compliant. Work is progressing and continuing to develop the Terms of Reference for the Essential Learning Oversight Group in line with the National Statutory and Mandatory Oversight Group. Safeguarding Level 3 Adults and Children were added to essential learning reporting in October 2025.
- **Statutory and Mandatory Training:** Compliance sits at 82.9% slightly outside the 90% target, with the impact of Safeguarding Level 3 being added in November affecting compliance. In Q2 Supporting Everymind, Safer working practices and safer responding were added to the matrix. We are receiving favourable feedback from the session and strong attendance is supporting with increasing compliance.
- **Apprentice Progress Learners Past Planned End Date (PPED):**
 - 35.44% of ASW Apprentices equating to 73 colleagues are passed their planned end date. 79 colleagues are on track to complete their qualification with 54 colleagues due to complete within the next 3 months.
 - 49.65% AAP Apprentices equating to 70 colleagues are passed their planned end date. 55 colleagues are on track for completion with 16 colleagues who are due to complete within the next 3 months.
 - The Skills England risk threshold is 15%.
 - This still presents a compliance risk which may result in financial clawback or Ofsted downgrading. YAS Academy continue to offer a wide range of actions and interventions are in place, managed through a specific project group, with data tracking and engagement with A&E Operations and Trade Unions.

4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The work of the Directorate aims to reduce the risks set out in the Board Assurance Framework as well as meet the Trust's bold ambitions and NHS People Plan.

- 4.2 We are committed to improving the staff experience to ensure our patients get the 'Best Care' possible. Our workforce is crucial to our operations, and we know that there is much more we can do to ensure they come to work and give their best on every shift. The above work demonstrates that our work programme is extensive and wide-ranging, and we will strive to ensure that our people can thrive at every opportunity.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Trust Board are asked to note the contents of this paper.