



**MINUTES OF THE PEOPLE, FINANCE AND ORGANISATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE HELD AT 9.30AM ON THURSDAY
8 JULY 2021 (VIA ZOOM DUE TO COVID-19)**

PRESENT: Mr J Dennison - Committee Chair
Mr T Haslett - Non Executive Director

APOLOGIES: Ms N Lappin - Non Executive Director

IN

ATTENDANCE: Mr M Bloomfield - Chief Executive
Ms M Lemon - Interim Director of Human Resources
Mr P Nicholson - Interim Director of Finance (left the meeting at 10am)
Ms A Quirk - Boardroom Apprentice
Mrs C Mooney - Board Secretary
Ms R O'Hara - Programme Director – Workforce Planning (for agenda item 5 only)
Mr G Plant - Senior HR Business Partner – Workforce Planning (for agenda item 5 only)
Ms L Gardner - Assistant Director of HR (for agenda item 7 only)
Ms A Pepper - Business Performance Manager (for agenda item 8 only)
Mr J Kearney - Equality & PPI Officer (for agenda item 9 only)

1 Apologies & Opening Remarks

The Chair noted apologies had been received from Ms Lappin and thanked members for facilitating the rescheduled date.

2 **Procedure**

2.1 **Declaration of Potential Conflicts of Interest**

The Chair asked the meeting to declare any potential conflicts of interest now or as the meeting progressed.

2.2 **Quorum**

The Chair confirmed the Committee as quorate.

2.3 **Confidentiality of Information**

The Chair emphasised the confidentiality of information.

3 **Previous Minutes (PC08/07/21/01)**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 April 2021 had been agreed by e-mail and **APPROVED** on a proposal from Mr Dennison and seconded by Mr Haslett.

4 **Matters Arising (PC08/07/21/02)**

The Chair referred to the actions from the previous meeting and acknowledged that a number of these were ongoing.

Ms Lemon referred the Committee to the HR Directorate Strategic Plan and described in detail how each objective within the Plan linked to the Trust's 'Strategy to Transform'. She acknowledged that, while the paper focussed on those deliverables within a one-year horizon, it also focussed on what could be delivered within a similar timeline to that of the Strategy.

Ms Lemon commented that some of the more substantive deliverables included transformation of culture; revision of Occupational Health Service (OHS); focus to reduce sickness absence on which members would receive updates during today's meeting.

She advised that, as well as progressing issues within the Trust, a number of colleagues were significantly involved in HSC workstreams which had been tasked with progressing issues on a

regional basis. Ms Lemon said that, although the Trust benefitted greatly from this involvement, officers were also required to make significant contributions to this work.

The Chair commended the detail of the Plan and said it was clear that significant work had been involved in its development. He asked whether consideration had been given to how the Trust would know if the Plan had been successful and what outcomes might be available for the Committee to consider.

Ms Lemon acknowledged that such issues were being discussed with the Planning team and said that achievement of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) would act as an indicator that objectives had been delivered. She undertook to bring a paper to a future meeting outlining the KPIs. Ms Lemon explained that ultimately her intention was to deliver a new model of HR which met the organisation's needs.

Continuing she acknowledged the need to undertake further work in relation to establishing a baseline as well as looking at an analytic approach. She referred to Ms Avery's presentation to a recent Trust Board meeting around business intelligence and said that consideration was being given to what a HR performance dashboard might look like. Ms Lemon suggested that such a dashboard might include, for example, information on levels of disciplinary/grievances within the Trust; indicators of leadership approach; number of complaints in relation to bullying and said that such issues were indicators of the organisational culture and potential engagement levels amongst staff. She indicated that information in relation to these areas had previously not been reported within the Trust.

Ms Lemon alluded to the engagement scores around staff surveys and said that these had not been reported until recently.

Agreeing with the points made by Ms Lemon, Mr Bloomfield reminded members that the findings of the most recent survey had made difficult reading. He suggested that it would be important to have indicators which could initially demonstrate that the direction of travel was correct. Mr Bloomfield was of the view that this would be key to getting a sense of the overall organisational culture.

