25/26 Workforce Strategy Mid-Year Update

1. Workforce KPI Position

Metric	Target	Q1 Result	Q2 Result	Trend	Comment
Vacancy Rate (%)	7.50%	6.24%	5.99%	▼ Improving	Below target and trending positively
Turnover Rate (%)	9%	8.34%	6.53%	▼ Improving	Continued positive retention trend
Time to Hire (days)	48	38.33	38.67	▬ Stable	Consistently better than target.
Sickness Absence (%)	4%	4.21%	4.49%	▲ Increasing	Key Area of Focus in Q3&4
Agency Spend (% of pay bill)	2.28%	1.24%	1.01%	▼ Improving	Positive controls in place
Bank Spend (% of pay bill)	2.47%	3.13%	3.56%	▲ Increasing	Driven by absence rates. Key Area of Focus in Q3&4
Mandatory Training Compliance (%)	90%	87.61%	90.28%	▲ Improving	Target met in Q2
Appraisal Completion (%)	90%	78.21%	79.51%	▲ Slight Improvement	Targeted plans in place for improvement in Q3&4

At mid-year, the Trust continues to demonstrate encouraging improvement in several key workforce indicators, particularly those relating to recruitment, retention and agency expenditure.

- The Trust-wide vacancy rate has continued to reduce, falling from 6.24% in Q1 to 5.99% in Q2, remaining below the 7.5% target.
- Turnover has also improved further, reducing from 8.34% to 6.53% over the same period.
- Time-to-hire has remained consistently below target at approximately 38 days across both quarters, reflecting the ongoing effectiveness of the recruitment process improvements implemented last year.
- Both mandatory training compliance and agency spend are trending positively, with training reaching 90.28% in Q2 and agency use reducing from 1.24% to 1.01% of pay bill.

However, two areas require focused action in the second half of the year.
- Sickness absence remains above the 4% target, rising from 4.21% to 4.49%, which is contributing to an increase in bank staffing expenditure as temporary capacity is deployed to maintain safe staffing.
- In addition, appraisal compliance remains under the 90% target at 79.51% for Q2, though this does represent incremental improvement. Both areas are incorporated within the Trust-wide Attendance Improvement Programme and leadership development agenda and will be focus areas for recovery planning and accountability monitoring during Q3 and Q4.

2. Progress Across Strategic Themes

Theme 1 - Compassionate and Collective Leadership (RAG: Amber)
Progress under Theme 1 has remained constructive and purposeful, with continued momentum in leadership capability development and cultural improvement work.

Transformational Reciprocal Mentoring (TRMP) continues to support lived-experience-based leadership learning, with a third cohort commissioned and actively engaged. Following the formal review of the Leadership and Management Development Programme, a new inclusive management skills offer has been designed, incorporating anti-racism learning, practical ER-aligned modules, and short, high-impact sessions to build confidence and competence in core people-management skills. This has been complemented by the redesign of the Clinical Fellows development offer and the commissioning of a tailored leadership and management programme for Allied Health Professionals.

The implementation of the Employee Relations Hub has been deferred to 2026/27 to allow organisational capacity to focus on the Attendance Improvement Programme. However, early developmental work on policy alignment, learning content creation and digital resource design has been retained. Activity to strengthen psychological safety and staff wellbeing has continued, alongside the launch and early evaluation of a new High-Performing Teams development offer.

Looking ahead, the second half of the year will focus on operationalising the redesigned leadership and management development pathway, ensuring divisional accessibility and alignment. Embedding the Leadership Behaviours Framework will continue through coaching, supervision, reflective practice and performance improvement discussions. We are also developing a workshop for leaders focused on addressing bullying behaviour which will take place in January. This is a follow on from the Inclusive Leadership event in April 2025 where leaders said that they wished to work together on improving the culture across the Trust. Evaluation of new team-development interventions will shape a phased rollout, while some necessarily more limited preparatory work for the Employee Relations Hub will continue to avoid pause-and-restart inefficiency.

Theme 2 - Belonging and Inclusion (RAG: Green/Amber)
Progress under Theme 2 remains strong with clear evidence of continued cultural development and targeted inclusion plans. TRMP cohort three, involving 33 participants, has commenced and continues to strengthen inclusive leadership capability through lived-experience learning, allyship and reflective leadership. The Trust has secured external funding from NHS Charities Together to develop and implement a bespoke "Stepping-Up" style programme for colleagues from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, with detailed design work underway and delivery scheduled for early 2026. We also secured funding for a bespoke line managers programme, to be called Leading for Inclusion, to build the skills, competence and confidence of line managers, specifically in clinical areas, in key aspects of inclusive leadership.

