



**MINUTES OF THE PEOPLE, CULTURE AND ORGANISATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE HELD AT 9.30AM ON  
THURSDAY 10 DECEMBER 2025 IN THE BOARDROOM, NIAS HQ**

**PRESENT:** Mr P Corrigan Non-Executive Director  
Mr P Quinn Non-Executive Director

**IN**

**ATTENDANCE:** Ms M Lemon Director of HROD  
Ms S Beggs Manager of Chair and Chief  
Executive Office  
Mr N Sinclair Director of Operations (Interim)  
Mr M Riddell Deputy Director of HROD  
Ms L Turley Deputy Director HROD  
Ms L Emery Senior HR Manager  
**APOLOGIES:** Mr J Dennison Committee Chair  
Mr R Sowney Senior Clinical Advisor

**1 Apologies & Opening Remarks**

Mr Corrigan chaired the meeting in Mr Dennison's absence and welcomed members to the meeting and specifically Lee Emery.

**2 Procedure**

**2.1 Declaration of Potential Conflicts of Interest**

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

No declarations of conflict of interest were made.

**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 – 25/09/2025

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 September 2025 were **APPROVED** on a proposal from Mr Corrigan and seconded by Mr Quinn.

### 4 Matters arising

The Committee **NOTED** the update to the matters arising from the last meeting.

	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>INDIVIDUAL ACTIONING</b>	<b>UPDATE</b>
1	<u>Matters Arising</u> Carried forward action - Update organisational chart to be provided at the next meeting.	<b>Michelle Lemon / Laura Turley</b>	Each directorate has updated their structures, and some final work is required to share a single consistent structure. Mr Corrigan and Mr Quinn agreed it would be useful to see the existing chart anyway and Ms Lemon agreed to share the link whilst considering a high-level chart. Mr Quinn is particularly interested in seeing a specific chart for Ops due to the many changes. <b>ACTION: Ms Lemon</b>
2	<u>Matters Arising</u> Detailed plan on Comms activities	<b>Michelle Lemon / Laura Turley</b>	Dr Philip Graham has been identified as the NED for comms and engagement undertaken to consider the appropriate committee for this reporting. Propose move from PCOD to the identified committee and Ms Lemon agreed to discuss with Mr Mullen. <b>ACTION: Ms Lemon</b>
3	<u>Item 6</u> Include detail within workforce summary of the	<b>Mr Riddell</b>	A report has been created to show the attrition at different levels across the organisation. This will be

	exact number of leavers, their grades and reason for leaving.		presented to PCOD at the committee meeting.
4	<u>Item 7</u> Share information on the development of long terms suspensions.	<b>Michelle Lemon</b>	A detailed report on suspensions is included in the report 'Monthly Workforce Information and Strategic HR' report to PCOD page 7. Ms Lemon advised this will also be part of the Kings fund commencing in January.
5	<u>Item 9</u> Provide a report and dedicated board session to think about what the vision of culture is and the delivery of service to patients in terms of sexual safety.	<b>Michelle Lemon</b>	This is planned to be included in the Kings Fund Programme of work in Q4. Further detail will be presented to Programme Board on 17 December 2025.

## 5 Workforce Information and HR Report

The Committee **NOTED** the Workforce Information and HR, OD, Equality and Wellbeing updates across all areas of HR. The Papers provide additional information aligned with the PCOD workplan referred as appendices.

Ms Turley explained there is a small increase in sick absence and an analysis identified this is as a result of seasonal respiratory illnesses and stress within EOC. If the figures spike HR ensure they investigate the reasons and the Committee noted the Cumulative figure is currently 9.9% which has reduced from this time last year.

Mr Corrigan welcomes the new report and Executive Summary narrative. He acknowledged that sick absence is cumulatively better this year, however if small increases continue month on month on an upward trajectory it could be concerning. Ms Lemon agreed and advised that the recent slight increase is contributed by

flu related absence and that the flu vaccine uptake is currently around 18%, and although it isn't a reasonable rate NIAS are one of the highest uptakes within the Trusts. Mr Quinn said it would be useful to get confirmation of the vaccination rate percentage for clarity.

**ACTION: Ms Lemon**

Ms Lemon continued that mental health related absence remains the highest reason and Mr Quinn acknowledges and understands there was a spike after recent issues within EOC. Ms Turley added that staff morale across the service is low and that often staff take sick leave during the summer period or holidays if they aren't granted leave, and Ms Lemon confirmed she has discussed at the GARAC Committee how NIAS managers are dealing with this issue.

