

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB)
Confirmed Minutes of the People & Culture Committee
held in Public on 16 October 2025
in the Boardroom, Carlton Court, St Asaph and via Teams

Committee Members Present	
Name	Title
Dyfed Jones	Independent Member (Chair of Committee)
Bill Nichols	Independent Member
Clare Budden	Independent Member
In Attendance	
Jason Brannan	Deputy Director of People
Nesta Collingridge	Head of Risk Management (<i>part meeting</i>)
Dave Harries	Head of Internal Audit
Fflur Jones	Performance Audit Lead, Audit Wales
Teresa Owen	Executive Director of Allied Health Professionals & Health Science
Georgia Roberts	Interim Executive Director of People Services and Organisational Development
Pam Wenger	Director of Corporate Governance
Committee Support	
Laura Jones	Acting Corporate Governance Manager
Philippa Peake-Jones	Head of Corporate Governance

OPENING BUSINESS
<p>PC25/98 Welcome and Apologies</p> <p>Apologies were noted for Carol Shillabeer, Dyfed Edwards and Tehmeena Ajmal.</p>
<p>PC25/99 Declarations of Interest</p> <p>No declarations of interest were raised.</p>
<p>PC25/100 Unconfirmed Minutes of Meeting held on 14 August 2025</p> <p>It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 August 2025 were a true and accurate record subject to noting apologies for Billy Nichols.</p>
<p>PC25/101 Matters Arising & Action Log</p> <p>Members received the action log and noted progress against the actions.</p> <p>Progress on Consultant Job Planning Internal Audit Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In relation to action PC25/82.1 it was confirmed that this will be a substantive item at the Audit Committee in December 2025 once it has been to the People and Culture Committee also during December 2025. The report will align with the follow up Internal Audit review that has been completed and provide an update on progress.

On-Call Arrangements - Final Internal Audit Report

- In relation to action PC24/100.1 it was confirmed that the intention was for the Committee to receive an update on progress against the report. The Chief Operating Officer and Executive Director of Public Health have now been assigned to take this forward and will commence a full review of on call arrangements. It was agreed that the action will remain open and progress will be presented at a future meeting.

It was resolved that the Committee:

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

STAFF STORY

PC25/102 Staff Story

The Committee received the staff story and the Interim Executive Director of People Services and Organisational Development and Deputy Director of People highlighted:

- The staff story focusses on the Culture Change Programme and the development of Culture Change Leaders.
- There are currently 79 Culture Change Leaders across the organisation with the aim of reaching 150 Leaders to include representatives from all professions and sites to ensure there is voice being heard for all staff.
- The Leaders meet on a quarterly basis and provide support on a wide range of elements including the Staff Survey and development of the Culture and Leadership Programme.
- The programme follows an evidence based model which has been established by Professor Michael West from the King's Fund to connect personally with staff to achieve changes in this area of work.
- A People and Change Group has been established in each of the Integrated Health Communities which the Leaders link in to and provide feedback, direction and shared information. This area of work has helped to drive forward the synthesis report with input from a wide range of Leaders.

In discussing the staff story, the Committee:

- Acknowledged that the Board are on a journey to address some of the issues being raised and the story provides a good example of a team speaking about the value of the Culture Change Programme.
- Recognised the breadth of Culture Change Leaders and confirmed the need to ensure staff on the ground are included to provide valuable feedback and experiences from colleagues working in challenging environments. It was confirmed that there is a need to ensure staff working in certain roles who have scheduled rotas can be released to take part in the relevant discussions and the need for Trade Union representatives to reinforce this message.
- Stated that a Culture Design Group has been established to ensure a wide range of staff are involved and identify where there are underrepresented groups. Going forward the team can then target specific areas to enlist staff as Culture Change Leaders.

- Noted that Leaders are being trained with toolkits which allow them to acknowledge the team values and share this information locally to see how culture is being represented across the organisation.
- Highlighted that both stories shared raise issues of concern around lack of support in particular around attendance at the Coroner's Court and queried how assurance can be provided to ensure these issues are being managed. It was confirmed that in relation to the Coroner's Court, work is taking place in relation to legal services and further information can be provided to the Committee.
- Suggested further work is required to ensure staff stories being shared align with the strategic priorities of the Health Board. It was confirmed that this is the aim when developing agendas however a wider discussion would be valuable.

Actions:

- **PC25/102.1** Director of Corporate Governance to provide information on the work being completed by Legal Services to provide support to staff including those who are requested to attend Coroner's Court.
- **PC25/102.2** Director of Corporate Governance and Interim Executive Director of People Services and Organisational Development to facilitate a wider discussion on aligning the strategic priorities of the Health Board with the content of the Staff Story.

