



STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 19th September 2019, 2pm in the Lecture Theatre, Education Centre, Borders General Hospital, Melrose.

Present: Cllr D Parker, Chair
Mr J McLaren, non-Executive Director
Mr T Taylor, non-Executive Director

In attendance: Mr J Cowie, Director of Workforce
Mr R Roberts, Chief Executive
Mr B Salmond, Associate Director of Workforce
Mrs E Cameron, HR Manager/Business Partner
Mrs C Smith, HR Manager/Business Partner
Mrs V Hubner, Head of Work and Well Being
Mrs S Aspin, Partnership Lead (Ex-Officio Member)
Mrs G Russell, Partnership Project Lead (Ex-Officio Member)
Mrs H Hunter, HR Officer (Minutes)

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

Cllr Parker welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.

Apologies were noted from Mrs K Hamilton, Mrs A Wilson, Mrs Y Smith

2. Minutes of previous meeting held on 23 May 2019

Agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. Workforce Metrics

a) Dashboard data

The Committee considered a proposed new dataset of workforce metrics presented in dashboard format, with data on sickness absence rates and reasons, turnover, bank & agency usage, WTE trends, iMatter, statutory & mandatory training and Turas.

In the course of discussion, concern was expressed at the low levels of staff appraisals and PDPs showing on Turas as 'completed'. Members asked that steps be taken to encourage sign off by staff and management and signalled that the Committee would wish to see an improving trend in this indicator.

It was agreed that statistics on employee relations case work, fixed term contracts and selected health, safety and wellbeing data would be incorporated in future reports

The Committee welcomed the introduction of the dashboard report as a regular item on the agenda, noting that it would be subject to ongoing refinement and agreed that it would be a useful tool to inform assessments by the Committee on the extent

to which the Board was meeting its obligations under the Staff Governance Standard.

b) Paper from National Corporate Governance Steering Group.

It was noted that a working group had been established under the auspices of the National Corporate Governance Steering Group to develop guidance on workforce reporting.

The Committee was pleased to note that the dashboard as developed within NHS Borders was consistent with the overall approach to workforce reporting recommended by the working group in its initial paper.

4. Turnaround

Overview/Assessment of Partnership Engagement and Communications

Mr Roberts reported that progress towards achieving turnaround targets was being made but that the rate of progress would require to increase by December when the Board was due to report to the Scottish Government on sign off of the Financial Plan. Efforts were being made to step up levels of engagement through the APF, staff meetings, departmental meetings, and sessions with senior clinicians and middle management.

a) Vacancy Control

The arrangements that had now been put in place for vacancy control were explained. It was noted that these were not yet producing the targeted level of savings in that approximately 30% of projected vacancies, or two per month, would require to be removed from budgets and mandated as savings. It was confirmed that BET was actively considering options for more rigorous scrutiny by Clinical Boards and Grip and Control. It was not expected that the process itself would require to be revisited.

The Committee was assured that necessary safeguards to ensure safe staffing levels were in place. In particular, the nurse staffing tools which would have statutory force under the Health and Care Staffing Act.

There was a discussion about whether or not staff in general were coming under pressure from increased workloads resulting from vacancy control. It was agreed that this was a very important issue which should be raised at the Board if necessary, although it was noted that the dashboard data did not show yet show an overall reduction in staff numbers.

The Committee agreed that the consequences for Staff Governance of the turnaround programme should be closely monitored and reports brought to future meetings.

5. Whistleblowing Champions

Mr Cowie reported on legislation and other measures being taken nationally to strengthen whistleblowing. It was noted that further detail had yet to emerge, particularly on the role of the Ombudsman and dedicated non-executive champions.

The Committee asked to be kept informed of the implications of these changes for the Board locally.

6. Staff Engagement Plan

Mrs Cameron advised that an Annual Plan was required to help inform the Staff Governance return to the Scottish Government and to ensure compliance with the Standard and this has been brought today for discussion and approval.

Mrs Cameron said it was a considerably shorter plan this year. There was one action and the hope was to engage staff with issues that matter e.g. iMatter, Dignity at Work Survey and to ensure staff are aware NHS Borders is a good employer. She added that other Boards were preparing staff stories which are very powerful.

Mr Taylor said that we need to look at metrics to ensure they are fit for purpose for example there were no explicit numbers for items 5 and 6. Regarding mitigating strategies around risks, Mr Taylor said that, to mitigate against the lack of engagement, we need to know where it is happening and how. He queried whether it is best to have one very in-depth conversation or 12 minor conversations. It was felt the terminology to be used should be "individual". Mr Taylor said that it was difficult to judge performance against a benchmark if there was no specific target.