Mr Riddell referenced this to an audit finding (219) regarding management continuing to monitor absence management, he said the fact NIAS are reporting this detail to PCOD is good evidence for IA and is useful to minute this.

SLA and KPIs are showing initial improvements within enhanced services for psychological support and there is a focus on international control week.

There were 135 live cases within Employee relations in October and there has been a focus on suspensions, with enhanced scrutiny and governance around those. There is a consistent review of suspensions and a process in place to review monthly.

In October there were five members of staff on suspension, one of which is being dealt with by the crown court. Another case involves the PSNI which is coming to a close soon, and the investigation is at the final stages. Ms Turley explained the NIAS legal team attend review meetings with the PSNI for crown court case to ensure the right decisions are being made.

Mr Quinn referred to the number of grievances being identified at policy level and that the Kings fund is looking at it as an indication of culture, in terms of local resolution. It is hoped that the indicators for those figures reduce but haven't yet.

Ms Turley elaborated that the figures for grievances are higher across the system, and there are challenges for these being dealt with locally as some managers have over 50 staff and the

substantial changes for the building blocks i.e. training, awareness and support are difficult to deliver to managers locally hence the numbers are proportionately larger than it should be.

Mr Corrigan queried if there is a trend and Ms Turley said it is spread and around 50% of cases don't need to be escalated to formal procedures, however there is a theme that staff want to have their say at formal hearings. Mr Sinclair added that it appears to be a cultural theme to submit a grievance which appears widespread, and that most of those staff are in temporary posts.

Ms Turley agreed to take forward a deep drive into grievances, and Mr Quinn suggested doing so in line with TU's to ensure there is engagement with managers to support them.

**ACTION: Ms Turley**

In relation to equality, diversity conclusion, Article 55, there is a consultation regionally with HSC about a Scottish gender identity case, and NIAS are seeking more guidance. There has also been some awareness and sharing about what domestic economic violence may look like. There has been an increase in domestic homicide in NI which impacts NIAS, and therefore they need to support staff who are dealing with these scenarios but also staff who are a victim of abuse.

Mr Riddell updated the Committee that there are 79 Employers liability claims which are broken down on the report. Coroner's cases are included under litigation and there is a significant impact on the organisation in terms of training witnesses and witness statements which Mr Sinclair is heavily involved in. Within the reporting period there are five new employers' liability claims received and NIAS continue to discuss the learning and recommendations coming out of all litigation case one such e.g. is that reasonable adjustments were not implemented in a service and resulted in an employer liability claim. There is regional guidance included in the policy which must be adhered to before settling a case to ensure NIAS have the appropriate legal advice.

Mr Riddell referred to resource pressures across pay and conditions, job evaluation, and that recruitment is so important for growth to retain recruitment. The table provided in the report demonstrates the quantum of activity around job evaluation and recruitment with job evaluation having remaining a potential bottle

neck in terms of growth due to the time taken to evaluate new posts , which dovetails with workforce strategy that will be discussed later.

Mr Quinn acknowledged the sheer volume of recruitment which is significant, and Mr Corrigan confirmed these stats are relating to candidates. Mr Corrigan queried if NIAS have a sense of how many posts they hope to fill and is that dependent on the Education team and capacity. Mr Sinclair said that it is part of the workforce team, trying to get as many education courses as possible. Some staff start as an ACA and move on to the ACP course and Mr Sinclair confirmed for Mr Corrigan that there are two ACA courses with 30 attending each course. Mr Sinclair was unsure if the current waiting list had expired, and Mr Riddell advised that he believes the next intake was the last on that particular waiting list and the February course may come from that previous list.

HR are dealing with many requests for payroll, and it is important to highlight the level of activity in that respect. Mr Riddell's colleague intends to write to NEDs imminently regarding NED and Chair pay uplift pay.

There are two member of staff and two managers dealing with job evaluations and there are currently 19 new requests which is a significant workload for them, however, they are trying to prioritise those that are aligned with the Trust strategies and contribute to overall Trust performance. There is training taking place on Tuesday for job evaluation including TUs, and the next phase of training will include general managers. There is regional consistency tracking to review and ensure quality assurance for consistency carried out by the HSC.

Mr Riddell advised the new system 'Equip' will have a huge impact across all HSC HR functions and are potentially moving towards a corporate risk. The system is being rolled out in November 2026 across all trusts rather than phased which will be extremely challenging. Ms Lemon added that it is important to flag it as a risk as it will take significant capacity from teams across the board as they are involved in meetings on a regular basis, and HRD are continually escalating their concerns.

