

Escalation and Assurance Report

Report from the: Workforce and Equality Committee

Date the meeting took place: 8 April 2021

Report to the: Board

Key discussion points and matters to be escalated from the discussion at the meeting:

Alert:

- The chair, while taking some assurance (see below) that useful work is underway re future policy/practice re **working from home arrangements**, would recommend a quick sense-check is undertaken by the exec team/board that the right process is in place, with the right people and timescales, for such an important strategic issue (with cross-cutting links to finance, safety, etc). There is a real opportunity to make long-term changes on this matter which, if got right, could delight a significant proportion of staff (and a corresponding risk of frustration, and worse, if not). The Committee will receive an update in Sept but this matter may be better positioned as a matter for the full board.

Advise:

- The Committee agreed that the existing general **target re sickness** (fixed at 4%) **has not been achieved over successive years and similar Trusts within the ICS have experienced similar. Whilst the target would remain, the recommendation was agreed that year on year incremental targets stretching beyond the previous year's outturn position would be a more realistic approach, setting out what the position would look like over the years, with a focus on listening to staff and actions in hot spot areas/continuing to share and learn alongside other Trusts.**
- **FTSU Guardian** in place, with plans being developed/implemented to advance the FTSU arrangements and agenda – recommendation that the board incorporates the “self-assessment survey” (along with a board development session) in the summer, among other things (including comms/profile raising).
- Despite sustained efforts, there is evidence of an ongoing risk/issue re **working time regulations**, particularly regarding 11 hour breaks, which requires some further consideration from the exec team.
- There have been (albeit relatively minor) deterioration in the stats re “BAME” employees being engaged in **disciplinary** proceedings and in **disabled job applicants** – further work and ongoing monitoring is required.

Assure:

- The Committee heard orally and in detail from two members of the admin team that recent **working from home** arrangements had been effective and extremely welcome for them and their teams – a working group is looking at what would be the right approach for the Trust to adopt in the medium to long term (as part of the Trust's building back better post-COVID programme).
- **Brexit** has not had a significant adverse impact on workforce, appearing to have been well-managed by the exec team.

- General support for the **Just R** recruitment proposal/development, with the safeguards in place re KPIs and a “go no go” decision process re second year.
- Considerable assurance that the Trust has embedded an impressive **preceptorship** programme, with ideas for further improvement (e.g., ways to monitor success, enhanced connections re other professions and FTSU, etc)
- Evidence of some improvements re: **apprenticeship** numbers; introduction of **new roles** generally; and compliance re the number of **appraisals**.

Risks discussed:

- See above – including the risk of not getting the right approach/arrangements in place re future working from home arrangements/opportunities

New risks identified:

- See above

Report completed by: Simon Lewis (8 April 2021)