The management development offer has been refreshed to ensure alignment with inclusive leadership expectations, including anti-racism, conflict management, cultural awareness and fair decision-making. Design work is in progress for new bullying and harassment training, due for implementation in Q4. Alongside targeted development, investment has continued in gender-focused learning through Springboard delivery, while inclusion networks remain active and highly visible through cultural and commemorative events.

The forward focus for the next two quarters is the completion of programme design for the new BAME-focused development pathway, its co-production with staff networks and subject-matter experts, and the commencement of anti-racism and bullying-and-harassment training.

TRMP cohort three will be evaluated to support future commissioning decisions, and work will continue to expand the use of EDI metrics within divisional planning and leadership decision-making.

Theme 3 - Workforce Development (RAG: Amber/Green)
Theme 3 has progressed well, particularly in relation to digital learning infrastructure and career-pathway development. Procurement of the Learning Management System (LMS) has been a major area of focus, with demonstrations completed in September and positive engagement from clinical and professional educators. Preparatory work is underway with Digital Services and contract award is expected by the end of Q3, followed by implementation in Q4. The LMS will provide a modern, accessible platform to host mandatory learning, leadership development, micro-learning and "just-in-time" modules aligned to the Employee Relations Hub.

Delivery of the Nursing Career Pathway Programme remains on track with role-profile validation nearing completion and will transition into the talent-development and intranet-based career navigation phase as planned. This structured approach to career development will subsequently be rolled out to other staff groups on a phased basis from 2026.

The focus for theme 3 in Q3 and Q4 will be contract award, LMS implementation planning, digital readiness and prioritised content design. Work will also move into the talent-development phase of the Nursing Career Pathway Programme, including launch of the intranet-based career navigation portal and early scoping of the next staff group for pathway development based on workforce risk and planning evidence.

Theme 4 - Growing the Workforce (RAG: Green)
Workforce stability continues to show strong performance, with improvements in vacancy, turnover and agency usage complemented by progress on talent pipeline development. A redesigned appraisal model has been fully implemented and aligned with the Career Pathways Programme, supporting more structured development conversations across the organisation.

Talent pools for newly qualified nurses are operational in Oleeo, improving deployment and succession alignment. A strategic apprenticeship review concluded during Q2 and resulted in a business case for a new Apprenticeship Development Programme being submitted to the Trust Executive and subsequently to the Charity Committee for two-year funding. If approved, the programme is expected to expand entry routes, increase apprenticeship utilisation, reduce agency reliance, enhance social mobility and position the Trust as a regional leader in workforce development.

Workforce planning commenced in October and now incorporates immediate operational need alongside three-year service-led forecasting.

The next steps for this theme includes embedding high-quality appraisal practice, evaluating the impact of the new nursing talent pool, continued workforce planning development, and early mobilisation of the Apprenticeship Development Programme, subject to funding approval.

Theme 5 - Efficient and Effective Workforce Processes (RAG: Amber)
Theme 5 has progressed well in digital modernisation and recruitment improvement. The launch of ESR Supervisor Self-Service in September gives managers real-time access to core workforce information and reduces reliance on individual data requests. Development of the HR Chatbot is complete, with policy content converted into machine-readable

structures, safety prompts and fallback logic in place, and user-tested refinements completed. The chatbot is now awaiting DPIA approval ahead of planned Q4 launch.

Work has commenced to develop Qlik dashboards, initially focused on Staff Survey insight.

Recruitment modernisation continues with a bank of over 450 values-aligned interview questions now available and new resources being developed ahead of a January 2026 relaunch. Some policy revision work has been put on hold due to prioritisation of Attendance Improvement work, with the Sickness Absence Management Procedure due for completion in Q3. Delivery plans for "Too Hot to Handle" training for workforce professionals are in progress, with implementation expected in Q3.

The next steps for Theme 5 will prioritise a safe and well-governed launch of the HR Chatbot, ongoing rollout of data analytics capability including Qlik dashboards, sequenced policy completion and preparations for the January 2026 recruitment refresh.

Theme 6 - Working with Partners (RAG: Amber/Green)
Collaboration with partners remains strong and has been particularly active in relation to Occupational Health, where joint scoping work with CUH is underway alongside participation in a sector-wide procurement exercise to test external market capability and cost.