It was resolved that the Committee:

- **NOTED** the themes raised by the two storytellers about their experiences which led them to want to be part of a change to the culture of the organisation.
- **CONSIDERED** the points raised by each storyteller.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

PC25/103 People Operations Report

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

- The Health Board have the lowest sickness rate across Wales however stress, anxiety and depression remain the highest reasons for sickness absence.
- Mandatory training continues to be above the target and the team are focussing on the staff areas where an increase in compliance is required.
- The vacancy rate remains high however specific posts may be being held at this point in time and this is an area that is being continuously reviewed.

In discussing the item, the Committee:

- Requested an understanding of why posts may not be being filled, it was confirmed that some services are redesigning structures when staff leave and some posts are also being held due to the Foundations for the Future Programme.
- Referred to the high figures relating to staff absence due to stress and queried whether systemic issues and patterns are being highlighted to identify any hot spot areas. It was confirmed that the team review this information on a regular basis and target specific areas with interventions.
- Stated that the current Performance Appraisal Development Review (PADR) documentation does not refer to career development and succession planning. It was confirmed that the new PADR system is being developed in line with the values

and behaviours workstream which will include a focus on succession planning, career aspirations and development. This is due to launch in the next six months however it will be two to three years before the full impact will be recognised.

It was resolved that the Committee:

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

PC25/104 Job Evaluation Update

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

- The information included in the paper regularly into both the Workforce Partnership Group and the Local Partnership Forum as well as forming part of the People Operations Report.
- The paper includes an update on the management actions that have been undertaken as a result of the Job Evaluation Internal Audit that was completed at the beginning of 2025.
- As a result of the Internal Audit, a new Job Evaluation Policy has been established which came into effect on 1 August 2025. The new policy sets out the process for writing, submitting and reviewing job descriptions to ensure this is more effective and standardised across the organisation.
- Going forward the reporting of job evaluation will form part of the People Operations Report.

In discussing the report, the Committee:

- Queried how the new policy has had an impact from a Trade Union perspective. It was confirmed that the policy is working well, previous concerns were raised around the rebanding process and the new policy includes clear information in relation to this process.
- Referred to new systems that have been developed and requested assurance around employees being asked to pick up additional tasks which may lead to the rebanding of specific posts. It was confirmed that the policy now provides more control, a range of national job profiles are coming into the organisation and this provides assurance that jobs have been scoped at a certain levels on a national scale which is helpful when agreeing establishments.
- Confirmed that this work has been completed in partnership with Trade Unions and staffside colleagues to bring the Health Board in line with the rest of Wales noting that where decisions are made to reband posts, the responsibility for this is to be funded through local budgets.
- Highlighted the audit recommendations that have now passed their agreed timescales and queried whether the required evidence has been signed off by Internal Audit. The Interim Executive Director of People Services and Organisational Development agreed to follow this up with Internal Audit outside of the meeting to provide assurance to the Committee.

Action:

- **PC25/104.1** Interim Executive Director of People Services and Organisational Development to make contact with Internal Audit to check whether the required evidence relating to the audit recommendations has been provided and approved.

It was resolved that the Committee:

- **NOTED** the content of the report.

PC25/105 Management of Fixed Term Contracts

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

- There have been ongoing issues across the organisation with the management of fixed term contracts and work has been taking place to address this issue.
- A number of recommendations were agreed by the Executive Team in May 2024 to reduce the number of fixed term contracts being used.
- Robust arrangements have now been implemented and over the past 15 months, this volume of fixed term contracts has reduced by 26%.
- The process has been managed in line with employment legislation and during that period, there has only been one redundancy payment made due to an individual not being able to be redeployed.
- Work continues on a monthly basis to prevent the use of fixed term contracts unless requests meet the required criteria, the team are suggesting the use of secondments to address short term issues.
- Further work is required to link in with workforce planning and provide further education to managers. Regular reports will continue to be provided to the Executive Committee and a cultural shift is required in the level of accountability of managers.

In discussing the report, the Committee:

- Acknowledged the controls that have been put in place and the decrease in the number of fixed terms contracts being used.
- Queried how the approval process has changed from previous practice. It was confirmed that this now forms part of the external control process to allow the relevant teams to identify whether requests meet the required criteria.

It was resolved that the Committee:

- **NOTED** the recommendations outlined in the paper to further strengthen the management of fixed term contracts and safeguard against future contractual and financial risks, building on what has previously been endorsed by the Executive Team.

