

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB)
Confirmed Minutes of the People & Culture Committee
held in Public on 14 August 2025
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	
Tehmeena Ajmal	Chief Operating Officer
Sreeman Andole	Interim Executive Medical Director (<i>part meeting</i>)
Jason Brannan	Deputy Director of People
Lynne Bushell	Head of Health, Safety & Security
Clara Day	Executive Medical Director (<i>observer</i>)
Dyfed Edwards	Chair of the Health Board
Nick Graham	Associate Director of Workforce Optimisation (<i>via Teams – part meeting</i>)
Ceri Harris	Head of Equality and Human Rights (<i>via Teams - part meeting</i>)
Eleri Hughes-Jones	Head of Welsh Language Services (<i>via Teams - part meeting</i>)
Teresa Owen	Executive Director of Allied Health Professionals & Health Science
Georgia Roberts	Interim Executive Director of People Services and Organisational Development
Katie Sargent	Head of Employee Experience & Engagement (<i>part meeting</i>)
Carol Shillabeer	Chief Executive
Dione Way	HEIW Graduate Trainee Manager (<i>observer</i>)
Pam Wenger	Director of Corporate Governance
Committee Support	
Laura Jones	Acting Corporate Governance Manager
Harriet Abbott	Corporate Governance Officer

OPENING BUSINESS
<p>PC25/69 Welcome and Apologies</p> <p>Apologies were noted for Billy Nichols, Dave Harries and Stuart Keen.</p>
<p>PC25/70 Declarations of Interest</p> <p>No declarations of interest were raised.</p>
<p>PC25/71 Unconfirmed Minutes of Meeting held on 12.06.25</p> <p>It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 12.06.25 were a true and accurate record subject to the inclusion of apologies noted for Georgina Roberts.</p>

PC25/72 Matters Arising & Action Log

Members received the action log and noted progress against the actions.

People Operations Report

- In relation to action PC25/55.2 it was confirmed that the approach to Performance reporting is being reviewed in relation to the level of information being shared at both Board and Committee level. This will be addressed by action 25/139.1 from the Board held on 31 July 2025 and therefore it was agreed to close this action.

It was resolved that the Committee:

- **AGREED** to close the actions that were proposed for closure.

STAFF STORY

PC25/73 Staff Story

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

- The previous staff story focussed on the impact of Mental Health issues on staff and this staff story focuses on another element of absence in relation to carers.
- According to NHS Employers, 6,000 people become carers every day and an estimated 3.7 million people are working carers within England and Wales.
- A growing number of people are having to play a dual role in balancing their jobs and caring responsibilities with the majority being female as women are more likely to have caring responsibilities.
- Janet, a Healthcare Support Worker at Deeside Community Hospital shared her story with the Committee.
- The story will not be shared any wider than the Committee at the request of the individual.

In discussing the staff story, the Committee:

- Thanked Janet for sharing her story, confirmed the need to be aware of the areas of improvement highlighted by staff and the importance of staff stories being heard by the Committee.
- Queried how much flexibility the organisation has in developing the relevant policies suggesting there is a need to have confidence in managers to exercise good judgement when dealing with staff issues. It was confirmed that the majority of policies are All Wales policies however the majority of policies include managers discretion which allows more scope to be flexible in the approach when dealing with individuals.
- Acknowledged the need to gain an understanding of which staff members have caring responsibilities, how these staff can be supported while facing challenges and ensure managers have the confidence to support individuals in terms of what leave is available.
- Noted the importance of learning from staff experience and providing the relevant training and support for managers to ensure this aligns to the culture approach that is be taken forward. It was suggested this is discussed further by the People

Managers Forum to explore the support that can be provided for staff and how this can be managed going forward.

- Suggested the need to support staff with signposting to external support as well as internal and ensure this links to the work around leadership, values and the foundation for the future programme. It was confirmed that staff are able to access BetsiNet from their home computers and there is scope to develop easy read guides to provide a better understanding of policies. It was agreed that the Head of Employee Experience and Engagement would discuss this further with the Director of Corporate Governance outside of the meeting to ensure staff have access to the relevant information.
- Confirmed that an interactive toolkit was developed to provide financial and Mental Health support and a new induction programme is being established which is due to incorporate some areas that have been discussed. It was agreed that the interactive toolkit is circulated to the Committee for information to see what is currently available to staff.

