

Borders NHS Board



Meeting Date: 1 April 2021

Approved by:	Iris Bishop, Board Secretary
Author:	Iris Bishop, Board Secretary
STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES 14.12.2020	
Purpose of Report:	
The purpose of this report is to share the approved minutes of the Staff Governance Committee with the Board.	
Recommendations:	
The Board is asked to note the minutes.	
Approval Pathways:	
This report has been prepared specifically for the Board.	
Executive Summary:	
The minutes are presented to the Board as per the Staff Governance Committee Terms of Reference and also in regard to Freedom of Information requirements compliance.	
Impact of item/issues on:	
Strategic Context	As per the Staff Governance Committee Terms of Reference. As per Freedom of Information requirements compliance.
Patient Safety/Clinical Impact	As may be identified within the minutes.
Staffing/Workforce	As may be identified within the minutes.
Finance/Resources	As may be identified within the minutes.
Risk Implications	As may be identified within the minutes.
Equality and Diversity	Compliant.
Consultation	Not Applicable.
Glossary	-



STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 14th December 2020, 10am on Microsoft Teams

Present: Councillor D Parker, Chair
Mr J McLaren, Non-Executive Director
Ms S Lam, Non-Executive Director
Mr T Taylor, Non-Executive Director
Mrs A Wilson, Non-Executive Director

In attendance: Mr A Carter, Director of Workforce
Mr R Roberts, Chief Executive
Mrs C Smith, HR Manager/Business Partner
Mrs E Cameron, HR Manager/OD Partner
Mrs V Hubner, Head of Work and Wellbeing
Mr B Salmond, Associate Director of Workforce
Mrs K Smith, Head of Professional and Clinical Development
Ms K Lawrie, Partnership Chair (Ex-Officio Member)
Ms G Russell, Partnership Deputy

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

Councillor Parker welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were noted from Mrs K Hamilton

2. Minutes of previous meeting held on 30th October 2020

Matters Arising

Updated Terms of Reference of the Staff Governance committee previously circulated agreed

Agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. Workforce Metrics

Mrs Smith delivered a presentation on the Workforce Dashboard and highlighted particular highs and lows within the data. Data collection for areas relating to Diversity i.e. Age Profile/ Gender/Sexuality reported that 28% of those asked chose not to give information. In relation to Ethnic Origin 23% chose not to say.

Mrs Smith reported that TURAS appraisal completion was very low. She also reported that the information within the presentation relating to Sickness Absence (including COVID absence) was based on the figures recorded in November, 2020.

Ms Lam thanked Mrs Smith for her succinct summary which reflected the discussion at the previous Committee. Ms Lawrie asked for the Gender Pay Gap to be reported at a future committee.

The Committee were happy to accept the Workforce Metrics.

4. EU EXIT – Workforce Implications

Mr Salmond spoke to his previously circulated paper. He explained that this formed part of Resilience Business Continuity and that the EU Exit was not being considered in isolation but as part of a suite of issues including COVID/Winter Planning and the Flu Vaccination programmes. However this has resulted in resources being overstretched.

There was uncertainty and it was difficult to plan for in isolation. He suggested that success was reliant on the national planning and contingencies which had been put in place. The report concluded that if a deal could be reached prior to exit from the EU subject matter experts suggested that there would be less issues.

Mr Salmond second paper laid out the worst case scenario and NHS Borders response. In relation to Workforce Issues staff data was up to date. A micro site was available to keep EU nationals informed and encouraged them to look at settled status.

He further reported that we had been working closely with Scottish Borders Council and that thought that approximately two thirds of the EU nationals within the area had requested Settled Status. The Citizen Advice Service had been very helpful.

Preparation was being made for a points based system to be applied to recruitment. Criteria Type 2 would be met by all registrations (NMC/GMC/HCHC) as all the roles these applied to had been identified as shortage occupations.

Mr Salmond concluded that the workforce elopements relating to EU Exit was a low risk as we were not overly reliant on EU Citizens and had been successful in encouraging those we did employ to apply for Settled Status.

Mr Taylor asked if perhaps we should consider increasing the workforce risk to amber as that was the risk associated with food and medical supply. He suggested that the workforce risk should not just consider head count but the impact on staff mental health and wellbeing.

Mr Salmond acknowledged and agreed with this assessment but stressed that the general feeling was that they could manage any impact at the moment.

