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Bwrdd Iechyd
Addysgu Powys
Powys Teaching
Health Board

WORKFORCE AND CULTURE COMMITTEE

CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 MARCH 2025

LOCATION OR HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

MEMBERS		
Jennifer Owen Adams	JOA	Independent Member-Third Sector (Chair)
Chris Walsh	CW	Independent Member-Local Authority (Vice Chair)
Cathie Poynton	CP	Independent Member-Trade Union
IN ATTENDANCE		
Debra Wood Lawson	DWL	Executive Director of People and Culture
Mark McIntyre	MM	Deputy Director of People and Culture
Sarah Powell	SP	Assistant Director of People and Culture
Rhys Brown	RB	Head of Organisational Development
Vicky Malcolmson	VM	Head of People and Business Partnering
Vicki Cooper	VC	Chief Digital Officer
Helen Bushell	HB	Director of Corporate Governance and Board Secretary
Stella Gwynne	SG	Deputy Board Secretary
Carl Cooper	CC	PTHB Chair (Observing)
Beth Powell	BP	Corporate Governance Officer
APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:		
Hayley Thomas	HT	Chief Executive
Pete Hoppood	PH	Executive Director Finance, Capital & Estates
Claire Madsen	CM	Executive Director of Allied Health Professions, Health Sciences and Digital
Kirsten Jones	KJ	Llais
Ian Thomas,	IT	Independent Member
Claire Roche	CR	Executive Director of Nursing, Quality,
Kate Wright	KW	Executive Medical Director

1. PRELIMINARY MATTERS

1.1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (W&C/24/048)

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and extended her thanks to the Workforce and Corporate Governance team for the efficient distribution of the committee agenda and papers. Apologies for absence were received as recorded above.

1.2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (W&C/24/049)

CW highlighted a spelling error within his declaration on the Board Members Register. This would be amended and republished on the PTHB website.

2. CONSENT BUSINESS AGENDA

No items were brought onto the main agenda from the consent agenda.

3. ITEMS FOR APPROVAL/DECISION/RATIFICATION

3.1 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (W&C/24/050)

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2024 were **CONFIRMED** as an accurate record.

MATTERS ARISING

DWL provided an update on the Workforce Future Partnership, following an evaluation exercise undertaken by the Regional Partnership Board (RPB) Executive, a meeting had been setup to review schemes. There was potential that the Workforce Future Programme would see a reduction in funding which poses a potential risk to the programme. It was anticipated that a confirmed position would be sought by the end of March.

Would an update be brought back to committee on the development of the programme given staff related implications?

DWL confirmed that work was being undertaken to review the impact on the Integrated and Delivery plan. An update would be provided to committee following completion of the work.

Action: Executive Director of People and Culture

3.2 ACTION LOG (W&C/24/051)

HB introduced the action log and recommendation the following action for closure, given it had been added to the 2025/2026 Committee Work programme.

PTHB/24/43: Deep Dive: Violence and aggression incidents

The Committee **RECEIVED** the Committee action Log.

4. ESCALATED ITEMS (W&C/24/052)

There were no escalated items on the agenda.

5. ITEMS FOR ASSURANCE

5.1 WORKFORCE PERFORMANCE REPORT (W&C/24/53)

DWL introduced the report which had continued to develop and improve workforce metrics. MM presented the report and drew attention to the following areas:

Staff Transformation and Sustainability of the Workforce

- Retention trends remain positive,

- Continuation of reduction in staff turnover rates (Powys remains above all Wales average)
- Age profile workforce- aware of future recruitment;
- Substantial increase in performance rate of bank shifts taken;
- Work underway to target areas of high agency reliance to meet a NIL agency spend across Wards;
- High-cost agency spends had decreased
- Work underway to meet Welsh Government (WG) target of NIL off -contract agency Health Care Support Workers (HCSW),
- Workforce had secured 59 HCSW to Bank work and 41 Registered Nurses (RNs), of which 14 are in the onboarding process;
- Significant improvement of overall reduction in Transactional activity across agency staff;
- A tracker had been setup to monitor individual's applications for Bank work and regular communication has continued to ensure onboarded processes are strengthened.
- Sustained performance compliance in PADR's of Statutory and Mandatory training;
- Reduction in absence levels for staff Health and Wellbeing;

Committee members sought assurance by asking the following questions:

What follow up process is in place to monitor high sickness absence rates for individuals?

A tracker had been established to monitor individual sickness absence. Should a high level of sickness absence be presented, a trigger point would be alerted for intervention to take place. Support would be provided to the individuals needs to maintain long term attendance .

Given the growing workforce and growing costs, has the workforce been benchmarked against growth from 2023 to 2024, in comparison to other organisations and are there concerns in terms of an aging workforce profile?

