



CYFARFOD BWRDD IECHYD PRIFYSGOLN ANEURIN BEVAN

MINUTES OF ANEURIN BEVAN UNIVERSITY HEALTH BOARD MEETING

MINUTES OF THE PEOPLE AND CULTURE COMMITTEE

DATE OF MEETING	11 June 2025 10.30-13.30
VENUE	Microsoft Teams

PRESENT	Paul Deneen, Committee Chair, Independent Member
	Helen Sweetland, Independent Member
	Philip Robson, ABUHB Vice Chair of the Board
	Vivek Goel, Independent Member
IN ATTENDANCE	Sarah Simmonds, Director of Workforce & OD
	Robert Holcombe, Director of Finance, Procurement & VBHC
	Rani Dash, Director of Corporate Governance
	Naomi Murtagh, Board Business Manager
	James Calvert, Medical Director
	Karen Newman, Assistant Director of Communications and Engagement
	Star Moyo, Head of Equality Diversity and Inclusion
	Cathy Brookes, Head of Workforce Planning
	Geraint Scott, Head of the Welsh Language Unit
	Huw Williams, Welsh Language Support Officer
	Joanne Gubbings, Assistant Director of Workforce & OD
	Katelyn Falvery, Assistant Director of Workforce & OD
	Julie Chapelle, Assistant Director of Workforce & OD
	Shelley Williams, Deputy Director of Workforce
	Peter Brown, Assistant Director of Workforce & OD
	Gavin Thomas, Governance Support Officer

Preliminary Items

PCC/1106/01	Welcome and Apologies
	Paul Deneen (PD), Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that guests would be joining later in the Committee to help support particular agenda items.



PCC/1106/02	Apologies for Absence There were no apologies for absence to be noted.
PCC/1106/03	Declarations of Interest There were no Declarations of Interest to record.
PCC/1106/04	Draft Minutes of the last Meeting held on 11th February 2025 The previous minutes were reviewed and AGREED as a true and accurate record of the meeting.
PCC/1106/05	Committee Action Log The Committee received the action log and was content with the progress made in relation to the completed actions. Paul Deneen, (PD), Independent Member, Committee Chair noted that there were no outstanding actions.
Items for APPROVAL/RATIFICATION/DECISION	
PCC/1106/06	Development of Committee Annual Programme of Business 2025/26 Rani Dash (RD), Director of Corporate Governance, presented the Annual Programme of Business 2025/26 to the Committee. Joanne Gubbings (JD), Assistant Director of Workforce & OD, noted that the strategic quality plan needed to be rescheduled for January's committee meeting on the forward work plan so that it considered by the Committee prior to being submitted to the Board. RD, agreed for this to be moved on the forward work plan. Action Director of Corporate Governance. The Committee APPROVED the Committee Annual Programme of Business 2025/26.
ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION	
PCC/1106/07	Annual Assurance Report on Medical Revalidation James Calvert (JC), Medical Director, presented the paper to the Committee and provided background to his role in relation to the paper. The Committee noted that the appraisal rates for GPs and Consultants exceeded the national average and in



terms of SAS doctors, whilst the rates were low at the time of the Committee, there was a plan to bring these rates up to a similar level as the consultants.

Philip Robson (PR), ABUHB Vice Chair, noted that the report was very detailed and enquired on the 360-feedback process and its role in the revalidation process. JC explained how the process worked in relation to medical revalidation.

Paul Deneen (PD), Chair, queried that other health boards were not undertaking the same amount of work in respect of revalidation. JC agreed and explained that he believes this could be due to the sheer volume of work which is involved in medical revalidation.

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

PCC/1106/08

Progress update on the Delivery of Welsh Government's Race Equality Action Plan for Wales

Star Moyo (SM), Head of Equality Diversity and Inclusion, presented the report to the Committee.

The Committee noted that there had been a re-launch of some of the networks within the Health Board as well as the roll out of a new E-earning package via ESR, with 67% of the workforce already having completed it.

Helen Sweetland (HS), Independent member, queried if the international nurses which commence employment with The Health Board, are appointed on a short-term contract and how many of them remain working for the Health Board after appointment.

Shelly Williams (SW), Deputy Director of Workforce, explained that when the overseas nurses are appointed, they are appointed on a permanent contract, but they commence their employment as unregistered nurses while they undertake their OSCE, and once they have secured their OSCE qualification, they are then registered on Band 5. In terms of fall out rate, SW explained that she did not have this detail to hand but that she would share with the Committee outside of the meeting.