Ms Lemon said it would be important to strike a balance between being able to achieve objectives in-year as well as monitoring the progression of those to be achieved in the longer term.

Ms Lemon was of the view that the process to transform organisational culture and increase levels of staff engagement would take time to achieve. She pointed out that all staff within the Trust had a responsibility towards ensuring a positive organisational culture. Ms Lemon believed that the fundamental aspect of improvement was how staff felt within the organisation and she accepted that, while staff surveys were indicators, they were not measures.

Referring to the objectives to be achieved within the short-term, the Chair asked Ms Lemon for her view on what these might be.

In response, Ms Lemon emphasised the importance of making a real difference to staff on the ground. She alluded to the leadership visits being undertaken by Directors and said that staff had raised a number of issues during these including long waits at ED and the need to continue wearing PPE as well as the need for staff to be hydrated and fed. Ms Lemon said that, as a result, arrangements had been made for vehicles or hubs to be available to staff where they could remove PPE for a short period of time and avail of water/food. She added that such actions were more tangible to staff.

Ms Lemon referred to peer support and advised that this would be further developed with the addition of a clinical psychologist and the adoption of a trauma-informed approach. She indicated that it was also important to communicate with staff and said that more effort was being made to undertake engagement through short videos, visits to stations and Zoom engagement sessions rather than issue paper directions. Ms Lemon also said that the Trust had introduced a horticultural programme which had been received positively by staff.

Mr Bloomfield commended the work which had been undertaken to date and was of the view that such initiatives would only make a difference to staff when those staff saw changes within the organisation.

Ms Lemon referred to the trauma-informed approach and suggested that the Committee might find it helpful to hear from the Clinical Psychologist about the impact such an approach has not only on the individual but also the organisation.

Mr Haslett agreed that the 'quick wins' would clearly demonstrate to staff the Trust's intention. He said that he looked forward to further updates on the culture programme and the review of OHS which, he believed, were two key elements in transforming an organisation as well as ensuring increasing safety levels.

5 **Consultation on the Personal Development Performance Review (PDPR) Policy and Procedure and to seek feedback on the proposal (PC08/07/21/03)**

The Chair welcomed Ms O'Hara, Programme Director – Workforce Planning, and Mr Plant, Senior HR Business Partner – Workforce Planning, to the meeting.

Ms O'Hara advised that, in the Trust's Strategy To Transform 2020-2026, the Trust had committed to 'providing meaningful and constructive feedback through structured appraisal and development conversations so that staff feel valued and included in the organisation's vision...'

She advised that, following agreement at SMT, the new PDPR policy and procedure proposal had been presented at JCNC on 26 May. Ms O'Hara indicated that, having elected and agreed a new staff side Knowledge and Skills Framework lead, the Trust had recently issued the documentation for consultation to seek feedback on the proposal. She indicated that engagement sessions to date around the development of the Personal Development Performance Review policy and procedure had been positive.

Ms O'Hara said it was intended to run a pilot in the autumn with a view to collating feedback on this before the system would go live in early 2022. She stressed the importance of staff knowing that any feedback had been taken into consideration and said that some documentation had already changed as a result of feedback.

Ms O'Hara explained that, following a positive meeting with Branch Secretaries, it had been agreed to proceed using critical success

factors for posts to negate the need to review and renew over 100 job descriptions.

Ms O'Hara alluded to the fact that there was an absence of a formal Organisational Development (OD) function within the HR Directorate and commented that the other Trusts against which NIAS had benchmarked had existing OD functions within their respective HR Directorates. She was of the view that this was a valuable function in terms of credibility and one which the Trust would continue to evaluate.

Continuing, Ms O'Hara said that, when running the pilot and at the point of implementation, it would be important to take account of the need for frontline staff to prepare for their appraisals. She indicated that consideration was currently being given to how best to work through this with Operational managers. Ms O'Hara said if preparatory time was not possible, it would be important to fully explain to staff the reasons behind such a decision. Ms O'Hara said that the Trust was working closely with the Yorkshire Ambulance Service which, in the context of Covid-19, had changed its appraisal system to consist of three questions. She acknowledged that the future was unclear in terms of how Covid-19 might impact upon the service and subsequently the timeframes for the pilot and implementation of the Scheme could also be impacted.