System-wide collaboration has also focused on corporate workforce reductions, with a joint protocol agreed to ensure fairness, transparency and employment continuity for staff placed at risk elsewhere in the system.

Workforce planning continues collaboratively, and cross-sector job evaluation work has commenced, supporting consistency and governance.

The focus for theme 6 in Q3 and Q4 will be progressing the Occupational Health scoping work to an informed recommendation, incorporating benchmarking, cost modelling and risk assessment, with findings triangulated against market testing outcomes. Collaborative job evaluation activity will continue with RPH sharing much of its learning from its career pathways programme and ICS-based workforce planning engagement will continue.

4. Conclusion

At the midpoint of 2025/26, delivery of the Workforce Strategy remains broadly on track with strong progress evident in leadership development, inclusion, workforce sustainability, and digital improvement. Core workforce performance indicators continue to trend positively, with sustained improvements in recruitment, retention and agency utilisation. Two areas, the Employee Relations Hub and wider policy consolidation, have been intentionally paused to align with organisational priorities, and associated preparatory work has been retained to protect future delivery. The remainder of the year will focus on operationalising new development pathways, embedding digital tools, progressing the LMS and career pathway programmes, strengthening use of data-driven insight, and advancing collaborative system work on Occupational Health. Continued oversight, resourcing improvements and alignment with cultural and operational priorities will be critical to ensuring successful delivery of the final year of the Strategy and securing a sustainable, inclusive and high-performing workforce for the future.

This attached document enables the EDI team to track progress and provide improved oversight to the EDI Steering Committee and Workforce Committee. Please see below current interventions that the we would like to draw the attention of the Committee to, which represent significant projects stemming from the High Impact Actions:

- Liberating your Talent.
- The ICS Cultural Intelligence Programme, and the continued work on the
- Transformational Reciprocal Mentoring Programme Cohort 3, alongside
- Ongoing work on Cohorts 1 and 2.

1. Liberating your Talent

1.1 As part of the work around the Regional Anti-Racism Strategy and the Trust's focus on Career Progression & Representation for BME staff at the Trust the Head of EDI, Director and Deputy Director of Workforce and OD and the Chief Nurse committed to developing a programme for BME staff.

The team started working with Morvia Gooden (former national lead for the Ready Now and Stepping up programme) in October 2024 to design this programme. A proposal was submitted to the team in December 2024, followed by a bid to NHS Charities Together in May 2025. Successful confirmation of the funding was received in August 2025, the Assistant Director of OD and the Trusts, Foundations and Statutory Fundraiser, attended a National Workforce Wellbeing Round 1 Onboarding and Welcome event on the 21st October to share what the Trusts programme outline looks like.

The programme consists of four cohorts, each targeting different staff levels:

Cohort 1: Mid-level Line Managers	Cohort 2: BME Staff (Bands 2-4)	Cohort 3: BME Staff (Bands 5-6)	Cohort 4: BME Staff (Bands 7-8)
This cohort focuses on developing allies and creating inclusive environments through: -Allyship and Cultural Competence -Exploring Personal Biases and Privileges -Building Allyship -Cultural Intelligence in practice -Creating Inclusive Environments -Reflection and Action Planning -Anti-Racism	Focuses on talent recognition and retention through topics like: -Psychological safety, -Building trust, -Self-awareness -Emotional intelligence, and -Strength-based development.	Covers essential leadership skills including: -Leadership Foundations -Communication and Influence -Emotional Intelligence and Resilience -Leadership Styles and Decision Making -Strategic Thinking and Organisational Leadership -Leading Teams and Managing Change	A talent management a sponsorship programme providing developmenta support, sponsorship opportunities, and networking to help BME staff advance into senic leadership roles.

The Assistant Director of OD and Head of EDI, have now establishing a Programme Steering Group that will meet every 8 weeks to monitor progress, discuss challenges, and celebrate successes throughout the programme lifecycle. Key stakeholders include the Director of Workforce, Chief Nursing Officer, Head of Leadership and Management, Royal Papworth Charities representative, and the communications team.

The first Programme Board meeting was held on 12th November 2025. Actions arising from the meeting include reviewing how the BME cohorts are composed and ensuring staff are allocated to the correct cohorts based on their banding. This will result in small changes to the cohort make-up.

Regular updates will be provided to the EDI Steering Committee as needed.