Action: Director of Workforce & OD.

The report was **NOTED** by the Committee.



<p>PCC/1106/09</p>	<p>Committee Risk Report</p> <p>Rani Dash (RD), Director of Governance, presented the report to the Committee. RD outlined the potential risk relating to Nurse Education at Cardiff University. Sarah Simmonds (SS), Director of Workforce & OD, explained that the proposals on Nursing education have been curtailed at the moment, but further explained that there will still be implications for the Health Board as the number of places will be reduced. The Committee heard that 70% of the Health Boards nurses currently come from Cardiff University.</p> <p>Helen Sweetland (HS), Independent Member, explained that whilst the situation was concerning, she believes that there would be benefits, in the quality of the course being delivered which could also lead to a lower dropout rate.</p> <p>In addition, SS advised the Committee that she had been informed that the trade unions had written to the members about strike action in response to the recent pay award announced by Welsh Government and that the position on strike action should be known by late summer.</p> <p>The Committee NOTED the report.</p>
<p>PCC/1106/10</p>	<p>Annual Review and Refresh of the People Plan and its Priorities</p> <p>Sarah Simmonds, (SS) Director of Workforce & OD, presented the report to the Committee and explained that the final report will be presented at Board later this year.</p> <p>The Committee noted the key achievements from the paper including the reduction in turnover from 9.10% down to 8.64%.</p> <p>The Committee further noted that the framework consisted of 22 core actions plus 7 new actions/initiatives added after publication, structured under the three strategic objectives</p> <p>The Committee noted that the new People Plan would build on the existing plan to date with more of a focus on the IMTP Priorities.</p> <p>Paul Deneen (PD), Chair, explained that he was pleased to see that the staff networks were gaining traction again, but</p>



he remained concerned about the PADR rates which were outlined in the report.

SS commented that whilst it was recognised that further work was needed, strides had been taken to simplify the process and to remove barriers.

Helen Sweetland (HS), Independent Member, queried if there was enough resources available to be able to deliver the actions. SS explained the use of the delivery framework whilst acknowledging that the Health Board would always welcome additional staff.

PD noted that when referencing staff wellbeing, we needed to ensure that we include volunteers on the People Plan.

The Committee **NOTED** the report and were **ASSURED** by its contents.

PCC/1106/11

Assurance on Compliance with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 - More Than Just Words

Geraint Scott (GS), Head of the Welsh Language Unit, was welcomed to the Committee as well as Huw Williams (HW), Welsh Language Support Officer.

The Committee noted that the Welsh Language Unit formally launched the next aspect of the Skills Surgery programme at Eisteddfod yr Urdd in Margam Park, Swansea on the 27 May 2025. The Committee noted that while the sessions delivered by Health Board staff were positively received by all participants, they are resource-intensive and currently limited in the number of students they can accommodate.

GS explained that the aim of the project was to generate a pack that was fully resourced and would be able to be delivered independently by schools. The resource launched contained fully planned lessons with all associated resources that any school can deliver. The Committee noted that the lesson plans had been aligned with the Welsh Government's 'Curriculum for Wales' with each lesson clearly noting which areas of the curriculum would be covered within each lesson.

GS provided an update in respect of digital platforms and it was noted that work had continued on existing digital platforms to ensure that they were both compliant with the



Welsh Language Standards and ready for use by service users.

The Committee noted that the patient portal platform was fully compliant with the Welsh language standards and further noted that the promptly health platform was ready to be launched.

The Committee further noted that the use of Welsh language champions in departments was working well, particularly in the physiotherapy department, but there were often misconceptions around the role and the need to be fluent in Welsh speaking.

PD asked if there were any plans to utilise AI developments in this field. GS explained that they were exploring Co-Pilot due to the bilingual capabilities, however it was also noted that the Welsh Language Commissioner's Office was focused on this element and the Health Board would take a steer from them when there was a plan to utilise AI more systematically.

The report was **NOTED** by the Committee.

PCC/1106/12

Training, Development and Education - Assurance on Workforce Planning and Education Commissioning Numbers

Shelley Williams (SW), Deputy Director of Workforce, presented the report to the Committee. It was noted that the educational commissioning plan was part of the requirement of the Health Board's IMTP submission, and was considered and approved by the Executive Committee on 13 March 2025 prior to submission directly to HEIW as the strategic workforce and education body for NHS Wales.

