

NHS WESTERN ISLES

STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING
13TH FEBRUARY 2025
HELD AT 10:00AM
VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS



Members Present:

Naomi Macdonald
Gill McCannon
Sheena Wright
Paul Steele

Non-Executive Director (Chair)
Chair of the Board
Non-Executive Director
Non-Executive Director

In attendance:

Gordon Jamieson
Diane Macdonald
Stuart King
Iain Macaskill
Louise Sullivan
Fiona Mackenzie
Alana Macphee
Claire Paterson

Chief Executive
Director of Human Resources and Workforce Development
Organisational Development and Learning Manager
Health and Safety Manager
Head of Clinical Governance
Nurse/AHP Director & Chief Operating Officer
Society of Physiotherapists
PA to Director of HR and Workforce Development

1. WELCOME / APOLOGIES

Naomi Macdonald welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were noted from Nick Fayers, Shuna Mighton, Jane Bain and Cameron Thompson.

2. MINUTES

2.1 Staff Governance Committee minute 14.11.24

The Minute of the Staff Governance Committee meeting held on 14th November 2024 was approved as an accurate note of the discussion.

Decision: The Minute of 14th November 2024 was approved.

Action: None.

2.2 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising noted.

2.3 Action Points

In reviewing the action points, the Committee noted the following:

Childcare Provision and Exit Interviews

Diane Macdonald informed the committee that the HR team have used the NHS Scotland standard Exit Interview Questionnaire which and adapted to our own local needs, and to include childcare questions. Diane Macdonald noted that discussions with IT are underway to develop an electronic version as well as a paper copy of the questionnaire.

Naomi Macdonald thanked Diane Macdonald for the positive update on the progress of this action and asked for clarification around the deadline date of March 2025. Diane Macdonald noted that this draft will be finalised to meet the deadline date.

Medical Staffing Training

Diane Macdonald stated that after discussions with the Medical Director on how we promote and ensure our medical staff are aware of what is expected on Turas, an agreement is now in place that Stuart King can attend one of the Friday morning meetings with the Medical staff to support them with training sessions and remind them of what is required.

Decision: The Staff Governance Committee formally noted the verbal update

Action: Above updates/outcomes will be reflected in the revised Action Points.

3. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

4. WORKFORCE REPORT

4.1 Workforce Report November 2024 Summary

4.1.1 Workforce Report November 2024

Diane Macdonald presented the November 2024 Workforce Report. There remains a direction from Scottish Government to reduce the administration job family, Diane Macdonald stated that this is done through the restriction and control of vacancies as well as organisational change management.

Diane Macdonald noted that the age profile shows that the Board are attracting more staff in the under 35 age group which is positive.

To date, there has been a total of 41 applications accepted for Retire and Return.

Overtime hours remain high in Hotel Services due to vacancies, and in Estates who use overtime to manage the completion of projects.

Bank usage for the month of November was highest in Domestic Services due to additional cleaning requirements and vacancies. Acute Nursing was recorded with the next highest level of bank usage. Diane Macdonald noted that the bank shift fill rate had increased for Medical 2 in November due to positive recruitment. The main reasons for bank usage are due to vacancies and the use of contingency beds. Diane Macdonald added that this month there has been an increase in the reasoning 'staff training' which is positive and encouraged.

Diane Macdonald referred to agency usage and locum spend for the month of November highlighting the upcoming General Surgeon interviews which could lead to vacancies being filled.

Diane Macdonald stated that the month of November has the lowest recorded sickness rate in the last three years at 4.57% which is positive. The consistent application of the attendance management process continues to ensure numbers remain low. Looking at the absence rates across all Scottish Boards, Diane Macdonald noted that NHS Western Isles sit lower than the average.

There has been a positive reduction in the reasons for absence with Anxiety / Stress / Depression / Other Psy Illnesses dropped down to the lowest number recorded. Work continues to ensure that managers absence reasons are reported correctly, and the 'Unknown' reason is not used.

Diane Macdonald stated that, in terms of recruitment, Pharmacy are currently unable to recruit to a Clinical Pharmacist which is currently covered by agency staff. The CAMHs post is under review as this is a difficult to recruit to post on part time hours which has been out to advert unsuccessfully a number of times.

Diane Macdonald added that Frances Robertson has secured the Nurse/ AHP Director and Chief Operating Officer post. The Medical Director job is closing today with interviews expected at the beginning of March.

Sheena Wright thanked Diane Macdonald for the comprehensive report and asked for further information regarding the 41 Retire and Return applications, are these individuals coming back at the same band job. Diane Macdonald noted that it is most common for staff to just reduce their hours, however, most do stay in the same job or job family. Sheena Wright added that it is positive to see Bank hours used to cover staff training and an overall reduction in sickness absence.

Gillian McCannon agreed with the comments from Sheena Wright, and went on to ask, in regard to Retire and Return, are there any gaps in cohorts where staff are applying for this. Gillian McCannon added that it would be useful to see data on Partial Retirement as well as Retire and Return. Diane Macdonald stated that the difference between these retirement options are they way you access your pension, meaning staff are more inclined to go for Partial Retirement, which means they stay in the same post with reduced hours. Diane Macdonald added that a breakdown of job families can be provided, however there is no concern over specific areas.

Gillian McCannon highlighted as one of the main Bank request reasons is 'vacancy cover', staff burn out and wellbeing needs to be considered when staff offer to cover extra shifts.

Alana Macphee stated that with the challenges of recruitment and high level of vacancies, there needs to be some flexibility in base location, specifically for posts that are not clinical based. Diane Macdonald thanked Alana Macphee for raising this, adding that the posts that can be flexible in location are open to ensure there are opportunities over all the islands within the Board.