For noting this intervention is specifically linked to two of the HIA's-
- High Impact Action 2 - Embed fair and inclusive recruitment processes and talent management strategies that target under-representation and lack of diversity. Specifically addresses: Create and implement a talent management plan to improve the diversity of executive and senior leadership teams.
- High Impact Action 4 - Develop and implement an improvement plan to address health inequalities within the workforce. Addresses wellbeing and support for ethnic minority staff

2. ICS Cultural Intelligence Programme Update

2.1 In December 2023, the Integrated Care System Management Board committed to an inclusive leadership programme called the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Leading and Engaging Inclusively with Cultural Intelligence Programme.

All partner organisations across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough took part in this important step towards becoming an anti-racist system. The Head of EDI at the time and Director of Workforce and OD at RPH served as Executive Sponsor and Programme Lead. The programme included 30 participants from across the ICS, organised into three cohorts:

Cohort A: Senior Board Leaders	Cohort B: Middle Management Leaders	Cohort C: Global Majority Leaders and Network Representatives
Designed for senior leaders who sit on their organisation's Board. Each organisation chose their participants, aiming for a good mix of different roles.	Designed for leaders who report to executive or board level directors, such as Deputy Directors, Divisional Directors, Associate Directors, and Clinical Directors. Again, we aimed for a variety of roles to participate.	Designed for leaders from Global Majority backgrounds, Staff Network Chairs, Co-Chairs, Deputies, and Cultural Ambassadors.

The programme ran from January 2024 to April 2025.

In July 2025, the team launched the final phase called the Culture Change Facilitator Programme. This phase focuses on training 6 people across the system to become Culture Change Facilitators who will work at both organisation and system level.

The 5-day training programme ran from October 20th to October 24th, 2025, and the Trusts new Head of EDI was part of this cohort. A verbal update will be shared with the Steering group of how he sees us integrating the learning from this into our existing development programmes.

It is hoped that the facilitators will act as a shared resource across the entire system, however RPH will be working through how we use this resource internally over the next 8 weeks.

For noting this intervention is linked to High Impact Action 1 - Chief executives, chairs and board members must have specific and measurable EDI objectives:

- Cohort A (Senior Board Leaders) directly supports board-level EDI leadership development.

Both programmes also support High Impact Action 6 around creating environments that eliminate bullying, discrimination, and harassment through cultural competence and inclusive leadership development.

4.2 **Vision for Inclusion**

The Board launched their Vision for Inclusion in September 2024, followed by a leadership workshop in April 2025 to explore this vision with leaders across the organisation. This has led to further work, including a dedicated workshop on Anti-Bullying and Harassment scheduled for January 2026. This programme is ongoing and evolving.

For noting this intervention is specifically linked to:

- High Impact Action 1 - Chief executives, chairs and board members must have specific and measurable EDI objectives, - specifically addresses: Continued visible leadership by Board members in the embedding of the vision for inclusive leadership through leading/attending leadership events.
- High Impact Action 6 - Create an environment that eliminates the conditions in which bullying, discrimination, harassment and physical violence at work.

3. **Other Interventions**

❖ Sexual Safety Programme-
Earlier in the year, specific training was delivered to managers and staff around sexual safety, including dedicated training modules added to ESR on trauma-informed care and understanding sexual misconduct in the workplace.

This work has been aligned to the Trust's Abuse, Violence and Aggression procedure, with continued oversight from the Sexual Safety group. This programme is ongoing and evolving, and links to:

- High Impact Action 6 - Create an environment that eliminates the conditions in which bullying, discrimination, harassment and physical violence at work occur-specifically addresses: Ensure safe and effective policies and processes are in place to support staff affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence (DASV). And how the organisation provides comprehensive psychological support for all individuals who

report that they have been a victim of bullying, harassment, discrimination or violence.

❖ Neurodiversity Programme-

Training has been provided for managers and staff around neurodiversity, with a toolkit for line managers due to be launched later in November 2025. The Disability and Difference and Working Carers (DaD) Network is focusing efforts on neurodiversity awareness and support. This programme is ongoing and evolving and links to:

- High Impact Action 6 - Create an environment that eliminates the conditions in which bullying, discrimination, harassment and physical violence occur at work- specifically addresses: Roll out the Neurodiversity toolkit to managers and HR teams to educate line managers and HR teams about Neurodiversity in the workplace.
- High Impact Action 2 - Embed fair and inclusive recruitment processes and talent management strategies that target under representation and lack of diversity.