The Committee noted that this year's education commissioning mostly assumed a training pipeline that moderately replaced turnover and retirements and any agreed anticipated service expansion.

The Committee noted that in Nursing and Midwifery the current reported vacancies of 170WTE across all bands is a reduction from last year by 100WTE.

Furthermore, the Committee noted that the appetite of students to take up careers within the NHS may also have been affected by current industrial relations and pay disputes



	<p>within the public sector. In addition to this, the Committee heard that whilst student placements had increased in some training fields by 50% over the past 5 years, there was an underlying concern that there was a diminishing pool of Welsh students willing to undertake university education in these fields. For example, not all branches of nursing were successful in filling their places in 2022 and as a result Cardiff University would not be running a Mental Health course in March 2024 due to poor uptake for this field last year.</p> <p>The Committee NOTED the report.</p>
<p>PCC/1106/13</p>	<p>Annual Assurance Report on Job Planning and Assurance of Implementation of Medical E-Systems</p> <p>Sarah Simmonds (SS), Director of Workforce & OD, presented the report to the Committee and it was noted that there had been some progress made in relation to job planning.</p> <p>Helen Sweetland (HS), Independent Member, explained that whilst progress has been made, she remained disappointed to see the compliance rate at 42%.</p> <p>SS explained that whilst she recognised the compliance was not where the Health Board would want it, there had been progress made with percentage increases month on month. SS further explained there was targeted work underway with Divisional Directors, Clinical Directors, and individual consultants.</p> <p>James Calvert (JC), Medical Director, explained to the Committee that the Health Board had to start from scratch with a new system, from design through to procurement and deployment all of which take time. JC noted that whilst it was a positive process, it will take time to embed.</p> <p>HS noted the target set by Welsh Government was 90% compliance by September and queried if there were any sanctions if the Health Board was non-compliant. JC explained that he was not aware of any sanctions, but believed that most of the divisions would reach this target.</p> <p>The report was NOTED.</p>
<p>PCC/1106/14</p>	<p>Workforce Performance Dashboard incorporating Key Performance Indicators</p>



Sarah Simmonds (SS), Director of Workforce & OD, presented the report to the Committee. It was noted that in April 2025, sickness absence increased to 5.98%, which was a 0.04% increase compared to March 2025 (5.94%). The 3 main reasons for sickness were Anxiety, Stress, Depression and other Psychiatric illness 32.6%, other Musculoskeletal problems 9.4% and Other known causes-not elsewhere classified were 7.4%.

In terms of staff turnover, the 12-month total percentage was 8.71% compared to 9.04% at the same time last year, which was a decrease of 0.33%.

The Committee noted that Nursing and Midwifery had the lowest turnover rate of 6.05%, whilst Allied Health Professionals had the highest turnover rate of 11.96%

The Committee further noted that Statutory and Mandatory training had decreased from 81.98% in March 2025 to 78.36% in April 2025. Statutory and Mandatory training compliance also decreased by 1.45% compared to 79.81% in April 2024, and SS explained that this was a result of additional courses being added to the library of training.

Helen Sweetland (HS), Independent Member, noted that administrative and clerical posts were increasing and queried if the strict review policy for vacancies remained in place.

SS confirmed that local/divisional vacancy review processes remain in place.

Furthermore, the Committee noted that Welsh Government was undertaking a review of statutory and mandatory training.

SS advised that the OD team deliver bespoke projects across the divisions, and advised that the team had received 224 requests for training and support over a 24-month period.

Phil Robson, (PR) ABUHB Vice Chair of the Board, thanked SS for the report and asked if the Committee could receive a report on how much the Health Board had grown over the last 5 years.

Action: Director of Workforce and OD

The report was **NOTED** by the Committee.



Report from the Director of Workforce & OD, including Employee Relations & Suspensions over 4 months

Sarah Simmonds (SS), Director of Workforce & OD, presented the report to the Committee. It was noted that during the period January to March, the Health Board had commissioned 14 new disciplinary investigations. The majority of the investigations (11 cases, 78%) relate to a failure to meet required standards or behaviour, with the remaining 3 linked to allegations of fraud.

In addition, the Committee noted there had been an increase in new disciplinary investigations from 5 in the previous quarter, to 14 in this period.