PC25/106 Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) Report

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

- The Annual Equality Report 2023/24 was approved by the Board in March 2025 and the team committed to present the report at an earlier stage during 2025/26.
- As part of the work, a strategic equality plan has been developed in line with the Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) report that was introduced by Welsh

Government. The report links to the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan which includes data and key themes that need to be reviewed in this area.

- The report highlights a number of areas that need to be addressed which include inequality of progression of staff, lack of diversity of Board members, ethnic minority staff not being appointed after shortlisting and poor levels of declarations of ethnicity.
- A Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) Task and Finish Group has been established to provide a strategic recruitment review of the processes based on the latest report recommendations.
- A Culture, Education and Training Lead for Equality has been appointed to provide support, share lived experiences through staff engagement and identify whether there are any fundamental issues that need to be reviewed.

In discussing the report, the Committee:

- Suggested the Committee need to review the action plan that has been developed to address the issues raised to provide assurance. It was agreed that there is a need to see progress and this should come back to a future meeting of the Committee.
- Noted that the organisation feels more diverse than the figures show in the report suggesting there may be a high proportion of non-declarers. It was confirmed that the Health Board aim to have a diverse workforce and will continue to encourage staff to declare their ethnic status.
- Referred to the information relating to minority staff in higher positions, it was suggested that there is a need to promote opportunities and the team are completing a deep dive in this area.

Action:

- **PC25/106.1** The Strategic Equality Plan to come back to a future meeting to highlight progress and provide assurance that the issues and themes raised are being addressed.

It was resolved that the Committee:

- **NOTED** the content of the report and how this aligns to the strategic equality plan.

PC25/107 Gender, Race and Disability Pay Gap Reports

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

- As part of the Health Board's duties there is a legal requirement to produce and publish a Gender Pay Gap Report on an annual basis.
- New reporting requirements have also been introduced by Welsh Government in relation to race and disability pay gap reporting. It was noted that during March 2025, the Health Board published its first Race Pay Audit and this year, a Disability Pay Gap report has been developed to sit alongside the other pay gap reports.
- In relation to gender, the majority of NHS organisations continue to have a gender pay gap and within the Health Board the current pay gap is 24% therefore further work is required in this area.

In discussing the report, the Committee:

- Noted that the Committee papers have been published on the website therefore there is a need for the reports to be published bi-lingually, and this will be noted in the Chair's Assurance Report to the Board.
- Highlighted concerns that the Health Board continue to have a gap in pay. It was noted that there is a need to track progress suggesting that doctors have a big impact on the figures as the majority are male however more women are now progressing through the system and the Foundations for the Future Programme may help to reduce the gap.

Action:

- **PC25/107.1** Deputy Director of People to ensure the Race and Gender Pay Gap Reports are published on the website bi-lingually.

It was resolved that the Committee:

- **APPROVED** reporting of the Race and Gender Pay Gap Reports for each area as appropriate.

GOVERNANCE AND ASSURANCE

PC25/108 Item Withdrawn

PC25/109 Corporate Risk Register Report

Members received the report and the Head of Risk Management highlighted:

- The report is presented for assurance and it was noted that two Executive Committee Development Sessions have taken place to review the risks in more detail. It was agreed as part of the Development Sessions to consolidate the 26 risks into a more strategic Corporate Risk Register.
- The risks for the Committee now focus on Future Demand and Sustainable Workforce as well as Leadership and Operating Model. The scores remain the same and reference to the old risks will be removed going forward.

In discussing the report, the Committee:

- Queried whether the current controls are sufficient or if additional measures are required. It was confirmed that while the expectation is to start seeing downward trends, there remain areas of weakness that require corresponding actions to provide assurance.
- Specific reference was made to sickness absence and whether further controls are needed to address this risk. It was noted that the Health Board can support staff within the workplace; however, additional work is required to manage sickness absence more effectively

It was resolved that the Committee:

- **RECEIVED ASSURANCE** for the progression of the corporate risks to which the Committee has overall accountability.

PC25/110 Corporate Governance Report

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

- The report is provided to note the summary of business considered in private and the forward workplan.

In discussing the report, the Committee:

- Highlighted that discussions are taking place around how the Committee can assess the use of apprenticeships, support for young people and promote careers via school settings to ensure this is in the strategic space. It was also noted that this will also be discussed further at an informal Executive Committee.

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

PC25/111 Agree Items for Referral to Board / Other Committees

It was agreed that the Gender, Race and Disability Pay Gap Reports are referenced in the Chair's Assurance Report for onward reporting to the Board.

PC25/112 Review of Meeting Effectiveness

It was agreed that there had been good discussion and the Committee is developing well.

PC25/113 Date of next meeting

Thursday 4 December 2025, 9.30am

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.'