Ms Turley added that it is utilising at least one full time day a week, and some of their teams is three days per week.

Ms Lemon is concerned that there is a lack of functionality in the new system to report staff in post which is critical, and Mr Riddell has raised this concern last week.

Mr Quinn said that the report is indicative of the complexity of work and agreed that the report is very good and useful to cross reference and do a deeper dive. He suggested NIAS think about how they mitigate the risks of Equip within the organisation and regionally and Mr Riddell advised that all of the trusts have raised similar risks corporately, and the issue for NIAS is getting towards the launch, it is going to impact operations, managers, recruitment, with significant training requirements.

Ms Turley advised that regionally, HR functions will have to look at what they stop, start and continue, which is difficult with all the other priorities as some other staff will be using 3 days a week for Equip, and Mr Corrigan acknowledged that NIAS may have to make some difficult decisions. Ms Lemon agreed that they will bring back to the Committee regarding some of the things that may not be prioritised as a result of Equip.

**ACTION: Ms Lemon**

Mr Quinn is aware of the difficulties and that there are a few issues arising out of the report. He will raise succession planning again under another agenda item and the need for a policy on succession planning and the outworkings of that. NIAS as an Organisation has a significant challenge within the top level of Organisation and something is needed to formalise this within a Policy.

## 6 **Review of HR Policies**

The Committee **NOTED** that some of the audit recommendations are linked to the requirement to update policies and procedures to reflect changing IR/ER and legislative requirements as well as best practice. Challenges include the need for negotiation with staff-side representatives on changing terms and conditions or changes as a result of custom and practice claims. Due to the workload associated with the plan, achieving the updates required will be challenging.

The Committee identified a typo in relation to '9' (16%) of policies being compliant and Mr Riddell agreed to amend.

**ACTION: Mr Riddell**

The team recognise that the Action plan needs to focus on the priorities listed and at the GARAC Committee yesterday they discussed a lot of recommendations that are coming from policy issues e.g. TOIL and trying to get over the line as it is a priority one finding.

A subgroup of JCNC has been set up working specifically with TUs and a list of priority one policies is on the agenda for the upcoming second meeting of this group.

Mr Corrigan said at a first glance it would be easy as a NED to be critical and query how NIAS have allowed this to happen, however, he recognises it is important to look ahead rather than back, and welcomes the honest assessment and transparency. Mr Corrigan encourages the Committee to focus on improving this area of work and hopes at the next Committee in February that most of those Priority one recommendations will be implemented.

Mr Quinn said that consistency is required going forward, not just in relation to HR policy issue, sometimes at the Safety Committee there is an inconsistency with the way policies are written, and this is a good opportunity to review the consistency of all throughout the Organisation.

Mr Riddell advised that Mr Henry is doing a lot of work in the background on this and looking at a standardised template and proforma.

Mr Quinn referred to there being a large number of policies and significant work programme ahead and queried whether this needs project managed to be tracked to provide progress and assurance to the Committee. He alluded to the risk involved with the sheer volume of policies along with the capacity required for Equip. Ms Lemon advised that HR will be looking at what they can start, stop and continue but these policies are a priority and must be progressed.

Mr Corrigan said there will be a lot of resource put into fixing things but there needs to be a process to make sure NIAS regularly review policies to ensure they are maintained and don't expire. He said that an annual review of ToR are built into the ToR and suggested something similar for a specific review of policies.

Mr Quinn reiterated the issue of succession planning, which is not specific to a particular audit but without policy or procedure it won't drive NIAS formally towards it.

## **7 Summary HROD Policy Framework**

The Committee **NOTED** the Summary HROD Policy Framework and Mr Quinn pointed out that the way policies are referenced, implementation hasn't passed but are not red, and Mr Riddell confirmed that the red ones refer to those which are highest priority.

## **8 HR Open Audit Recommendations Summary**

The Committee **NOTED** the summary of the HR related audit recommendations, current progress and implementation status.

Mr Corrigan appreciates these were discussed at GARAC yesterday, but it is also important to update this Committee for assurance.

Mr Riddell explained that from a control perspective, he has provided a summary table for priority one, two and three recommendations and gives an idea of the level of work required for the 22 recommendations that require more work than others. Mr Riddell plans to come back to PCOD in advance of GARAC in February to provide an update on the recommendations and he feels NIAS are in a good position to make progress on the vast majority. The team are trying to understand the evidence required to demonstrate the improvements.