The Chair commented that it was clear that both the KSF and the PDPR were inextricably linked and noted the absence of this on the flowchart contained within the documentation. He sought clarification on why this was the case.

Mr Plant explained that the KSF was within the PDPR project plan. He clarified that Trade Union colleagues were of the view that it should be an integral part of the process. He advised that, as a result of the collaboration between the Trust and Trade Unions, it had been agreed that a streamlined version could be used. Mr Plant said that, through networking with other Trusts, NIAS had obtained a template which was the equivalent to approximately ten post outlines. He added that this template would help in simplifying the process and would be used for the pilot.

Ms O'Hara explained that, following positive discussions with Trade Union colleagues, KSF was now an integral part of the appraisal system. However, she emphasised the importance of staff having a

positive experience when progressing through the appraisal system and said it would be important that staff did not focus on the KSF element.

Mr Haslett referred to the staff perspective of the scheme and sought clarification on how it was presented to staff.

Responding, Ms O'Hara said that, in the past, appraisals tended to be used for staff to seek agreement to undertake development programmes. She referred for the need for Personal Development Plans (PDPs) to be realistic and acknowledged that it was likely that there will be aspirations from staff in relation to their development. Ms O'Hara indicated that, if it was not possible to meet staff aspirations, it would be important to provide the reasons as to why.

Ms O'Hara said she hoped that the introduction of the PDPR programme would assist in bringing about cultural change throughout the organisation. She clarified that KSF focussed on staff providing evidence to their line manager on how they performed their job while the appraisal discussion focussed more on providing support to staff and managers to ensure they performed to the optimum level.

Mr Bloomfield pointed out that both the Committee Chair and Mr Haslett were currently members of the Remuneration Committee and said that the appraisal process in place for Directors was much more robust than for other staff. He stressed the importance of staff viewing the appraisal system as a valuable opportunity for them to raise any concerns they may have as well as providing managers with the opportunity to give feedback on performance.

Ms Lemon acknowledged that the action of managers meeting with staff to undertake the appraisal would be a significant cultural shift within the Trust and would be hugely important from that perspective.

The Chair referred to the consultation process and sought clarification around the timescales involved.

In response, Ms O'Hara welcomed any comments members may have on the documentation. She advised that the consultation had commenced in June and would close in July with a view to commencing the pilot in the autumn. However she said that a

decision would be taken in July on whether there was a need to extend the consultation period. She added that work was also ongoing in relation to a communications strategy.

The Committee **NOTED** the Consultation on the Personal Development Performance Review (PDPR) Policy and Procedure.

Before they withdrew from the meeting, the Chair thanked Ms O'Hara and Mr Plant for their presentation and said he looked forward to further updates.

6 **Financial Update**

Mr Nicholson advised that he planned to provide a verbal update today following on from the detail provided at the last People Committee and the subsequent Trust Board meetings.

He reminded the meeting that the Trust's Financial Plan had been presented to People, Finance and Organisational Development Committee on 22 April 2021 and approved by Trust Board on 24 June 2021. He advised that there had been minimal formal Revenue Resource Limit (RRL) adjustments received since then and said that the Trust continued to engage with HSCB, in particular in relation to the business case process that was required in order for the funds to be released.

Continuing, Mr Nicholson indicated that of note in the discussions to date was that the original savings requirements of £2.6 million may be reduced marginally. However, he said, other significant areas remained in relation to Covid-19, Agenda for Change (AfC), regrading, pay pressures and Community Paramedics.

Mr Nicholson explained that financial reporting was minimal for the first two months of the year as the focus was on the completion of the Annual Report and Accounts. He indicated that the Trust was currently working on producing the Month 3 Trust Monitoring Returns and associated Management Accounts Information.

Mr Nicholson reported that the operational pressure had continued in 2021-22 and had continued to translate into expenditure. He added that the reliance on Independent Ambulance Providers remained significant as did reliance and expenditure on overtime.