Action:

- **PC25/73.1** The People Managers Forum to review real life scenarios and explore the support that can be provided for staff and managers in terms of training, support and learning from staff experience to align with the culture approach and discuss how this can be managed going forward.
- **PC25/73.2** Head of Employee Experience and Engagement and Director of Corporate Governance to discuss staff access to relevant information and providing guidance for policy management.
- **PC25/73.3** Deputy Director of People to circulate the current interactive toolkit that is available to provide support to staff.

It was resolved that the Committee:

- **NOTED** the themes raised in the story.
- **CONSIDERED** the points raised in the staff members reflections within the report.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

PC25/74 Sickness Deep Dive Report

The Committee received the report and the Associate Director of Workforce Optimisation highlighted:

- The report outlines the current position in relation to sickness across the organisation including the main causes and drivers and also refers to the staff survey.
- The discussion around staff returning to work when not fit to perform duties and the use of policies has been discussed as part of the review and highlights the need to work with staff in line with individual circumstances.
- Sickness is generally managed as a pan organisation area of work however due to the complexity of the Health Board there is a need to review how this could be managed more successfully. There are good initiatives being developed to support staff well-being in certain areas however further work is required to provide a co-ordinated and targeted approach for impact.

- A Healthy Workforce Group has been developed under the Value and Sustainability Workforce Programme to identify and implement interventions to support staff to stay in work as well as supporting staff who are currently off. This group will be monitored through the re-established Strategic Health and Wellbeing Group which reports to this Committee.

In discussing the item, the Committee:

- Confirmed the need for a robust action plan to gain further in-depth information into the causes of sickness, understand the hotspots and areas of concern and provide support to particular groups who may be more likely to have episodes of sickness absence.
- Stated that the Committee will need to be aware of what is included in the action plan, what the organisation are looking to achieve as a result of the deep dive and what the outcomes are from the actions.
- Highlighted that there are a wide range of factors contributing to sickness which include staff who are also patients waiting for treatment as well as seasonal absences linked to staff being vaccinated. It was suggested there may be a need to offer more flexibility across all roles to help manage attendance, identify opportunities to bring staff back into more manageable roles to help people return to work and ascertain how many absences are linked to work or personal related stress.

Action:

- **PC25/74.1** An action plan relating to the sickness deep dive to come back to the Committee to highlight what the Health Board are looking to achieve as a result of the deep dive and what outcomes will be monitored.

It was resolved that the Committee:

- **NOTED** the current position and provided feedback and observations regarding **ASSURANCE** required as a result of the reported positions contained in the report.

PC25/75 People Operations Report

Members received the report and the Associate Director of Workforce Optimisation highlighted:

- The report outlines the current workforce operational position and includes a high-level analysis of the current activity and challenges.
- There has been a slight increase in the vacancy rate, turnover remains steady and the Health Board continues to have the lowest reported sickness absence levels across Wales.

In discussing the report, the Committee:

- Referred to the increase in vacancy rates and suggested further detail is required to gain an understanding of vacancies across the organisation. It was confirmed that work is taking place to gain a global view of the organisation and will allow specific service areas to be reviewed to identify opportunities for workforce redesign and targeted solutions to address staffing issues.

- Highlighted internal promotions and suggested this data may be useful, it was confirmed that the Health Board have a high level of internal movement with approximately 70% of vacancies being filled internally.
- Queried whether flexible working requests are being reviewed and whether a higher percentage of these requests are coming from older staff members. It was suggested that there is a need to be proactive and start looking at workforce profiles in terms of the older workforce and how this will be addressed going forward.
- Proposed the need to promote the Health Board as a future employer to provide potential roles and apprenticeships for young people. It was confirmed that this is an area of work that is not being managed consistently however at the last meeting of the Education Steering Group there was a discussion around school leavers and apprenticeships and the need to provide a more coordinated approach in this space, grown our own staff, drive forward staffing solutions and provide a focus on recruitment of young people.
- further engagement is also required with schools and colleges and it was confirmed that an opportunities event is planned to take place with Further Education colleges.
- Confirmed the need for the Committee to focus more strategically in terms of driving change forward and gaining oversight and assurance around addressing some of the issues highlighted.

