



PEOPLE, CULTURE & ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (PCOD)

Date 12 February 2026
Time: 9.30 am
Location: Board Room

Attendance	
Chair:	Jim Dennison (Non-Executive Director)
Attendees:	Phelim Quinn (Non-Executive Director) Paul Corrigan (Non-Executive Director)
In Attendance:	Michael Riddell (Deputy Director Workforce & Governance) Laura Turley (Deputy Director HROD – People & Culture) Nigel Ruddell (Medical Director)
Apologies:	Robert Sowney

Minutes of Meeting		
Agenda Item	Summary of the discussion	Actions Agreed
1.	<p>Apologies & Remarks</p> <p>The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and noted apologies as above.</p>	
2.	<p>Procedure: Declaration of potential conflict/pecuniary interest/confidentiality of information/quorum</p> <p>The Chair asked those present to declare any potential conflicts of interest now or as the meeting progressed.</p> <p>No declarations of conflict of interest were made.</p>	
3.	<p>Previous Minutes – 10/12/25</p> <p>The previous minutes of 10 December 2025 were APPROVED on proposal from Paul Corrigan and seconded by Phelim Quinn.</p>	

	<p>Ms Turley apologised for the submission of late papers due to existing pressures and that going forward papers will be provided in line with deadlines.</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>Committee members NOTED the <u>attached</u> update to the matters arising.</p> <p><u>Carried forward Actions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms Turley to circulate the most up to date Organisational Chart. Recurrent action from 10 Dec 2025 - Workforce Information and HR Report - 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. 	<p>Ms Turley</p> <p>Ms Turley (in Ms Lemon's absence)</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Monthly Workforce Information and Strategic HR Report</p> <p>The Committee NOTED the report which provides an update across all service areas within the HR Function.</p> <p>Ms Turley and Mr Riddell presented the highlights of the reports.</p> <p>Mr Corrigan raised concern that the biggest cause of sick absence is mental health which will be impacted by the lack of occupational health support in terms of psychologist availability. Ms Turley advised there is a regional psychology workforce shortage. Which is being considered in the Regional Occupational Health Service review. Some developments within this include that developing additional capacity roles for psychology assistants to support caseloads and assured the Committee that NIAS internally are delivering internal interventions through the Health and Wellbeing Team directly.</p> <p>The Committee referred to Section 9 regarding mandatory training which quotes compliance is 67.8% however, a recent internal bulletin reported this at 53%.</p> <p>Ms Turley explained the difference relates to the bulletin figures reflecting a change in the Complaints module as a result of a NIPSO guideline, which the QSI team have an action plan to address.</p>	



Diagnostics to date have determined core reasoning as are mental health, REAP pressure, industrial relations, pay dispute and staff burn out.

Ms Turley explained the second biggest reason for absence is accidents at work and the team continue to review with QSI, however, the Committee acknowledged that assaults on staff are also a contributory factor, and Ms Turley is establishing a working group with key partners across the Trust to explore and address.

HR are liaising with GRS in Operations to carry out a review of the impact on absence as a result of leave requests turned down. The Committee noted the substantial number of staff some managers are responsible for, and Ms Turley advised that OREL would address this and also consider provision of leadership and management training to help managers deal with difficult conversations.

HR are reviewing absence reporting approaches to increase the accountability around absence management which may include Managers receiving a monthly report for their remit to discuss with their Director/ Directors to review with Chief Executive on a monthly basis.

The Committee noted that a new regional attendance Policy will be launched in April that will provide a formal process to address some of the issues contributing to the increase in absence.

Mr Quinn highlighted the variances of absence rates within divisions and queried if there are reasons some division(s) are an outlier and why it has continued to this point, and he sought clarity on what accountability has taken place to address. Ms Turley advised that historic culture within divisions is a challenge but is being addressed via the ongoing work within the culture programme and other internal improvements.

Mr Quinn pointed out that there has been a significant increase in SAI's which result in death and therefore there will be more referrals to the coroner's court which may subsequently impact absence further.

Ms Turley confirmed some of the practical steps NIAS are taking to address the reasons:



	<p>There is cross functional working groups set up to identify key matters for EAC including health and wellbeing support. The litigation team are supporting staff attending coroners court as a witness, and NIAS need to review resourcing to deal with calls.</p> <p>Mr Corrigan was disappointed that there was no representative from Operations present to explain how absence is being managed at an operational level. He emphasised the Committee’s concern about the continued upward trajectory month on month and reminded the Committee that NIAS were previously commended regarding the improvement to absence which has now significantly deteriorated. Mr Corrigan appreciates the external factors impacting absence however this is also a reflection of the leadership and management of staff.</p> <p>Dr Ruddell explained that the current coroners court cases are relating to incidents in 2021/22 and as ambulance delays have continued since then, the court cases will likely increase also.</p> <p>Mr Quinn suggested that an Ops representative attends the next meeting to explain how the absence hot spots are being managed at an operational level.</p>	<p>Ms Turley</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>PCOD Terms of Reference Review</p> <p>The Committee APPROVED the updated Terms of Reference.</p>	
<p>8.</p>	<p>Violence and Aggression Update</p> <p>The Committee NOTED the briefing and the ongoing work to help mitigate the risks associated with violence and aggression directed towards staff.</p> <p>There has been a continued low uptake of body worn video (BWV) and NIAS need to understand the rationale of the reasons behind this. Ms Turley explained there was an initial reluctance from staff as BWV was perceived as being used as a punitive tool, however, NIAS have encouraged a change in perception to this.</p> <p>Mr Corrigan referred to the significant variance in stations and suggested that there needs to be more focus on the leadership, management and</p>	<p>Ms Turley</p>