Mr Haslett acknowledged the financial pressures across the public sector and sought clarification in relation to the general view on available budgets and finance.

Mr Bloomfield advised that the focus of recent regional meetings had been on finance, in particular how best to release additional monies to undertake various pieces of work. He alluded to the work being progressed through No More Silos and which members had been briefed on and said that bids totalling £27 million had been received against available funding of £13.5 million.

Mr Bloomfield advised that Trusts were currently considering how to address their respective in-year positions with underlying deficits. He reminded the meeting that the Trust was required to identify savings of £2.6 million and added that other Trusts' savings requirements were more significant because their budgets were larger. Mr Bloomfield indicated that the allocation of additional funding was a matter for the NI Executive.

Mr Haslett agreed that the need for additional funding was a significant issue across the public sector.

Mr Bloomfield said that it was his understanding that, moving forward, Committee meetings would alternate between finance and human resources.

The Chair was of the view that it would be important to identify the Committee's priorities in the first instance as well as agreeing what financial information needed to be brought to the Committee. He added that this might necessitate a change in the Committee schedule.

It was agreed that Committee members as well as Mr Bloomfield, Mr Nicholson and Ms Lemon, would discuss this further.

Mr Haslett confirmed that he had been asked to chair the Committee when it met to consider finance and added that his preference would be to focus on the current schedule.

The Chair thanked Mr Nicholson for his update which was **NOTED** by the Committee.

Mr Nicholson left the meeting at this point.

7 Attendance Management – June 2021 Update (PC08/07/21/04)

By way of introduction, Ms Lemon reminded the meeting that a key objective of the Trust was to reduce sickness absence and said that Ms Gardner would outline a number of steps being taken by the Trust in this regard. Ms Lemon emphasised that work had commenced on developing better analytics and baseline information highlighting the importance of this in demonstrating outcomes.

The Chair invited Ms Lorraine Gardner, Assistant Director HR, to provide her update to the Committee.

Ms Gardner commenced by providing a context to the 2020-21 reporting year, specifically referencing management of the Trust's response to Covid-19 and Covid-related absences. She then highlighted the salient points of the report which provided information on current sickness absence levels and comparative figures within the Trust for 2019-20 and 2020-21 as well as figures for comparison purposes within the HSC. Ms Gardner detailed the measures which had been put in place to deliver improvements in attendance levels; detailed the impact of such measures on the Trust's attendance management figures and outlined priorities for 2021-22 including the introduction of a revised HSC Framework for the Management of Attendance which would introduce a focus on prevention and sustaining attendance at work. Ms Gardner said she would welcome the Committee's view on what information it would like to see at future meetings.

The Chair welcomed the proactive approach adopted by the Trust as well as the support offered to staff. He referred to the fact that the cumulative absence figure in 2019-20 was 10.49% and said this had reduced to 8% in 2020-21, resulting in a reduction of 2.49%. The Chair indicated that this had not included Covid-19 figures and asked whether this had skewed the figures.

Ms Gardner acknowledged that the Trust had started to examine this in detail and said that evidence, at this stage, would suggest that those staff off work due to Covid-19 were usually those who would not be off long-term. Therefore the reduction achieved may not be significantly skewed. She indicated that further analysis should provide better certainty in this regard.

The Chair enquired if there was any analysis around how those staff returning to work had felt the Trust had supported them.

Responding, Ms Gardner acknowledged that, while there was no current analysis, the intention was to undertake measures to improve the 'employee experience' in the workplan moving forward and to bring a focus on supporting staff to remain in work following a return.

Ms Lemon referred to the significant amount of work ongoing in this area. She said she recognised that very often those staff absent from work felt vulnerable and said that the Trust was giving consideration to the content of letters issued to those on sickness absence to ensure a compassionate approach.

The Chair reminded members of Ms Gardner's request for members to give consideration to the types of information the Committee might wish to see.

Mr Haslett commended the comprehensive nature of the information provided within the paper and agreed with the Chair's point around the importance of return to work interviews. He said he was uncertain whether the exclusion of Covid-19 figures had portrayed a more positive representation than was the case and thought that absences would have been significant during the pandemic.

