

Borders NHS Board



Meeting Date: 24 June 2021

Approved by:	Iris Bishop, Board Secretary
Author:	Iris Bishop, Board Secretary
STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES 15.03.2021	
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	Not Applicable.
Consultation	Not Applicable.
Glossary	-



STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 15th March 2021, 2pm via Microsoft Teams

Present: Councillor D Parker, Non-Executive Director, 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 E Cameron, HR Manager/OD Partner
Mrs V Hubner, Head of Work and Wellbeing
Mr B Salmond, Associate Director of Workforce
Ms V MacPherson, Partnership Lead Staff-side, Unite
Mrs Y Smith, Partnership Lead Staff-side, RCN
Mrs J Boyle, HR Manager
Mrs M Phillips, Minutes

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

Councillor Parker welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were noted from Mrs K Hamilton and Mrs K Lawrie.

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

Matters Arising

The minutes were agreed with an amendment to item 8 to be made

Agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. Workforce Metrics

Mr Salmond delivered a presentation on the Workforce Dashboard. Total absence (including staff shielding, self isolating and those testing positive) peaked at 11.29% in February 2021, the highest level over the last 12 months. Staff exhaustion after the second wave of Covid is thought to be a contributory factor. A third of all absences are linked to mental health.

During the pandemic, a number of new services were created so overall workforce size increased. Additional staff were recruited through the NES portal, retirees returning and nursing students, many of whom have stayed with NHSB. Fixed term contracts of 6 months were issued for the vaccination and transport hub.

Mr Salmond reported a range of data including that 82% of the workforce is female and female employees are much more likely to work part-time. The data also shows that Agenda for Change Band 8A+ (senior roles) are more likely to be filled by male employees, despite their lower concentration in the workforce at large.

Mrs Wilson commented that the ratio of full-time : part-time for female staff was quite alarming and asked if this is an NHS issue. Mr Salmond replied that he was unaware how our stats compare with other sectors but there have been changes allowing staff to work more flexible hours.

Ms Lam asked about the integrated workforce plan which is required to be in place by the end of March 2022 and are we aiming for a long term strategy and how do we maximise potential in NHS Borders? Mr Carter responded that he intends to create a 3-year Workforce Strategy incorporating plans for a recruitment micro-site and plans to maximise use of social media advertising to attract talent to NHS Borders. Mr Salmond added that the workforce plan is not updated annually and the timescale is 2022 to 2025.

Mr Roberts said he would like further information regarding the gender balance and can we look back further to see if we are making progress. This should be picked up through the Equality Diversity & Inclusion in Employment Group.

4. Whistle-blowing

Mr Carter advised the Committee that there has been a lot of work since the turn of the year. From 1 April 2021 there will be a new process for raising concerns about patient safety, other harm or perceived wrongdoing. This new process will help staff, students & volunteers to raise concerns as early as possible, and will support and protect people when they do so.

There are a few issues with independent contractors that are being worked on.

NHS Borders confidential contacts are currently John McLaren (Employee Director) and Andy Carter (Director of Workforce). More contacts will be appointed in due course. Sonya Lam (Non-Executive Director) is the NHS Borders Whistle-blowing Champion.

Mr Carter will circulate the updated implementation plan.

Ms Lam mentioned the challenge of implementing new whistle-blowing standards during the pandemic and stated there are themes around culture that NHS Borders needs to consider and be built in as business as usual so staff can speak up without having to go down the whistle-blowing route. Mr Taylor asked if the Board should be looking at culture across the organisation and commented that 10 cases of Whistle-blowing in the last 3 years shows there have been concerns.

Mrs Cameron commented that the next step with the Collecting your Voices project is giving people across the organisation the opportunity to be heard. Ms Lam added that there is good information coming out of this project. Ms Lam said she would like to take a paper on whistle-blowing to the Board.

Mr Roberts agreed that Board members need to be aware of this and there is ongoing work around decision making structures and culture issues too. Mr Parker thanked Mr Carter and Ms Lam for the presentation

The Committee agreed the update and asked for a paper to go to the Board.

5. Staff Well-Being Group : Update

Mr McLaren gave an update to the committee. The Staff Wellbeing Group was established through the initial Covid wave but has now been embedded into business as usual structures. There has been full commitment from the Exec Team to this and the ToR includes longer term strategies for work and well being. At the moment snack boxes are being provided to all areas and GP practices and Mr McLaren thanked the catering department for ensuring these are topped up. Water bottles have been distributed to staff, courtesy of endowments. Free tea & coffee is also available for staff and this is proving very popular. Mr McLaren commented that Here4You counselling and Wellbeing Wednesdays are now business as usual practice and have proven to be a helpful. Rest areas were made available to help provide staff with space for breaks but now with services being brought back this will need to be revisited. Free online yoga is also available to staff, courtesy of endowments, and the feedback from this has been very positive.