	<p>accountability, and Ms Turley agreed to follow up with the relevant managers.</p>	
9.	<p>Organisational Cultural Improvement Update inc. sexual safety</p> <p>The Committee NOTED the recent progress and key next steps contained in the briefing report.</p> <p>Ms Ann Marie McStocker has recently been appointed as the Head of Culture Transformation.</p> <p>At the last programme board meeting the Kings Fund proposal was accepted and they are moving to implementing phase one.</p> <p>Mr Quinn highlighted that the adoption of the Being Human Framework is not included in the briefing report and explained the programme board agreed NIAS would adapt the recommendations within the framework to align with other aspects.</p> <p>Mr Quinn referred to a conversation at the SPF Committee regarding clarification on £100k slippage set aside for Kings Fund and queried if this will be active within this financial year, and Ms Turley confirmed they are going to commence this within the current financial year.</p>	
10.	<p>Vaccinations Briefing</p> <p>The Committee NOTED the update on NIAS approach to the influenza vaccination programme 25/26.</p> <p>Dr Ruddell highlighted that performance is not at the required level and despite NIAS challenging the lack of funding for NIAS to roll out internally, the PHA continued to run the scheme for staff to avail of the vaccine externally. He acknowledged the good effort from the team, but the lack of uptake reinforces that NIAS need to deliver this in house.</p> <p>Mr Quinn agreed NIAS need to maintain the pressure to secure early funding and ensure the delivery of vaccinations is well planned for next year and he suggested strengthening the proposal by detailing the absence rates for respiratory illnesses among staff.</p>	
11.	<p>Demand Capacity including OREL brief Update</p>	



	<p>The Committee NOTED the update for the Demand and Capacity Tactical Workforce sub-group.</p> <p>Mr Riddell referred to Slide 7 which details the calendar of events for recruitment for the rest of 2026 and the team will keep PCOD updated on the progress of this.</p> <p>Mr Riddell confirmed that DCA is an abbreviation for ‘double crewed ambulances’ and the Gannt chart for recruitment and training includes driver training and clinical education.</p> <p>With regard to the OREL programme of work, Mr Riddell updated that a workshop with TUs was held on 21 January to agree the principles which was very positive, and further meetings are planned to ensure there is a partnership approach to the model.</p>	
12.	<p>Partnership Update</p> <p>The Committee NOTED the HR Policy and Partnership Update, and the progress achieved to ensure that appropriate governance, engagement, and consultation arrangements are in place to support the delivery of a strengthened and more mature partnership model.</p> <p>Mr Riddell pointed out the key significant milestone is to issue a new partnership framework based on the regional framework.</p> <p>Ms Turley drew the Committee’s attention to page two and three which explains the observations identified from the TU partnership Working Survey.</p>	
13.	<p>EQUIP SBAR</p> <p>The Committee NOTED the update regarding the EQUIP Human Resources Digitisation</p> <p>Mr Dennison referred to the implementation of EQUIP as being a significant risk to the Trust and should be a standing item on the PCOD agendas, which can be reviewed in time.</p> <p>Mr Dennison exited the meeting at this stage and Mr Corrigan chaired the remainder of the meeting.</p>	<p>Ms Lemon/Ms Turley/Mr Riddell/Ms Beggs</p>



	<p>Mr Riddell and Ms Turley shared concerns with the timescales and financial consequences for NIAS which has been reflected on the Risk Register.</p> <p>NIAS are setting up a Programme Board to manage the implementation of EQUIP and explained that other Trusts are utilising their Encompass leads to facilitate these forums within their Organisation, however, NIAS do not have a member of staff within this post and therefore need to seek alternative capacity to fulfil.</p> <p>Mr Corrigan acknowledged GARAC, SPF and PCOD are aware of the significant impact of EQUIP on NIAS and suggested it is brought to Trust Board's attention.</p>	
14.	<p>PCOD Forward Work Plan 2026/2027</p> <p>The Committee NOTED the forward work plan which is flexible as priority matters evolve throughout the year.</p> <p>Mr Riddell and Ms Turley agreed to schedule time with Mr Dennison in advance of meetings to agree papers being submitted.</p> <p>The Committee suggested adding space in the plan to receive an update on progress of the HR activities aligned with the new Corporate Plan and it was agreed 'HR input into new Corporate Plan' would be added to the forward workplan for November.</p>	<p>Ms Turley/Mr Riddell</p> <p>Ms Lemon/Ms Turley/Mr Riddell/Ms Beggs</p>
15.	<u>Any Other Business</u>	
16.	<u>Next meeting:</u> <u>23 April 2026</u>	

Signed:

Date: 23-4-26