Ms Lemon referred to the GARAC Committee identifying there is good cross directorate working, for example, Ops and HR regarding absence management. In relation to the non-absence management aspects of that audit, NIAS have purposefully put in very challenging dates as it was escalated, and they appreciated the contribution to the Organisation trying to be ahead of the timeline to be in a position by February to give IA evidence.

## **9 HR Risk Register**

The Committee **NOTED** the current Directorate and Corporate Risks owned by the HR function and that the amendments planned to the current risk profile on pages three and four.

Mr Riddell advised the Committee that this is a summary table and that the risk register contains more detail. The footnotes indicate the policy risk has increased and reflects the trend in audit findings that policy review is affecting.

Equip is a corporate risk and it is important for NIAS to reflect the concerns regarding litigation risk, and the team are working directly with Mr Henry within this space.

Mr Quinn appreciates that the risk register is detailed and referred to the footnotes to identify what direction they are moving as there is a substantial number of risks included for the directorate. He said there are other risks that are more static that aren't in there and Mr Riddell confirmed the others will remain there unless there is a change, if there are additional mitigations they will be reflected but not necessarily change the score. He confirmed there are two risks for HR on the Corporate Risk Register.

Mr Corrigan agrees that Equip needs to be on the Corporate Risk Register and expects to see this being added for the next GARAC Committee.

**ACTION: Mr Riddell/Ms Lemon**

## **10 HR Governance, Assurance and Performance Forum**

The Committee **NOTED** the new Governance, Assurance and Performance forum which HR have introduced since September 2025. The Terms of reference and agenda were provided for the committee's information and for noting. The forum is designed to ensure enhanced assurance around governance and assurance across the HR functions aligned to the Trust governance and assurance framework.

Meetings Are held bi-monthly, and governance and assurance is rotated with performance every other meeting. November's meeting focused on performance across Audit, Suspensions and Job Evaluation with a particular focus on relevant KPIs.

The Committee acknowledged the inclusion of the Terms of Reference and suggested having three levels of assurance in there.

**ACTION: Mr Riddell**

Mr Corrigan welcomes the forum to provide better governance and scrutiny which will be judged on performance and outputs, but he would also like to see the metrics improving, and Ms Lemon agreed that the point of that work is that NIAS have the metrics to provide evidence of what they are achieving.

Mr Riddell suggested in time they could change the frequency of the forum but at present they need to keep them more regularly.

The Committee agreed with the implementation of the forum which will provide the Committee with further assurance.

## **11 Organisational Culture Update**

The Committee **NOTED** the update following the first meeting of the Programme Board in June 2025, which outlines the key priorities, work undertaken so far and priority actions planned moving forward. The next meeting of the Programme Board, chaired by the Chief Executive and consisting of NED and independent members, is on 17 December 2025. The RQIA Being Human Framework is appended for information, and it is a good overarching strategic document to correlate with NIAS' own work which will be referred to in the meeting.

The plan for January to March is busy which includes leadership and engagement sessions as well as getting staff to reflect on their work to help build objectives to develop culture.

A project manager has commenced and will come to the Programme Board next week to discuss what is being delivered and the strategy development. Ms Lemon hopes the Programme Board next week will demonstrate the increased momentum, reflected in the Gantt chart, forums and meetings.

The team have tried to reflect some of the other work happening in the background, for example, sessions with managers and workforce facilitated by Ms McStocker and Ms Biddle in January.

There is an importance placed on external focus linking with others i.e. Ms Charlton is involved in the being human framework and Safety, and Mr Sinclair is involved in the clinical aspects to ensure it is mainstreamed in the programme.

Ms Lemon referred to the Hill McBride Report, which is a review of Belfast that will provide a sense check of where NIAS are, and Ms Turley met with BHSCT this week to discuss their approach to culture work.

Mr Corrigan advised that Mr Quinn has put himself forward as the nominated NED for the being human framework, and Mr Quinn elaborated that the framework was discussed at the last Programme Board meeting and identified that it could help with the overall culture of staff and patient safety as it recognises happy healthy staff leads to better patient safety.

The Committee queried if Kings fund will use the framework to carry out the assessment of baseline and referred to it as not being a user-friendly document. Ms Lemon responded that this is one of a number of things they will be using. She appreciates Mr Quinns involvement due to his insight as a NED at Safety Committee and PCOD which aligns well to helping deliver a safe culture.