Action:

- **PC25/75.1** A detailed report to come back to a future meeting of the Committee in relation to the increase in vacancy rates to provide an understanding of vacancies across the organisation.

It was resolved that the Committee:

- **NOTED** the current position and provided feedback regarding **ASSURANCE** required as a result of the reported positions contained in the report.

PC25/76 Review and Refresh of the PADR Process

The Committee received the report and the Deputy Director of People highlighted:

- The report forms part of the Organisational Development plan which focuses on embedding the culture of the organisation.
- The Performance Appraisal and Development Review (PADR) process is being revised to provide both challenge and support for staff and looks to facilitate a contribution conversation for staff and managers.
- The refresh also provides a focus on well-being as well as performance and links in with the revised values and behaviours and organisational objectives of the Health Board.
- The new process has been developed with input from a design group which included a wide range of staff from different areas of the organisation. The feedback from the group incorporated the need to enable more meaningful discussions with staff to include reference to performance and culture.
- The draft documents were shared with the Committee and these include a performance grid which allows discussion around performance and values and additional guidance around succession planning to identify staff who want to stay within the Health Board.

In discussing the report, the Committee:

- Acknowledged that the documentation includes clear progression pathways for staff and queried whether this new process will improve the current PADR rate. It was confirmed that the aim is to improve the quality of discussions taking place as well as the figures.
- Queried the outcome of the new process suggesting there is a need to keep it simple and focus on how staff are contributing to the wider achievements of the organisation including their individual future plans to ensure PADR discussions are welcomed and provide valuable outcomes for staff.
- Agreed that staffing and performance issues should be addressed on a regular basis and not dealt with via this process. The reviews should provide an opportunity for open conversations and include clear objectives that can be reflected on an annual basis.
- Noted the need to ensure managers have the skills to facilitate open and honest discussions as this is a critical part of the approach and also suggested this links in to the clinical appraisal process.
- Thanked the Committee for the feedback stating that the aim of the refresh is to start to make improvements in leadership and management across the organisation by developing a process to instigate conversations that include areas such as performance and behaviours, noting this is part of a journey.

It was resolved that the Committee:

- **REVIEWED** and **ENDORSED** the plans to implement a new PADR process to include a toolkit and refreshed PADR paperwork.

PC25/77 Strategic Equality Annual Report 2024/25

The Committee received the report and the Interim Director of People Services highlighted:

- The report includes an overview of the previous year as well as areas that need to be strengthened over the current period which will then be reported in the following year to provide a look forward and look back.
- The recommendation is for the Committee to approve the report ahead of being presented to the Board in September 2025.

In discussing the report, the Committee:

- Acknowledged the lack of ethical diversity across the organisation including senior leaders and the need to address this area of work. It was confirmed that a race equality scheme action plan has been developed which refers to ethical diversity and the Health Board are currently facilitating the aspiring Board members programme however further work is required in this area.
- Referred to the race pay gap report which provides a good measure and indicator for the future and suggested that Social Economic Duty training has been received by some Board members.
- Stated that a group is being established to focus on the data linked to the Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) to review current processes.
- Confirmed that there is a need for clarity in terms of identifying the issues and aligning actions to address these issues.

It was resolved that the Committee:

- **NOTED** the content of the report.
- **RECOMMENDED APPROVAL** to the Board of the Draft Equality Report content, that will be considered for approval by the deadline of March 2026.