Ms Gardner accepted that further detailed examination was needed.

The Chair queried whether the figures covered frontline staff only and suggested that, when examining absence figures, it might prove interesting to consider roles and geographical locations as well.

The Chair welcomed the progress and detail within the report and thanked Ms Gardner for her presentation which was **NOTED** by the Committee.

8 **Occupational Health Improvement Plan (PC08/07/21/05)**

The Chair welcomed Ms Amy Pepper, Business Performance Manager, to the meeting.

By way of introduction, Ms Lemon reminded members that the HR Strategic Plan and the Trust's Strategic Plan had both referenced the need for the Trust to review its occupational health service.

Ms Pepper drew the Committee's attention to the paper providing an update and outlined for the Committee the recommended steps for action, namely:

- a) To secure assurance of continuation of service delivery beyond 31 March 2021;
- b) To commission OHS services within Contract regulation requirements:
 - i. Establishment of NIAS policy & procedure for commissioning of services
- c) To monitor delivery, evidence need and outcome impact of service commissioned;
- d) To establish a Key stakeholder group to informed service development and ongoing management;
- e) To communicate with staff and points of referral OH services and support available

Ms Pepper advised that a phased approach would be adopted to progress this work. She outlined the timescales for each element and described the progress made to date, including the establishment of monthly finance reports and monitoring returns around the OHS being provided; commencement of monthly 1:1 monitoring meetings with OHS providers; the development of an information/data gathering dashboard in-house as well as building relationships with the OHS providers. Ms Pepper advised that a draft Memorandum of Understanding was currently with the BHSC for consideration and if the Trust was in agreement with its content, it was hoped that this would be signed off in the coming months. She added that this would also allow the BHSC to be included within the procurement process.

Referring to the financial aspects of the work, Ms Pepper cautioned that the review of OHS may not necessarily reduce expenditure on OHS but there would be absolute clarity in terms of where the resources were being allocated and ensuring that the Trust received value for money against its expenditure. Ms Pepper explained that current practice meant that all providers were on an equal footing in terms of providing OHS. She explained that any referrals for OHS should be directed to the BHSC in the first instance and if the Trust

was unable to provide the service in a timely manner, then the Trust could look to alternative providers.

Responding to a query from the Chair around the timescales for the procurement of OHS, Ms Pepper said it was hoped that this would be concluded by April 2022.

Ms Lemon advised that a number of aspects of the review of OHS could be progressed in-year while other aspects would be achieved on a more longer-term basis.

Mr Haslett referred to page 5 of the report and sought clarification on a number of points.

In response, Ms Pepper reminded the meeting that the Trust did not have any in-house services and confirmed that the current average monthly spend represented expenditure with other OHS providers. She explained that the providers listed in the tabled were independent providers with whom NIAS had commissioned services on an ad hoc basis since November 2019.

Mr Haslett sought clarification on the likelihood that costs would increase as a result of progressing the action plan.

Ms Pepper confirmed that it was not clear, at this point, whether expenditure would increase and explained that work was ongoing to develop a needs analysis. She indicated that the focus of OHS should be to maintain a healthy workforce.

Responding to a request from Mr Haslett to identify any impediments which might prevent the Trust from achieving the Gold standard to which it aspired, Ms Pepper suggested that a significant impediment might be resources.

Mr Bloomfield said it was his understanding that the only funding identified in the Trust baseline was £98,000 to the BHSCT and said that Mr Nicholson had identified substantial additional funding over the last number of years to meet the need. Mr Bloomfield clarified that the Trust currently spent approximately £300,000 on OHS services and said he had no doubt that further resources would be required in addition to those already identified in the Trust baseline. He said that he hoped the Trust would be able to put a better value for money contract in place for such funding.

The Committee **NOTED** the update on the Occupational Health Improvement Plan.

The Chair thanked Ms Pepper for her update and attendance and she withdrew from the meeting.

