Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB)
Confirmed Minutes of the People & Culture Committee
held in Public on 9 April 2026
in the Boardroom, Carlton Court, St Asaph and via Teams

Committee Members Present	
Name	**Title**
Dyfed Jones	Independent Member (Chair of Committee)
Clare Budden	Independent Member
In Attendance	
Jason Brannan	Deputy Director of People
Clara Day	Executive Medical Director (part meeting)
Debbie Eyitayo	Executive Director of People and Organisational Development
Ffion Johnstone	Programme Director, Foundations for the Future (part meeting: via Teams)
Teresa Owen	Executive Director of Allied Health Professionals and Health Science
Katie Sargent	Head of Employee Engagement and Experience (part meeting)
Pam Wenger	Director of Corporate Governance
Committee Support	
Laura Jones	Corporate Governance Manager
Philippa Peake-Jones	Head of Corporate Governance

OPENING BUSINESS

PC26.28 Welcome and Apologies

Apologies were noted for Billy Nichols, Paul Lambert, Dave Harries and Georgina Roberts.

PC26.29 Declarations of Interest

The Chair of the Committee declared an interest in item PC26.37 BCUHB Becoming a Foster Partner due to his membership on the Joint Committee for Foster Wales.

PC26.30 Unconfirmed Minutes of Meeting held on 12 February 2026

It was resolved that the Committee:
- **AGREED** that the minutes of the People and Culture Committee meeting held on 12 February 2026 were a true and accurate record.

PC26.31 Matters Arising & Action Log

The Committee reviewed the action log and agreed to close the actions that were proposed for closure noting the timescales for those actions which remained open.

STAFF STORY

PC26.32 Staff Story

The Committee received the staff story and Head of Employee Engagement and Experience highlighted:

- The story related to the support provided for staff across the Health Board to raise concerns and discuss issues in confidence with the Speaking Up Safely Guardians. The story also referred to the process for triage, signposting and seeking resolution.
- The results from the NHS Wales Staff Survey 2025 highlighted that staff do not feel confident speaking up noting that the organisation was reported as the lowest scoring Health Board in Wales in this area with a score of 63.9% against a Wales average of 65.6%.
- The story was anonymised due to concerns regarding identification as the narrative describes the experience of a member of staff who tried to suggest areas for improvement via their line management, the suggestions were not positively received and subsequently the individual contacted the Speaking Up Safely Service. It was noted that the experience had impacted the wellbeing of the staff member and contributed to time off work.
- Current engagement with the Speaking Up Safely platform was highlighted at around 2.5% of staff engagement and it was noted that colleagues may only register when they require the service rather than proactively using the system on a regular basis.
- Promotional activity is taking place to ensure staff are aware of the service and share the broader messages around staff feeling able to speak up if required.
- An Internal Audit Report focussed on Speaking Up Safely has recently been completed which provided limited assurance and noted that the outcome of the report will provide opportunities to strengthen compliance with Welsh Government expectations and embed arrangements more effectively.
- A significant proportion of themes raised in this area relate to management and leadership behaviours and therefore link directly to the wider culture and leadership work taking place. Plans are being developed to work closely with Wrexham University to strengthen leadership and management programmes.

In discussing the staff story, the Committee:

- Recognised that Speaking Up Safely should not be treated as a standalone initiative and needs to be embedded across all Health Board culture and leadership programmes noting the detrimental impact this can have on staff wellbeing.
- Discussed how to raise the profile of Speaking Up Safely at ground level, including the value of strong visible leadership behaviours and fostering conditions for teams to operate effectively. The work also needs to the align with the activity of the Culture Change Leaders to ensure staff feel confident to raise issues in line with the Health Board values.
- Acknowledged that only 36% of staff completing the Staff Survey felt that the organisation would address their concerns and queried how the Committee could start to share anonymised examples of positive outcomes to build confidence and trust, for example highlighting issues that have been raised and emphasising how the organisation has acted in response.

- Suggested further work is required around training managers to have proactive discussions with staff and respond appropriately as well as providing staff touch points and a staff forum where people can raise concerns on behalf of other staff members. Staff also need to have the opportunity to speak with another manager if concerns relate to their direct line managers.
- Queried accessibility and inclusivity, including whether Welsh speaking support was available. It was confirmed that the team do have Welsh speakers and try to allocate staff to the most appropriate member of the team noting the need for a diverse team to enable open conversations.
- Noted that Trade Union representatives can provide intelligence to help target improvements in specific areas.
- Highlighted that staff may have concerns if the service sits within Human Resources as it may not be seen as independent and agreed this should be reviewed going forward.
- Referred to the relationship with Whistleblowing arrangements noting the need for clarity around reporting routes for those cases that report under the Whistleblowing Act and those that report through Speaking Up Safely.

