

STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE:

MRS LILIAN MACER, CHAIR

Meeting on 29th November 2021 by Teams

Key Issues Considered

1. Corporate Risk Register

The risks on the Corporate Risk Register were highlighted, in particular those pertaining to the Staff Governance Committee. The Committee welcomed this information.

2. Equality Strategy Action Plan

The committee was provided with an update on the work that was being progressed in relation to the Equality Strategy Action Plan and it was explained how equality is embedded and linked to other Strategies. Members were supportive of the work being taken forward.

3. HR Directorate Report

It was highlighted that the HR Directorate Report had been discussed at the Planning Performance and Resources Committee (PPRC) and the Committee discussed the key questions that had been raised at PPRC:

- **Could there be link to sickness absence and staffing doing additional hours on bank? (DR)**

The Committee noted that as part of discussions with staff, in line with the management of sickness absence policy, staff's additional hours and bank shifts are reviewed.

- **Violence and aggression and threatening behaviour – disconnection in the narrative in the report? (AO)**

The Committee were advised that violence and aggression figures are captured within the Datix system and reported by managers. The figures reported are accurate recordings at time of submission. There have been anecdotal reports of increases in aggression and verbal abuse, however these have either not been reported formally or they are infrequent and have had little impact on the Datix

figures. Concerns were raised re telephony abuse to administrative staff when attempting to cancel/reschedule treatment. Following this Organisational Development within HR quickly provided a short training course aligned to de-escalating aggressive telephony behaviour for 160 staff. Another session of the course is currently in development.

The potential under-reporting of aggressive behaviour is currently being taken forward within a wider action plan and will seek to improve reporting via increased communication to managers. Unfortunately, categories with Datix only capture the resultant behaviour (eg verbal abuse) and not the cause (eg anger/frustration).

- **Why is NHSL Sickness absence level higher than other Boards? (AB)**
Lanarkshire absence rates have risen year on year recently as have most Boards employing higher numbers of staff. That said the Lanarkshire figures are rising at a slightly higher rate than these other Boards. Previous investigations tried to establish a rationale for the higher Lanarkshire figures. Lanarkshire's Short Term absence figures are consistently among the lowest in Scotland. However, our Long Term absence rates are consistently high.

Previous investigations into this compared workforce age profile and deprivation indices to try and determine if these had an impact, however no significant impact could be identified in comparison to other similar sized Board areas. There is a possibility that other Boards record absence slightly differently and also a perception that GP's may be administering slightly longer Fit notes than previous years.

- **93% of staff access counselling service are female – why is this? (NF)**
Since the service was introduced, uptake has always been proportionately greater in females than males. This is fairly consistent across many mental health providers (Breathing Space, Mind, ISMA). Although improving, males are consistently lower in seeking support for mental health issues resulting in higher suicides in males. Male stigma in seeking help remains an important influencer.

The 93% female staff uptake of counselling services should be measured against the total workforce being predominantly 80-85% female. All staff in NHSL are encouraged to utilise the support services available.

- **In-post staffing, funded establishment, skill mix and vacancies.**
The Committee had a lengthy discussion about workforce metrics and the merits of reporting against funded establishment and whether the funded establishment reflects the current service demand. It was noted that the Health

and Care Staffing common staffing methodology will provide the long term approach for determining safe staffing levels and in the short term, the Head of HR - Workforce would engage with staff side colleagues to review the current metrics used to report the staffing position. and consider including valid data from workforce tools.

The committee noted there has been a 12% increase in staff and this is partially accounted for by the introduction of two key services; covid vaccine and test and protect.

The committee also considered how attractive Lanarkshire is as a place to work and noted the work with recruitment and communications team to promote NHS Lanarkshire as an employer. Practice Development are also reviewing the educational opportunities offered by other Boards.

4. i-Matter Update

A brief overview was given in relation to i-Matter which included the survey result of 56% which was comparable with the National Average. A detailed report would be provided by December/January.

5. Whistleblowing Report

The National Whistleblowing Standards and Once for Scotland Whistleblowing Policy were introduced on 1st April 2021 and a report highlighting was submitted to the Staff Governance Committee providing information from Quarter 2 – July – September 2021. It was noted that there were no concerns received during this Quarter. The Committee were asked to note the implementation update, the content of this performance report and seek assurance that whistleblowing standards are being followed and learning shared.

6. Employability Report

The committee noted in 2020 most employability programmes were paused in NHSL. The work is now currently being re-introduced in the areas of Project Search, Care Academy, Return to Practice, Modern Apprenticeship and Technical Apprenticeships.

7. Workforce Dashboard and Job Train

The Committee received two presentations on the Workforce Dashboard and Job Train from Jonathan Pender and from Michelle Gormley/Victoria Clark respectively.

Any Decisions / Approvals taken to highlight

Staff side representatives to work with the Head of HR – Workforce to review the metrics included in the Workforce Report.

Any risks identified that need to be highlighted

Nil