PC25/78 Foundations for the Future

The Committee received the report and the Chief Executive highlighted:

- A briefing session for Independent Members will be arranged going into the Autumn period.
- Foundations for the Future is one of the four major change programmes for the Health Board and the purpose is improve the effectiveness of the organisation to better serve the population of North Wales.
- The Discovery report was published in November 2024 and highlighted seven themes which have driven forward the design element. The programmes also comprises of five workstreams which include strategy, culture, people, process and structures.
- An outline design paper was presented to the Board in May 2025 and was based on a wide range of design workshops which highlighted eight key themes.
- Further detailed design is currently underway and the core features being raised consistently include the need for greater pan BCU working as well as collaboration and joint working between clinicians and managers at all levels, reducing silo working and improving standardised care, the need for greater clinical engagement within specialties to develop medium and long term service plans as well as recruitment, morale and performance.
- Additional areas that are also being addressed include the gap between senior managers and the shop floor, significant focus and clarity on decision making, the need for clear strategy and organisational direction, an increased focus on autonomy and accountability, the need for clear and communicated governance routes and consistency of planning.
- The model going forward in relation to the structures work relates to an integrated primary and community placed base approach with a regional secondary specialised services approach which include corporate functions and this work is accelerating.
- In terms of the overall programme, there will be a focus on the benefits and this will link in with the improvement team to ensure defined measurables and outcomes are identified.

In discussing the report, the Committee:

- Queried the timeframe of the programme, it was confirmed that there is a current focus on the structures timeframe to ensure this is addressed as quickly as possible. A deeper engagement report is being completed and there may be opportunities to develop different timeframes for certain areas however the aim is to ensure the organisation have the right people, in the right jobs at the right time.

It was resolved that the Committee:

- **NOTED** the verbal update provided.



GOVERNANCE AND ASSURANCE

PC25/79 Social Partnership and Public Procurement Act

Members received the report and the Interim Executive Director of People Services and Organisational Development highlighted:

- The report includes the two papers, one refers to the Social Partnership Act and the duties of the Health Board and the second paper, appendix B refers to the Strengthening Social Partnership Report.
- The Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act (SPPP) provides a framework to improve population well-being by enhancing public services through social partnership working, promoting fair work and socially responsible public procurement.
- The report includes four key principles which include social partnership, socially responsible procurement, fair work and sustainable development.
- As an organisation we are required to submit a Social Partnership Report to Welsh Government and this is the first year this has become a requirement, once submitted there will be an opportunity to reflect on the reports submitted by other Health Boards which may provide some learning going forward.
- Appendix B, the Strengthening Social Partnership Report is based on a self assessment tool provided by Welsh Government, the report has been created in partnership with Trade Union colleagues to assess the working relationship and will be submitted to Welsh Government if approved by the Committee.
- The report does not require Board approval but can be reported via the 'AAA' Report as an appendix.

Action:

- **PC25/79.1** Include the Strengthening Social Partnership Report as an appendix to the Committee 'AAA' Report.

It was resolved that the Committee:

- **APPROVED** the Strengthening Social Partnership Report for onward submission to Welsh Government.
- **NOTED** the briefing.

PC25/80 Welsh Language Annual Report

Members received the report and the Executive Director of Allied Health Professionals & Health Sciences and the Head of Welsh Language Services highlighted:

- The report is due to be presented to the Board in September 2025 and includes the key components of work that have been taking place across the Health Board and the actions going forward.
- The 'More than just words Plan 2022-27' provides the main areas of progress against the standards and appendix 2 highlights delivery against these actions.
- The Welsh Language training team have excelled this year with a 28% increase in demand for training. One learner has also been shortlisted for learner of the year and has commended the team for the support received.

In discussing the report, the Committee:

- Agreed that the report showcases the amount of work taking place in this space, highlights a willingness of staff wanting to learn Welsh and referred to the feedback received from the Eisteddfod that reflected positively on the Health Board in terms of incorporating the Welsh Language across the organisation.
- Confirmed the need to highlight the ambition and culture of Welsh Language at the Board and encourage Board Members to speak more Welsh as part of their Board leadership roles.
- Highlighted the availability of Welsh Language being used in patient facing areas and stated the need to encourage staff to speak other languages where relevant.
- Stated that the new corporate induction process will include a Welsh Language section which provides an introduction to the language and practical support with areas such as pronouncing people's names correctly.
- Suggested going forward staff are encouraged to use Welsh Language on a daily basis and proposed the Committee consider how this work can be supported.