The Chair said that comments from members should inform the continuing development of the Plan

The Committee welcomed the approach being taken this year to the development of a Staff Governance Action Plan, namely to focus on the single criterion of staff engagement..

7. OHS Report

Mrs Hubner advised that this report was in a different format this year and would change again as they adopt a dashboard and include other services. OHS are trying to get away from only reporting on staff coming to them when they are sick and are looking at putting responsibility onto employees to "opt in" to the service rather continually not attending appointments. Mrs Hubner continued that they may need to see if there is a training issue around needle stick incidents and will start to question staff more as this should not be happening. Mrs Cameron suggested a staff story by asking Laundry staff about items they find in uniforms. Mr Taylor said he would be happy to write as a Non Executive to staff we have been made aware of as this shouldn't have happened. Mrs Aspin added these incidents could be conduct issues.

Mr Taylor stated he liked the format of the Report but would want to see targets against which to assess the performance levels that were being reported. He also requested that the detail on adverse events be broken down further. Mrs Hubner agreed to address that.

The Committee noted the report.

8. Workforce Planning

Mrs Smith advised the Committee that her report covered the Local Workforce Plan as well as the National Plan and that all Boards are required to develop a Health & Social Care Integrated Plan by 2020. Challenges were expected but the national framework would support local and integrated Plans going forward. She referred to some issues with partner agencies engaging in the process including SBC where there had been a loss of

experience and seniority in the staff involved and the voluntary sector which did not always hold the data in the form required.

The Committee noted the update on the various workforce planning activities and the emerging guidance from Scottish Government. Members were concerned to note difficulties with the availability of data from the independent and voluntary sectors and the Chief Executive agreed to raise the issue at EMT and IJB meetings.

9. Workforce Systems

b) Jobtrain

Mrs Cameron outlined the functionality of the Jobtrain recruitment system. She advised that Health Board Chief Executives had signed up to this shared service to ensure consistent processes and that Claire Smith was now the Lead for Jobtrain in the East Region. She said that the system allowed for collaborative working and would be going live within the Board in November. There was an implementation plan in place for managers that would allow the development of a regional recruitment process.

a) eESS

Mrs Smith advised that whilst the HR and Training departments had been using eESS we had missed the target date of August 2019 for using all functionality as the Payroll interface was not in place. This was due to capacity issues within Finance. NHS Borders was one of two territorial boards that had not met this target.

Cllr Parker asked if there was a new target date for this to be completed. Mrs Smith replied, no, we have to fit in with Finance but added that we need to work on this soon to get the support from the other Boards, if we leave it we will lose that support. As it takes 3 months from start to finish Mrs Smith stated she hopes this is done before the end of the financial year. Mr Cowie commented this is on the BET Agenda.

b) Turas

Mrs Smith explained the functionality of the three platforms within Turas: Turas Learn; Turas Professional Portfolio; and Turas Appraisal

The Committee requested that a report on developments with these Workforce Systems should remain on the agenda.

10. Once for Scotland Policies

Mr Cowie advised this paper was for information and update. He advised six Policies went to SWAG to be adopted but were not approved, staff side requested sight of supporting documents. Mr Cowie added despite a lot of effort there is still not one Policy approved and advised our PACE Working Group is organising our workload to compliment what Once for Scotland is doing.

The Committee noted accept the update.

11. Remuneration Committee Report

Mr Cowie confirmed that the Staff Governance Committee, as the parent committee of the Remuneration Committee, was required to formally receive an annual report from the Remuneration Committee. It is highly anonymised, and relates to due process and activity undertaken by the Remuneration Committee rather than to substantive matters of business

Mr Taylor referred to section 1.7 which states minutes should be made available to the Non Executive Directors and he said he only receives them heavily redacted but that is not explained in the Terms of Reference.

Mr Cowie agreed to clarify the redacted Minutes with the Board Secretary as well as whether the Minutes should be circulated to all Non Executive Directors or only the Non Executive Directors of the Remuneration Committee.

The Committee received the report.

12. AOCB

Mr Cowie advised that The Board had submitted a report to the Scottish Government regarding our readiness for withdrawal from the EU. This had also been sent to Board members for discussion at their meeting in November where a full paper will be presented.

This was noted by the Committee.

Date of next meeting:

Thursday 19th December 2019, 10am – 12noon, BGH Committee Room.

Cllr Parker thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.