Agenda item 2.i

Report to:	Board of Directors	Date: 04 December 2025
Report from:	**Chair of the Workforce Committee**	
Principal Objective/ Strategy and Title	**GOVERNANCE:** **To update the Board on discussions at the 27 November 2025 Part 1 Workforce Committee Meeting**	
Board Assurance Framework Entries	BAF 1853, 1854, 1929 and 3261	
Regulatory Requirement	Well Led/Code of Governance:	
Equality Considerations	To have clear and effective processes for assurance of Committee risks	
Key Risks	N/A	
For:	Discussion	

1. Strategic Context

The Committee continues to oversee delivery of the Workforce Strategy (2023–26), monitor workforce-related risks within the Board Assurance Framework (BAF), and provide assurance on progress against regulatory and organisational priorities.

2. Key Highlights by Agenda Item

Agenda Item 6 – Board Assurance Framework (BAF)

- The Committee noted **no change to the full risks overseen by the Committee**, with industrial action remaining a high-impact risk.
- The revised BAF now comprises two workforce risks:
  - *Culture and Staff Engagement*
  - *Full and Affordable Workforce Plan* (rated at 12).
- Members expressed concern that the second risk's current risk rating may be understated and agreed this should be reviewed.
- Mitigations include embedding the Compassionate and Collective Leadership Programme, career pathways development, and integrated workforce planning.

Agenda Item 7 – Staff Story

- **Jade Butler** shared her career journey, starting as an HR admin assistant, completing Level 5 training in 2014–15, and now undertaking Level 7. She described Level 5 as a "bed and breakfast experience" compared to Level 7 as "all-inclusive with drinks," reflecting the depth of learning.
- Jade highlighted the importance of recognising unseen barriers and credited coaching and mentoring for her development.

- **Kiaran Milligan** entered HR following a traumatic personal experience involving her daughter's major surgery and a cardiac arrest caused by a medication error. This shaped her commitment to compassionate, people-focused care.
- Both participants praised the People Management Development Programme (PMDP) for providing coaching, mentoring, shadowing, and action learning sets, positioning them as strong advocates for leadership development.

Agenda Item 8 – Workforce Director's Report

- **Recruitment & Diversity:**
  - Vacancy rate improved to **4.71%** (below 7.5% target).
  - Time-to-hire remains strong at **39 days** (vs 48-day target).
  - Mandatory training compliance reached **90.41%**, a record achievement.
- **Concerns:**
  - Diversity metrics deteriorated, with most indicators moving from green to red.
  - Deep dive into BAME recruitment revealed inconsistent scoring, poor feedback post-interview, and instances of active discouragement from applying.
- Committee acknowledged disappointment but reaffirmed commitment to pursue multiple improvement routes as described in the presentation.

Agenda Item 9 – Critical Care Absence Management Programme

- Programme plan has been developed and resources identified. Aspects of the programme are applicable to other areas with high absence rates and are being shared with them. Staff-side representatives are supportive of the aims and approach of the programme. The Critical Care leadership team are engaged and committed to implementing the programme and the Divisional leadership team have put in place appropriate governance arrangements.
- **Two risks identified:**
  - Need for clarity on what changes are being sought to current flexible working arrangements and processes.
  - Ownership of pace and communication with controlled messaging.

Agenda Item 10 – Workforce Plan Mid-Year Review

- Good progress overall; however, two areas delayed due to resource reprioritisation:
  - Establishment of the Employee Relations Hub.
  - Sexual Safety Programme (rescheduled to 2026/27)

Agenda Item 11 – EDI Improvement Plan

- Committee noted significant work underway, including:
  - **Liberating Your Talent Programme** launching February 2026, based on Ready Now/Stepping Up approach for mid-level staff.
  - Embedding of a Cultural Intelligence approach into our leadership development and change management approaches led by new EDI Lead, Tom Harrison, whose expertise will strengthen delivery.
- These initiatives aim to improve career progression and psychological safety, particularly for BAME staff.

Agenda Items 12–14 – Medical Workforce Updates

- **Consultant Job Planning:** Video audit provided baseline for aligning job plans to a maximum of 15 PAs over 12 months (six months planning, six months implementation).
- **Resident Doctors:** Progress noted on NHS England's 10-Point Plan; improvements seen in training and education.
- **GMC NTS Improvement Plan:** Focus on workload and training experience; complex work to continue into next year.

Agenda Item 16 – Radiology Workforce Plan

- Despite significant effort, concerns remain regarding assurance and timeliness of actions.
- Independent review commissioned to assess demand, capacity, and clinical model.
- **Digital access issues flagged as urgent risk**, causing severe staff dissatisfaction. Committee agreed to escalate for a Part 2 Board discussion.

Agenda Items 18–20 – Nursing Reports

- **Safer Staffing Review:** Self-assessment aligned with NHS England and ICB external review—a rare and commendable achievement.
- **Non-Medical Revalidation:** Update provided.
- **Safeguarding Level 3 Compliance:** Improvements noted, but further focus required. Chief Nurse warned compliance may drop during ESR transition; planning adjustments needed.

3. Decisions & Recommendations

- Ratified BAF updates for Board submission.
- Endorsed actions from recruitment deep dive and absence management programme.
- Agreed escalation of radiology workforce and digital access risks to the Board.
- Supported continued prioritisation of EDI programmes and leadership development initiatives.

4. Emerging Risks for Escalation

- **Industrial Action:** Further strike action by resident doctors anticipated; risk remains extreme.
- **Digital Infrastructure:** Persistent system failures impacting radiology and staff experience.
- **Workforce Capacity:** Delay in ER Hub and policy consolidation due to reprioritisation.