Action:

- **PC25/80.1** Committee to consider how to provide support and encourage staff to use Welsh Language on a daily basis.

It was resolved that the Committee:

- **REVIEWED** and **APPROVED** the reports prior to submission to the Board in September 2025.

PC25/81 Draft Health and Safety Annual Report

The Committee received the report and the Head of Health, Safety and Security highlighted:

- The report is due to be presented to the Board in September 2025 and highlights the areas of work that have been taking place across the Health Board.
- Further work is required in this area which will enable the team to chart the journey more clearly going forward.
- Work is taking place to transition to NHS employer and the teams are working closely to provide support.

In discussing the report, the Committee:

- Highlighted the need for more focus on violence and aggression, it was confirmed that this is an area of concern, work is taking place with the Welsh Risk Pool around violence prevention and reduction and this work will start to embed.

It was resolved that the Committee:

- **ACCEPTED** the **ASSURANCE** provided in the report.

PC25/82 Progress on Consultant Job Planning Internal Audit Report

The Committee received the update and the Interim Executive Medical Director highlighted:

- Consultant job planning is a big challenge due to the volume of Consultants who require a job plan.



- Job planning is included as an element of Consultant contracts and is required to be reviewed on an annual basis however this has not been completed by the Health Board over the past few years.
- There is a requirement to complete up to 90 staff members by the end of September 2025 however the current overall compliance status is 38%. A high proportion of doctors are working above their sessional limit of ten sessions therefore job plans cannot be signed off as further scrutiny is required.
- Work is taking place to adopt a job planning policy to ensure sufficient standards are in place.

In discussing the report, the Committee:

- Confirmed that an Internal Audit review has been completed in this area as requested by the Chief Executive which received an unsatisfactory rating and a follow up review is currently taking place.
- Noted that all Health Board in Wales have received limited assurance in this area and the lack of an All Wales job planning policy is an issue across NHS Wales.
- Queried whether the lack of job plans creates a risk, it was confirmed that doctors limits are set at ten sessions and once this limit is breached, this creates a risk.
- Agreed that there are areas of the system that need to be addressed and clarity is required to ensure this is resolved suggesting further discussion is required with colleagues across Wales and progress is reported back to the Committee.

Action:

- **PC25/82.1** Progress on Consultant Job Planning to be reported back to the Committee for onwards submission and assurance to the Audit Committee.

It was resolved that the Committee:

- **NOTED** the update provided.

PC25/83 Board Assurance Framework

The Committee received the report and the Director of Corporate Governance highlighted:

- The Board Assurance Framework is being shared with each Committee to review the relevant areas, the Audit Committee will review the full Board Assurance Framework before it is submitted to the Board in September 2025.

It was resolved that the Committee:

- **RECEIVED** and **CONSIDERED** the contents and assurance rating of the Board Assurance Framework.

FOR INFORMATION

PC25/84 Summary of Business to be Reported from Private

It was resolved that the Committee **NOTED** the report.

PC25/85 Cycle of Business and Committee Forward Workplan

It was resolved that the Committee **NOTED** the forward workplan for information.

PC25/86 Welsh Language Commissioner Annual Report

It was resolved that the Committee **NOTED** the report.

CLOSING BUSINESS

PC25/87 Agree Items for Referral to Board / Other Committees

It was agreed that the Strengthening Social Partnership Report would be attached as an appendix to the Committee 'AAA' Report.

PC25/88 Review of Meeting Effectiveness

It was agreed that there had been good discussion about taking forward areas of work. There is a need to ensure main items feature in the appropriate place and the Committee are sighted on progress. The staff story was received positively and generated valuable discussions.

PC25/89 Date of next meeting

Thursday 16 October 2025, 9.30-12.30pm

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.'