MM explained the service had been reflective of communities and demographics of an aging workforce; however, it was noted that Powys offer a range of flexible working patterns and Retire and Return contracts for employees. Arrangements are in place to strengthen and support individuals to start their careers such as the Aspiring Nursing programme to improved experiences and retain a newly established workforce.

Given the potential changes across commissioning Nurses at Cardiff University, what is the challenge for Powys given recruitment of International Nurses would impact internal bank and agency use?

MM confirmed that Powys do not commission with Cardiff University and therefore no direct impact would be anticipated. Health Education Inspectorate Wales (HEIW) had redirected funding into the Aspiring Nurse Programme which is fully utilised.

What is the impact on the reduction of off contract expenditure in terms of financial savings?

MM explained that the finance team provide a comprehensive report which demonstrates tracking of monthly expenditure and provides data of the progress made across all areas of agency and forms part of the variable pay discussions. The report would be shared with members outside of the meeting for their information.

DWL confirmed that in December 2024, it was agreed to establish additional vacancy controls and approval processes for any agency shifts through Out of Hours (OOH) Gold On Call, to ensure temporary recruitment was of critical skills to demonstrate and support the financial challenge.

The Committee **RECEIVED** the Workforce Performance Report and were **ASSURED** that the organisation has appropriate mechanisms in place to record and monitor workforce data.

5.2 NHS STAFF SURVEY (W&C/24/054)

DWL introduced the presentation and explained that due to prioritisation of other critical matters, the survey was deferred from a recent Board Development session and agreed it would be presented to the Workforce and Culture Committee. DWL noted that a procurement exercise had taken place to change the frequency and how the Staff survey was managed.

RB presented the survey and highlighted that Powys had 780 responses, (30% of staff), the highest response rate of the Health Boards. The majority of scores across the survey had increased with all questions against a number of themes higher than the NHS Wales average scores.

Committee members sought assurance by asking the following questions:

The 'next steps' section states 'specific data analysis for areas of interest' have these been identified?

RB confirmed there had been learning from the last year's survey of which individuals had asked for specific data of interest, there was a need to clarify the offer of opportunity to welcome requests should individuals wish to. The 'Free text' section received a number of staff feeling undervalued within their role, this would be an area of deep dive to understand the rationale of comments submitted.

Out of the 125 questions, how many were answered, how long does it take to complete, and does it allow staff to complete it within their working hours?

RB confirmed that all questions were optional and are unable to view overall how many were answered. It was noted the survey can take from 20 -40minutes to complete and engagement with line managers had taken place to allow staff to complete the survey within their working hours. The survey was also made accessible on personal devices should staff wish to complete this in their own time.

What is the rationale for Hospital Nurses providing less positive feedback in comparison to Community Nurses being more positive?

The analysis was yet to take place but was scheduled to be reviewed in the near future.

The Committee **RECEIVED** and **NOTED** the NHS Staff Survey.

5.3 DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE AND CULTURE REPORT (INCLUDING STAFF BANK SERVICE UPDATE AND THEME 2 – A GREAT PLACE TO WORK) (W&C/24/055)

DWL provided an overview of the Workforce update which focused on Q4 performance across 2024/2025. An update on national workforce matters were also highlighted. Key themes of local work undertaken were:

- HEIW had confirmed they are committed to supporting PTHB with the ongoing success of the Aspiring Nurse Programme with further ongoing funding;
- 23% increase in Student placement opportunities over the past year;
- Speaking up safely process to move the actions within the initial Welsh Health Circular to business-as-usual operations;
- Workforce Turnover had reduced by nearly 4% in the last year, from 15.16% in January 2024 to 11.30% in January 2025;
- A release support tool for managers continue with roadshows as result of the staff survey,
- Reverse mentoring pilot underway until the end of May, an evaluation would be taken before opening a second round;
- Audit Wales review of the Workforce challenges- a number of actions had already been implemented across the health board;

Independent Members sought assurance by asking the following questions:

How does the reverse mentoring work and who can take part?

DWL confirmed any member of staff can take part in reverse mentoring and would be of benefit to both individuals to experience an insight of various roles.

The Committee recognised the excellent work undertaken across the Workforce directorate and congratulated the service on the progress made.

The Committee **RECEIVED** the report as an update on priorities within the Workforce section of the Integrated Plan for Q4 2024/25 and were ASSURED against delivery of those priorities.

5.4 THEME 4: WELSH LANGUAGE, EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (W&C/24/56)

VM provided a presentation on the Strategic Equality Plan which sets out priorities over a five-year period with a particular focus on Age, Sensory Loss and Neurodiversity as areas identified by staff and public consultation. VM provided members with an overview of the key activities delivered in 2024/2025

The Anti Racism Plan was shared with members, and it was noted that the Board had approved plan in 2025. The following key themes were highlighted:

- Since the approval of the plan Welsh Government had stopped funding for the 'Time to Change' campaign, it would be removed from future iterations of the plan;
- Work is underway via the workforce research project against SMART objectives which would be made clear in future planning;
- Objectives without dates, such as the Aspiring Board Members programme had now been published and appropriate local action taken.