It was resolved that the Committee:

- **NOTED** the themes raised.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

PC26.33 Staff Survey 2025

The Committee received the report and the Head of Employee Engagement and Experience and Executive Director of People and Organisational Development highlighted:

- The Staff Survey has been completed by 5,203 staff which equates to 24.9% of the organisation, representing a 45% increase from 2024.
- Additional data is yet to be received and there had also been delays in receiving the Welsh language comments however the team are currently working through the free-text comments received noting that the detailed thematic findings will follow once fully reviewed.
- Early positive themes include staff feeling supported by colleagues and line managers and are motivated to do the best for patients and their teams. Staff have pride in working for the Health Service and are happy to come into work and do more than is required.
- Early negative themes include inconsistency around access to flexible working, poor work / life balance and issues relating to wellbeing, stress, workload and staffing levels. Colleagues also feel that financial constraints are having an impact on patient care and there is a perceived disconnect between senior leadership and staff on the ground.
- Work is taking place to understand why staff did not participate in the Staff Survey, with key themes indicating that a lack of action in response to staff feedback may be a major factor. Going forward there is a need to share some tangible results with local managers to encourage future engagement.
- Local results have been shared with individual People and Culture forums and meetings to allow results to be shared and local discussions to take place.

- This information will form part of the Director of People and Organisational Development Report being submitted to the Board in May 2026 and wider communication across the organisation will follow.

In discussing the report, the Committee:

- Questioned how the organisation can increase staff confidence that completing the survey leads to action emphasising the need for a clear “you said, we did” narrative to ensure staff are aware of the improvements being implemented as a result of the feedback provided and ahead of completing the 2026 Staff Survey.
- Suggested targets should be set against internal baselines rather than Welsh averages and shared positive feedback on the data highlighting incremental changes.
- Queried what the objective is going forward, it was confirmed that the Culture, Leadership and Engagement Plan will address some areas and objectives relating to the data and further information will inform the detail being reported to the Board in May 2026.
- Discussed the need to build trust in staff to complete the survey in future, promote the resources available as well as the ability to complete the survey in Welsh and follow up the delays in receiving Welsh responses. There is also a need to focus on key actions around triangulating survey findings with other intelligence and targeting support to areas where required.
- Queried whether technology could be used more effectively to support analysis and accessibility of local data. It was confirmed that support and training for use of the Insights app is being provided to enable managers to review local information and the data analysis team are able to provide support where required.
- Noted that corporate and local action plans have been developed in certain areas following the last Staff Survey and may have achieved some areas of improvement therefore suggested this progress is highlighted to staff.
- Referred to the pace and expectations of culture change noting the organisational change activity that is underway and the improvements being made in gaining an understanding of the data on an annual basis within the broader context.

It was resolved that the Committee:

- **NOTED** and **DISCUSSED** the quantitative results of the NHS Wales Staff Survey 2025.
- **SUPPORTED** the planned next steps.

PC26.34 People Operations Report

The Committee received the report and the Executive Director of People and Organisational Development highlighted:

- Sickness absence is a currently priority area in line with the ongoing deep dive work which has a focus on attendance and utilising flexibility within the All Wales Policy to support staff to remain in work.
- There is also a continued focus on staff health and wellbeing, including consideration of how occupational health and wellbeing resources can be redistributed to strengthen both psychological and mental health support.

- The Integrated Leadership Development Framework has now been included in the report reflecting previous Committee feedback.

It was resolved that the Committee:
- **NOTED** the current position provided.

PC26.35 Three Year Culture, Leadership and Engagement Improvement Plan

The Committee received the report and the Deputy Director of People and Executive Director of People and Organisational Development highlighted:
- The team are building levels of accountability and ownership for this work and the Three Year Action Plan had been reviewed to ensure strategic alignment to the Integrated Medium Term Plan.
- Work is taking place with Executive Directors to ensure their programmes of work and actions relevant to culture, leadership and engagement are clear, specific, owned and measurable. These operational actions will sit behind the high level plan held by the People and Organisational Development Team. It is expected that progress against these actions is collated and overseen through corporate processes aligned to the Integrated Medium Term Plan reporting. Progress against reports will be presented to People and Culture Committee for assurance, clearly identifying any potential risks against delivery.
- A Culture Change Leaders event is due to take place in April 2026 with Executive Director and Independent Member involvement, supported by Michael West which will be an important event in the Culture Change Community.