Mr Quinn referred to the RQIA group and that it wasn't clear what the purpose of the group is and that he plans to discuss further with Ms Larmour to identify if it will be a forum for discussion, and if so he may consider his attendance, as it may not be worthwhile attending.

## **12 Operations Restructure Update**

The Committee **NOTED** the Operational Resilience and Enhanced Leadership (OREL) Progress Report Paper which provides a programme update in relation to an overview and outputs to date for Year one 2025/26.

Mr Sinclair advised that there is a real challenge engaging TUs, as they have expressed their dissatisfaction with the way the programme is run which has slowed things down a little in the last number of weeks. Ms Lemon and Mr Sinclair intend to meet with them individually to have discussions on how to move forward.

Mr Sinclair added it has been challenging within the last six months with a wider portfolio but has managed to work successfully with TU's, and is adopting Scotland's Ambulance service approach- to work more closely with TUs in partnership and ensure they are more involved from the start.

There is a preliminary date for a workshop with TU's 26 January to discuss the issues raised and proposals for consultation, and with good planning and approach NIAS can resolve some of those issues.

Mr Corrigan said the Ops restructure has been discussed since he commenced with NIAS two years ago and it seems to be stalled and NIAS need to ensure perfection doesn't stand in the way of progress. The Committee are still not clear on the financial implications and asked Mr Sinclair to talk through the understanding for the SPF Committee and Trust Board regarding the £14 million workforce money given by SPPG for a number of things. NIAS have been given this additional money in recognition, and they need to move forward with workforce planning. Mr Sinclair confirms that this is part of the £14 million but NIAS need to submit a business case for the spend of that money. The first element has been completed by Ms Sharpe's team, and they are now discussing with the DoH to ensure it is in the right place.

Mr Corrigan referred to his focus being the current finance challenge in year and that NIAS have pushed ahead with the restructure and the new recruits, which are adding to the costs but haven't made the savings expected as yet.

Mr Corrigan also referred to NED's recognising an improved scrutiny since this has been under Mr Sinclair's portfolio and they understand the challenges but encourage NIAS to progress and implement. Mr Quinn suggested that AD's attend some Committees and receive feedback from NED's which will help develop them as part of succession planning and Mr Sinclair agreed with this recommendation.

### **13 Summary of Recruitment Shared Services Candidate Satisfaction Survey Results**

The Committee pointed out that the cover page states this paper is for Approval and Mr Riddell confirmed it should be for Noting.

The Committee **NOTED** the responses received which outlines key insights based on the feedback to performance of Recruitment Shared Services. Ms Lemon has suggested to Mr Riddell that it may be useful to demonstrate NIAS' performance against recruitment shared services to make the Committee aware.

Mr Corrigan advised that they receive an independent analysis of this annually at GARAC as Internal Audit provide outcomes based on BSO shared services.

#### **14 Demand and Capacity Programme Board: Tactical Workforce Group**

The Committee **NOTED** the update on activity across the Tactical Workforce Group which is a subgroup of the Demand and Capacity Programme Board.

Mr Sinclair advised that on the back of the demand and capacity review they identified the need for a revised focus on recruitment, and additional recruitment is now included in there. They have started to break down the communication barrier with BSO which is working and can see a better conversion rate now.

The table demonstrates the financial year end target thus far and provides data for Quarter three and four vacancies. The numbers are going in a positive direction and the team are focusing on attrition figures in terms of providing reassurance.

NIAS are making plans to visit universities and attend focus groups with students to ensure they have a full waiting list and talent.

Mr Corrigan referred to the table and in particular the final column for year end and that 83% of funded establishment is filled so therefore NIAS know where the gaps are, and he queried if this takes into account where NIAS are over resourced in RRV and moving more to double crew. Mr Sinclair confirmed the vacancy in RRV was 52 but needs to check if they are included or not.

**ACTION: Mr Sinclair**

#### **15 PCOD Forward Workplan**

The Committee **NOTED** the forward workplan.

**16 Any Other Business**

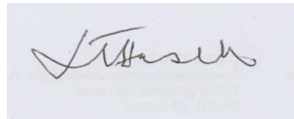
The Committee commended Ms Lemon and her team for achieving progress within the statutory mandatory training.

**Next meeting:**

12 February 2026, 9.30am

**THIS BEING ALL THE BUSINESS, THE CHAIR DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 12.40**

**SIGNED:**

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be 'J. Lemon'.

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**DATE:**

12/2/26