Independent Members sought assurance by asking the following questions:

Is there a strong demand from patients requesting verbal and written Welsh language in providing care plans?

VM to confirm the Welsh Language verbal and written demand from patients in providing a care plan

Action: Head of People and Business Partnering

Members observed the need to improve the Welsh Language offer to patients and consideration would be given to improve the proactive use of a lanyard to distinguish Welsh speaking staff. CC observed that following recent discussions with a local Priest, feedback would be provided to the Director of Nursing, Quality and Family Health given that Chaplaincy provision sits under the directorate.

The Committee **RECEIVED** the Equality and Welsh Language Update and took **ASSURANCE** that actions were being implemented.

5.5 COMMITTEE RISK REGISTER (W&C/24/57)

The Committee **RECEIVED** and **NOTED** the risk register update.

5.6 ANNUAL ASSESSMENT OF COMMITTEE EFFECTIVENESS (W&C/24/58)

HB provided a summary of the Annual Committee Effectiveness surveys which are undertaken across all Committees of the Board, Advisory groups and the Board. The assessment provided detail of responses received following a Workforce and Culture focused questionnaire where members discussed the learning and action required for improvement. The following was discussed:

- To consider Transformation, Better Together programme of work to be inclusive within the agenda;
- Consider a broader title as 'Workforce and Culture' is specific and focused;
- Utilisation of Chairs Forum to share learning and opportunity to discuss joint interests.
- Change of contextual space, potential of a Joint scrutiny groups to allow Chairs to come together and analyse similar issues from various perspectives;
- Consider use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for workforce development;
- Maximise the opportunity to change given the maturity of priority delivery;
- Think about the remit and scope of the committee, reducing reporting frequency to allow for other priority themes of reporting to be presented.

The Committee **DISCUSSED** the summary of the Committee Effectiveness survey and areas for action and improvement.

5.7 REVIEW COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE (W&C/24/59)

SG provided an overview of the Committee Terms of Reference proposed amendments and explained that further work is to be undertaken to form a final version for Board approval in May.

It was highlighted that the committee considers a broader overview of planning and implementation of Transformation, Better Together programme, Health and Wellbeing and Future Generations. The Executive lead, Committee Chair and Board Secretary would discuss potential areas of reporting to align the committees remit prior to submission to the Board in May. Members supported the Committee title change to 'People and Culture' to broaden the remit of its programme of work.

Independent Members sought assurance by asking the following questions:

Is the Committee missing an Independent Member for today's meeting if the Membership states 3 Independent Members to be in attendance?

The Chair explained that the Membership was under review to look at expertise and skillset of independent members to serve on sub committees of the Board. It was noted that the review would ensure that all sub committees are proportionate to include the correct representation of the Board.

Members observed the spacing and alignment between bullet points within the Terms of Reference to ensure it is in a readable style.

The Committee **RECEIVED** the Committee Terms of Reference;

- **ENDORSED** the proposed amendments;
- **AGREED** that the Chair of the Committee and Director of Corporate Governance would finalise the revised Terms of Reference for approval to the Board in May.

6 ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION (W&C/24/60)

There were no items for discussion on the agenda.

7 CONSENT AGENDA

7.1 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORTS (W&C/24/61)

The Committee **RECEIVED** the following Internal Audit Reports for information.

- Staff Retention (*Reasonable Assurance*)
- Board & Committee Structure / Effectiveness (*Substantial Assurance*)

7.2 WORK PROGRAMME (W&C/24/62)

HB advised this was a standard item, which showed what business is planned for Committee agendas for the year.

The Committee **RECEIVED** the Committee Work Programme for information.

7.3 PTHB GLOSSARY (W&C/24/63)

The Committee **RECEIVED** the PTHB Glossary for information.

8 OTHER MATTERS

8.1 Any Other Urgent Business (W&C/24/64)

There was no urgent business.

8.2 ITEMS TO BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE BOARD AND /OR OTHER COMMITTEES (W&C/24/65)

The RIF funding which currently supports a number of work streams across Powys is subject to review by the Regional Partnership Board (RPB). Should funding be discontinued there would be implications for the deliverability of the Transformation Better Together Agenda. The Workforce and Culture Committee agreed to monitor this closely and will alert the Board of any fundamental changes that arise.

Committee members recognised the very good work being undertaken across the Health Board in terms of progress and positive direction of travel in relation to Workforce performance across a number of services.

8.3 COMMITTEE REFLECTIONS (W&C/24/66)

The following reflections of the meeting were provided by the committee:

- Effective meeting with a great deal of progress made across the services;
- Insightful and Quality of reporting;
- Recognised the hard work to enable current position of the workforce;
- Potential to review frequency of staff stories to share more experiences

8.4 DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

03 June 2025 via Microsoft Teams

Meeting closed at 12:26