In discussing the report, the Committee:
- Emphasised the importance of Executive Directors and Leaders shaping and demonstrating commitment to the organisational culture to ensure the plan translates into practical actions that leaders understand and deliver on a daily basis.
- Noted that when the progress report is received by the Committee in June 2026, there will be a need to agree the frequency of reporting to allow progress to be monitored against the high level plan to provide assurance to the Committee.
- Agreed that the plan will provide assurance that the Executive Directors are committed to the plan and embodying the culture of the organisation.

Action:
- **PC26.35.1** Bring a People and Culture progress update back to the June 2026 meeting for assurance.

It was resolved that the Committee:
- **NOTED** the progress made since the last meeting, including the executive review and OD-facilitated work.
- **ENDORSED** the proposed timeline for final approval and submission.
- **SUPPORTED** continued investment in the Culture Change Leaders network.
- will **RECEIVE** the revised People and Culture Plan at the June 2026 meeting for assurance.

PC26.36 Foundations for the Future Programme

The Committee received the report and the Programme Director, Foundations for the Future highlighted:

- The programme is based around the five pillars that have been developed and is not solely focused on the structures element noting that the discovery phase of the programme has now been completed.
- In relation to the Strategy workstream, the Board have now approved the Integrated Workforce Planning Framework along with the Strategic Intentions and work continues on the Clinical Services Plan.
- In relation to the People workstream, an Integrated Leadership Development Framework has been established, resources are available on BetsiNet and the competency and skills framework is being streamlined.
- In relation to the Culture workstream, progress continues around culture and values, the Culture Change Leaders work in developing and the revised PADR training and succession planning elements are being piloted.
- In relation to the Structures workstream, early socialisation and engagement has taken place and some of the methodology has been refined based on the feedback received. Formal consultation is expected towards the end of April 2026 and the team continue to work through the Operating Model, Operating Framework and Operational Governance.
- The key risks of the programme include communication and engagement challenges, ensuring staff wellbeing support is in place for staff as required and robust programme governance and decision-making are appropriate.

In discussing the report, the Committee:

- Noted that this is a fundamental cornerstone for the organisation and queried whether sufficient resource is in place to maintain pace and deliver the expected timelines questioning whether there are any barriers that can be addressed to achieve this. It was confirmed that this area of work is being prioritised to ensure the fundamental elements of the team are in place. The importance of the programme was highlighted noting that partner organisations such as Wrexham University are being contacted to explore what support can be provided to ensure the timelines are met.
- Referred to the capacity constraints affecting programme teams and Executive Directors noting the need for clarity in terms of requirements and where additional resource may be required.
- Highlighted a risk in relation to pressure on the Organisational Development team who may be supporting organisational change whilst also being individually affected by the changes taking place.
- Agreed that the issues raised and discussed are escalated to the Chief Executive including pace, timelines, resource and expertise concerns suggesting a paper comes back to the next meeting of the Committee focussed on resources, delivery confidence and next steps.

Action:

- **PC26.36.1** Escalate the issues raised around pace, timelines and resource with the Chief Executive and suggest a paper in presented to the next meeting in June 26 focussed on resources, delivery confidence and next steps.

It was resolved that the Committee:

- **NOTED** overall February–March 2026 progress and delivery across all workstreams.
- **NOTED** structures dependencies and rationale for re-phasing into 2026/27.
- **SUPPORTED** the revised structures timeline and associated communication and engagement approach.

PC26.37 BCUHB Becoming a Foster Partner

The Committee received the report and the Executive Director of People and Organisational Development highlighted:

- The Committee are requested to endorse the proposal for the Health Board to become a Foster Wales Partner (Level 2) and support the intention to seek Health Board approval in May 2026.
- The proposal suggests that the Health Board make a formal commitment to the Foster Wales friendly employer accreditation.
- As the Health Board is a major employer and anchor institution, the organisation are well placed to support staff who are foster carers as well as fostering capacity across North Wales.
- A wide range of organisational policies already align to this approach and allow work to continue to develop as a foster friendly employer.