9 **NIAS Culture Programme - #Proud to work for NIAS**
(PC08/07/21/06)

At the outset, Mr Kearney expressed his personal thanks to Ms Lemon, Ms O'Hara and Mr Bloomfield for leading by example in terms of engagement, compassion and focussing on outcomes. He conveyed his appreciation that the Trust Board had supported the focus of the culture work and said it was important to focus on realities. Mr Kearney referred to the £2.6 million efficiency savings to be achieved by the Trust. He mentioned the 2,700 staff contacts with peer support, 29% of which were following assaults on staff. He said that, while the Trust could provide the support to staff at such times, it could not stop the assaults taking place.

Mr Kearney outlined the programme being undertaken and explained that it had three distinct phases, namely:

- Discovery – diagnosis to discover the culture of the organisation;
- Design – development of a programme to change the workplace culture entitled 'Proud to work for NIAS' and
- Delivery – implementation of 'Proud to work for NIAS' culture programme.

Mr Kearney drew the Committee's attention to the action plan which had evolved from documentation and the staff engagement process and said that the plan focussed on what had to be done in order to make a difference. He advised that a number of changes had already been implemented as a result of staff engagement undertaken and he briefly described these to the meeting.

Continuing, Mr Kearney said that a key driver within the organisation in terms of health and wellbeing had been the engagement partnership between NIAS and UNISON launched a few years previously. He was of the view that, when considering measurements of change, it would be important to look at qualitative as well as quantitative matrices. Mr Kearney said it would be

important that members would view the prospective changes as an evolving process, for example, considering progress through focus groups and how it progressed through qualitative assessments of work.

Ms Lemon emphasised the importance of Mr Kearney's comments and referred to the consistent 'thread' that permeated today's Committee agenda in terms of the culture, compassionate leadership and recognising and valuing the workforce. She acknowledged that the review of the Operational management structure and the Education Review being led by Ms Byrne and Dr Ruddell respectively would be helpful in ensuring that culture was embedded in the organisation. Ms Lemon accepted that further work was needed and she referred to the culture dashboard which was based on the culture assessment tool and which provided the basis from which to progress this work.

Mr Bloomfield stressed the importance of this programme of work and was of the view that, until significant progress had been made in this area, other programmes of work would only have a marginal impact. He referred to peer support which had started as a reasonably small service and one which was very much valued by staff. Mr Bloomfield acknowledged the complexity of the work undertaken by peer support and said that the Trust's focus on ensuring the continuation of this service had helped signal to staff the importance of its workforce.

He said that he would be keen for the Committee to focus on this programme of work and provide challenge to ensure that the work was progressed.

The Chair sought clarification around what the outcomes might look like and acknowledged that the nature of the work did not lend itself to quantitative analysis.

In response, Mr Kearney referred to the action plan which had been developed as a result of the methodology and engagement approach and said that this should result in the delivery of the objectives having a positive impact, based on the existing science behind culture and OD transformation. In terms of measurement, Mr Kearney acknowledged that this was very much ongoing and suggested that, rather than set narrow targets, the change in culture should potentially be felt and measured across the organisation in

terms of, for example, attendance management, health and wellbeing, feedback from those staff on leadership courses.

Ms Lemon said it would be important to accept that organisational culture would take time to embed. She indicated that the culture dashboard represented the baseline based on the staff survey and the cultural assessment tool and that, over the next number of years, the scale would begin to look different.

The Chair thanked Mr Kearney for his attendance and said that, while he appreciated this was work in progress, he looked forward to receiving further updates.

The Committee **NOTED** the update on the NIAS Culture Programme. Mr Kearney withdrew from the meeting at this point.

10 **Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of the People Committee will take place on Thursday 30 September 2021 at 10am (arrangements to be confirmed).

Consideration would be given to face-to-face meetings if permitted.

11 **Any Other Business**

Closing the meeting, the Chair confirmed that there were no items of Any Other Business. He commented that it was clear there was a significant amount of work being progressed with a great sense of commitment and enthusiasm. He acknowledged that, while further work remained to be done, the fundamentals were already there to build upon. Commending all involved, the Chair welcomed the positive updates provided to the Committee and said he looked forward to receiving further updates.

THIS BEING ALL THE BUSINESS, THE CHAIR DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 12.00PM.

SIGNED:



DATE:

20 September 2021