Mr Carter reported that National Planning Meetings were recognising the impact on society at large and was recommending that Boards prepared for the shock that may occur. A discussion on the impact on lower socioeconomic groups took place. Mr Salmond provided assurance that Public Health has been involved and that the Health Inequalities Lead locally was looking at potential impact. Mrs Cameron gave assurance that the Board always paid a minimum of the Living Wage.

The Committee were happy to accept this update.

5. Whistle blowing

Mr Carter updated on the Whistle blowing Standards. A local Short Life working Group, chaired by Mrs Lam had met. They had an Action Tracker and recoded the methodology/ Equality Impact Assessment and Governance relating to local implementation. They had been waiting for the Once for Scotland Policy and Learning Material but these had not been delivered.

Communication in January and February regarding the National Whistle blowing Help line has been agreed. Mrs Lam suggested that we needed to ensure that this agenda was seen as "Business as Usual" and all staff should feel free to speak up. There needed to be a cultural shift.

The Committee agreed this item.

6. COVID-19 Staff Testing & Vaccination

Mrs Hubner provided a verbal update. To date 240 staff had been vaccinated. The major work was to build vaccination capacity but this is a fast moving agenda so it is difficult to plan for. That day sign off had been received to commence vaccination in Care homes. However things have been going well even though daily planning was required.

Mr Taylor observed that the Non-Executives were aware of the amount of work this would require and were not taking it lightly. Ms Lawrie asked what band the vaccinators would be paid at and what planning was in place for adverse events. Mrs Hubner assured that it was only current registered practitioners who were being used.

Mr McLaren acknowledge the difficult situation and commented on his frustration about insufficient vaccinations being available.

Mr Carter reported that lateral flow testing was starting. Mr Roberts confirmed that there was an expansion for the testing plans and that we were continuing to roll this out.

The Committee was happy to accept this update.

7. Health and Social Care COVID Bonus

Mr Carter advised that this would be a one off payment of £500 pro rata payment to all Health and Social Care Staff. It is anticipated that payment would not be made until the January 2021 pay but with the caveat that it might be delayed until February 2021.

Mr McLaren asked if the Scottish Terms and Condition (STAC) group was going to provide a series of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)? He also raised the risk of fraud as staff had already raised issues. Mr Carter assured him the STAC and that he was not aware of any FAQ's being prepared nationally

The Committee accepted this update as it stands at the moment.

8. Race Equality Employment and Skills: Making Progress

Mr Carter updated the Committee on the paper which he had already shared with the board Executive Team. They had discussed the paper and are currently looking at the Action Plan relating to the 20/21 report on ethnicity. Three action points have to be addressed prior to the committee meeting again in 12 months.

Action: Action Plan to come to the next Staff Governance Committee for consideration

The action plan addresses occupational segregation, Earnings linked to Ethnicity and Pay Audit.

Mr Taylor thanks Mr Carter for the report. He expressed his strong views on race and equality sighting his own experience as an employer and in business. He suggested that we needed to employ positive action to acknowledge that non-white people have a hard approach in life and employment. He went on to suggest that we needed to examine “our whiteness” and influence the culture and approach we use to produce evidence within the 12 month period.

Mr Carter thanked his response and comments. He reported that we had an Equality and Diversity group who would be looking into this paper. He also stated that he was interested in positive action and mentioned his communication with the RCN BAME network regarding our Director of Nursing post.

Mr McLaren thanked them both for their responses and stated his support.

Mr Taylor suggested that diversity and inclusion is a corporate structure and that the only people who can fix racism is white people

The Committee were happy to agree this paper.

9. Any Other Competent Business

Mr Roberts raised his concern regarding the pressure on staff at this time. He asked if there were things that we could pause over the winter months. He said he had not come with a list but would discuss it at the next meeting. Mr Taylor asked him to elaborate.

Mr Roberts felt that we were reaching a “perfect storm” with many competing demands and pressures for example COVID/ Test and Protect/Vaccinations/Winter/Brexit etc. He reported his concern about increasing sickness absence and the feedback from the recent pulse survey which suggested that staff felt stressed and challenged.

Mr Parker remarked that 9 months with COVID had resulted in the same challenge for Scottish Borders Council.

ACTION for further discussion at the next meeting

The Chair closed the meeting by thanking those for attending.

Date of next meeting:

Monday, 14th December 2020, 10am – 12 noon, Microsoft Teams