The Committee were happy to accept this update.

6. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion in Employment Group – Terms of Reference (ToR)

Mr Carter asked the Committee to note the terms of reference. This is the final draft and Mr Carter asked the committee if they could suggest any further improvements.

Mr McLaren endorsed the ToR and suggested that the LGBTQ+ Community and the Scotland Rainbow Badge scheme be included. This is designed to let staff and patients know who is an understanding and safe person to talk to if they have any issues. Mr McLaren mentioned a previous patient story that was shared with the Board and this should be taken into account.

Ms Lam asked what the longer-term vision is and is there alignment to the integrated workforce strategy. Mr Carter advised that the Workforce Strategy would include equality, diversity and inclusion as a component part, as well as OD, Culture, Health & Safety, Workforce Planning, Training, Resourcing etc.

Mr Roberts voiced his support for this framework and asked about the co-Chairs of the group. Mr Carter agreed that would be himself and Mr McLaren. Mr Taylor stated that he would welcome the chance to discuss this further with Mr Carter outwith the meeting.

Ms Lam commented that in some other organisations they have developed apprenticeship schemes to help give others a chance to chair meetings. Mr McLaren added that it is essential from staff-side that the Board show they are supportive/committed and having an Exec Director as a chair shows that continued commitment. Mr McLaren was open to the suggestion of giving staff the opportunity and encouragement but, in first instance, said it needs to be senior management and unions.

Action: Mr Carter to make suggested changes and circulate to the group for further comments. With that done, the Committee would be happy to accept the ToR.

7. Race Equality, Employment and Skills: Letter to Ruth Maquire, MSP

Mr Carter shared with the committee the letter which was sent to Ruth Maquire, MSP. No response has been received as yet. Mr Taylor stated that having seen the original request he has concerns that the response does not address the questions asked. Mr Carter said he valued the different points of view and offered to meet with Mr Taylor to discuss in further detail out-with the meeting. Mr Roberts added that he agreed it would be useful for that conversation to take place. He also reminded the committee that the request had come from a Parliamentary Committee and is technically not Health Service Policy at this stage and is an area ongoing work.

The Committee approved this item.

8. Pay Awards

Mr Salmond informed the committee that SG had agreed to a 1% increase for AfC staff and this is to be backdated to 1st December 2020. Staff on the higher bands, earning more than £80k will receive £800. If the final pay award is more than 1% then this will be backdated to 1st December 2020 also. Mr Salmond noted that Payroll have been working hard to implement the changes for April 2021 and have also had to work on the £500 Covid payment which was paid in February 2021.

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

9. Covid-19 Staff Vaccinations

Mrs Hubner updated the committee that there has been a good response from patient-facing health care staff taking up the vaccination. This is not mandatory but certainly recommended for the majority of staff. At time of writing, 4026 health & social care staff have had their first vaccination and 3522 health & social care have received their second vaccination. Mr Parker thanked Mrs Hubner for the update.

The Committee were happy to receive this update.

10. iMatter

Mrs Boyle updated the Committee that iMatter was paused in 2020 due to Covid. The Everyone Matters Pulse Survey ran instead. NHS Borders achieved a 52% response rate (same as iMatter in 2019).

Of the 9 directorates in total, 4 directorates achieved a level of engagement with the program of 40% or less. At an all Health Board level, all responses fell into the encouraging Strive and Celebrate category however a number of questions showed a significant decrease in satisfaction scores, such as: I am treated with dignity and respect – down 7 points, I am treated fairly and consistently – down 7 points, I feel appreciated for the work I do – down 6 points. iMatter 2021 is going live across NHS Borders and Borders HSCP on 16 August 2021. There are discussions around removing the 60% engagement threshold within directorates & teams, at which point detailed reports are produced for distribution.

It is anticipated that we will need to produce Action Plans at Board and Directorate level in addition to Team reports. Health Boards are also being asked to reduce paper questionnaires. Text message functionality will be rolled out.

The Committee noted the update.

11. Any Other Business

Mrs Cameron reminded the Committee that the annual report was due and when finalised, would be sent to Mr Parker for approval and signing.

The Chair closed the meeting by thanking people for attending.

Date of next meeting:

Monday, 14th June 2021, 2.00pm, via Microsoft Teams

DRAFT