It was noted that at the time of the Committee there were 9 employees suspended from duty representing 0.05% of the workforce. SS explained that 3 employees had been suspended for over 12 months, 2 had been suspended for over 6 months, 3 employees had been suspended between 3 and 6 months and 1 employee had been suspended for less than 3 months.

SS explained that all suspensions were either linked to patient safety concerns or a police investigation, which often elongated the period of suspension and could prevent the Health Board taking further employer action until the criminal process had concluded.

The Committee noted that the All-Wales Staff Survey was undertaken in October and November of each year. The results would then be published at the end of February each year and SS confirmed that the organisational results had been shared with all staff via the intranet.

SS explained that the planning to promote the 2025 Survey was underway. The Committee noted that a staff survey communications plan had been developed which would enable the Health Board to promote the staff survey all year round with an aim of increasing participation rates.

The Committee heard that staff had provided feedback that there were too many surveys and therefore it had been agreed to refocus the Staff Wellbeing survey and this would no longer be sent out as an all-staff survey, but would instead be used as a bespoke tool to support individual teams when requested.



SS informed the Committee that work was ongoing to map the surveys which take place and also discussions were taking place to stand down all other surveys when the National Staff Survey is out so this becomes the focus.

Paul Deneen, Chair, thanked SS for the report and explained that he believes it would be useful to see the mapping out of all surveys which take place between January and December which could be broken down into each quarter.

Action: Director of Workforce & OD

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

PCC/1106/16

Speaking up Safely

Peter Brown (PB), Assistant Director of Workforce & OD, presented the report. It was explained that Welsh Government launched the Framework for Speaking up Safely in NHS Wales in August 2023 and was designed to be a safety net for staff who feel for any reason, unable to raise their concerns using other mechanisms.

PB explained that the Health Board launched the Framework on 01 December 2024 and since its launch 18 concerns have been raised using this process and of these, 6 have been raised anonymously. In addition, PB explained that in December 2024 the process was subject to a planned internal audit by NWSSP, the outcome of which was limited assurance.

The Committee noted that the audit was an assessment of the implementation of Welsh Government's framework and further noted that prior to the framework's launch there was a dedicated e-mail address for staff to use, and this was changed with the launch of the new framework.

The Committee noted that there was a planned follow up audit but there was no date for this yet.

Helen Sweetland (HS), Independent Member, requested clarity around the raising concerns policy and the speaking up safely process. PB explained that the Raising Concerns policy is the formal policy, and the Speaking Up Safely framework is the last resort to be used when all other routes outlined within the policy have been exhausted.



	<p>SS confirmed that the Health Board were taking on Board all of the issues outlined with the auditors to address the actions from the audit.</p> <p>The Committee NOTED the report.</p>
ITEMS FOR INFORMATION	
PCC/1106/17	<p>Annual Review of External Organisations Meeting Minutes</p> <p>The Committee received and noted the External Organisations Meeting Minutes.</p> <p>The Committee NOTED the minutes.</p>
PCC/1106/18	<p>Committee Annual Report 2024/25</p> <p>The Committee received the Annual Report for 2024/25.</p> <p>The Committee NOTED and APPROVED the Committee Annual Report.</p>
PCC/1106/19	<p>Annual Review of Committee Terms of Reference</p> <p>The Committee received the Terms of Reference for 2025/26.</p> <p>The Committee APPROVED the Terms of Reference.</p>
OTHER MATTERS	
PCC/1106/20	<p>Items to be Brought to the Attention of the Board and Other Committees</p> <p>The Committee agreed the following items should be brought to the attention of the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Planning to ensure there is a plan in place to address all issues and that this is progressed. This is to be regularly re viewed at People and Culture Committee meetings. • Refreshing of the People Plan and the 3 pillars. To include Volunteers. • Speaking up Safely to receive regular updates and to ensure actions are in place to address all of the



	<p>issues raised by the internal audit and that these are reviewed and monitored.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting that there had been 8 suspensions (of over 4 months).
<p>PCC/1106/21</p>	<p>Any Other Urgent Business</p> <p>Paul Deneen, Chair, noted that this was likely to be James Calvert (JC), Medical Directors, last meeting and expressed his sincere thanks for his work with the Committee during his tenure and wished him all the best in his new role.</p> <p>There was no other urgent business and the Committee was closed.</p>
<p>PCC/1106/22</p>	<p>Date of the Next Meeting</p> <p>Wednesday 15th October 2025</p>