In discussing the report, the Committee:

- Endorsed the proposal and the need to provide support for staff who are foster carers noting that as the biggest employer in the region, this commitment was welcomed.
- Queried what is required to reach the Foster Friendly Employer status in addition to the Foster Wales Partner and could this be approved at the same time. It was suggested that the Foster Wales Partner proposal is approved initially before the organisation go forward with the Foster Friendly Employer requirements.
- Suggested that the staff story for the next Board meeting in May 2026 could focus on foster carers and supporting local vulnerable children to bring the proposal to life.

It was resolved that the Committee:

- **ENDORSED** the proposal for Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board to become a Maethu Cymru / Foster Wales Partner (Level 2) and support the intention to seek formal Board approval for this commitment at the May 2026 Board meeting, aligning with Foster Care Fortnight.
- **NOTED** that becoming a Maethu Cymru / Foster Wales Partner reflects the Health Board's role as an Anchor Institution, supporting the wellbeing of children and young people and contributing to regional fostering capacity across North Wales.
- **NOTED** that BCUHB already has a strong foundation through its adoption of All-Wales People Services policies, which provide flexibility and support for employees with caring responsibilities, including foster carers.

- **SUPPORTED** further work in 2026/27, led by People and Organisational Development, to explore the requirements and implications of achieving Foster Friendly Employer (Level 1) status, including review of relevant policies, supporting guidance, and organisational practice.
- **AGREED** that a further update and any associated recommendations relating to Foster Friendly Employer (Level 1) status are brought back to the People and Culture Committee for consideration and agreement in due course.

GOVERNANCE, RISK AND ASSURANCE

PC26.38 Consultant Job Planning

The Committee received the report and the Executive Medical Director highlighted

- This has been discussed by the Executive Committee where it was emphasised that consultant job planning is a key mechanism to ensure effective use of senior medical workforce capacity and therefore requires effective utilisation and clear expectations.
- A job planning protocol has been agreed with representative bodies including the Joint Local Negotiating Committee and the British Medical Association noting that collaboration to reach an agreed position has been a positive step forward.
- A key issue within the job planning guidelines relates to part sessional activity above 10 sessions. For example, if 10.7 sessions are completed, pay is only received for 10 sessions. Local approaches vary with some Health Boards paying for 0.25 and 0.5 sessions.
- A draft National policy is currently being developed which is expected to include 0.25 increments and the Joint Local Negotiating Committee have signed an agreed job planning protocol which includes this increment.
- The Executive Committee endorsed the need for a job planning protocol agreed with the Joint Local Negotiating Committee and the British Medical Association. It was also agreed that a small group would be established to work through the financial implications and modelling options such as waiting list initiatives to support this area of work.

In discussing the report, the Committee:

- Emphasised the need to progress and deliver sustainable improvements with support from representative bodies as this is important for staff and clarity in this area is required.
- Noted that Internal Audit have previously identified this as an issue and focus is required on achieving and embedding a solution. The Director of Corporate Governance agreed to inform the Chair of Audit Committee of the discussions that have taken place at the Committee.

Action:

- **PC26.38.1** Director of Corporate Governance to inform the Chair of the Audit Committee on the discussions that have taken place around Consultant Job Planning at the Committee.

It was resolved that the Committee:

- **NOTED** the update provided.

PC26.39 Corporate Governance Report

The Committee received the report and the Director of Corporate Governance highlighted that the Board effectiveness survey has been circulated to Board members and once this has been finalised, the Committee effectiveness survey will be circulated to members and return to the Committee with the Terms of Reference and the Cycle of Business.

It was resolved that the Committee:

- **NOTED** the summary of business considered in private session to be reported in public and the forward workplan.

CLOSING BUSINESS

PC26.40 Agree Items for Referral to Board / Other Committees

It was agreed that the Staff Survey 2025 and the endorsement to become a Foster Wales Partner would be highlighted in the Chair's Assurance Report. It was also noted that going forward the reports will be published on the Health Board website within 10 days.

PC26.41 Review of Meeting Effectiveness

It was agreed that there has been progress in relation to the discussions being held by the Committee and the items being presented.

PC26.42 Date of next meeting

Thursday 11 June 2026, 9.30am

PC26.43 Resolution to Exclude the Press and Public

'Those representatives of the press and other members of the public be excluded from the remainder of this meeting having regard to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, publicity on which would be prejudicial to the public interest in accordance with Section 1(2) Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.'