5. WORKFORCE PLAN/ADP

5.1 Workforce Plan 2024/25 Summary

5.1.1 Workforce Plan 2024/25 Updates

5.1.2 DL (2024) 33 National Health and Social Care Workforce Strategy: Workforce Planning

5.1.3 Workforce Section of Annual Delivery Plan 2025/26. Draft submission to SG.

Diane Macdonald presented the attached papers, including the draft Annual Delivery Plan submission that is ready to be sent to Scottish Government for information.

A Directors Letter was issued in December which lists nine questions that Board must respond to by the 17th March. Diane Macdonald noted that the data is being collected from Managers to provide the response to these questions. All the information is known and easily accessible, with questions around hard to fill posts and sickness absence rates.

Diane Macdonald informed the committee that there is currently no clear picture on how Workforce Planning is to look, however, work continues to ensure a new workforce plan is in place for the end of this year.

Gillian McCannon thanked Diane Macdonald, noting that this is a complex request that is being asked of the Boards. There needs to be a robust discussion on workforce planning and the strategy expectations going forward, it is important for the Board and Staff Governance Committee that there is a clear view of what the landscape will be for the future workforce. Gillian McCannon suggested scheduling a workshop to ensure these important discussions can be made.

Diane Macdonald noted that as the landscape is unclear at the moment which makes planning difficult however further discussions will go ahead and a workshop could be facilitated.

Fiona Mackenzie stated that, as a Board, we need to look at how we manage our workforce and create a plan going forward while we await confirmation. There are a number of pieces on going with the Annual Delivery Plan, the Remote Rural Island and Sustainable Island Service, with no clear vision on how they will look.

6. STAFF GOVERNANCE MONITORING

6.1 Staff Governance Action Plan Summary

6.1.1 Staff Governance Action Plan

Stuart King presented the Staff Governance Action Plan for this year and went on to highlight some main actions. Some of these actions will roll over to the 2025-2026 action plan, which will be presented at the next committee meeting.

Stuart King stated that there continue to be reoccurring Communications sent to staff around Wellbeing, Training and Thanks a Million and Greatix for staff recognition and allowing staff to say thank you.

Themed HR Drop In sessions continue which have been helpful and all well received by Managers. Gail Allan presented a Bereavement Friendly Workplaces talk, while others have been about retirement, managing absences, flexible working and neurodiversity.

Stuart King noted that the Organisation Development and Learning policy and strategy is an action on the attached plan and he will provide the update under the relevant agenda item.

The Mental Health contacts were launched in January to offer additional support to staff who need this mental health focus.

Stuart King highlighted the next segment of Once's for Scotland Policies are due in the upcoming months, support will be available for managers around these changes.

Naomi Macdonald thanked Stuart King for this update. Referring to page 20 of the Action Plan, Naomi Macdonald asked if there is an Turas Monitoring update. Stuart King stated that a full update will be

provided under the relevant agenda item however, developments with NES can be slow to progress but the baseline reporting mechanism is working well for now.

7. OD & LEARNING STRATEGY AND POLICY

7.1 OD & Learning Summary

7.1.1 Learning and Development Policy

7.1.2 OD & Learning Strategy

Stuart King presented the Organisational Development and Learning Strategy and Policy. The key areas are succession planning, employability, learning development and management, which will all help development career pathways and equal opportunities for staff.

The policy has been through and approved by Policy Review Group and the Area Partnership Forum where there were additional adjustments made from positive suggestions from Staff Side.

Stuart King noted that the next steps will be for the policy itself to be shared and an action plan will be finalised and circulated for the next committee meeting. This action plan will reflect how this strategy will be actioned and implemented within the organisation.

Naomi Macdonald praised Stuart King for the comprehensive report, adding that the action points will be positive to see.

Gillian McCannon thanked Stuart King and the team for their extensive work on this policy and strategy, adding that it is good to see the organisations commitment to training. This work feeds into the workforce strategy and succession planning.

Paul Steele thanked Stuart King for the detailed report, and asked where the Gaelic language sits within the policy and what opportunities there is for this. Diane Macdonald noted that this sits under the Gaelic Language Plan which is lead by the Equality and Diversity Team.

8. TURAS LEARN

Stuart King presented the attached Turas Learn update which provides the committee with a brief overview of the volume of work that has been ongoing in the last few months.

Line Manager reporting is now in place which will ensure accurate reporting and allow managers to manage compliance. Stuart King noted that a number of awareness sessions have gone ahead, with good uptake, to ensure all Managers know how to fully use the reporting mechanism.

Stuart King informed the committee that the next development is the face-to-face training being bookable through Turas. This is expected to be in place after the summer and will then allow all face to face training to be included in the Line Manager reports.

A quarterly report is being looked into to provide Turas compliance, work experience data and what job families are accessing which Turas Modules. Stuart King added that he hopes to have this drafted and ready for the committee meeting in May.

Naomi Macdonald thanked Stuart King for the comprehensive report and added that it is positive to see the compliance increasing.

Sheena Wright noted that it is helpful to hear the plans moving forward with the system and how positive it is to see the training compliance increasing.

Gillian McCannon asked if there will be a centralised reporting system for example, where all ward data is located in the once place and easily accessible. Gillian McCannon noted that she has attended some useful WINE's sessions and asked if it is possible to see the uptake numbers on each session. Stuart King thanked Gillian McCannon for her comments, adding that it is only HR that have the ability to look at an employee to view what they have attended. In the quarterly report data can be added on all learning staff compliance, including iMatter awareness sessions and WINE's. Gillian McCannon thanked Stuart King, noting that from a governance perspective, this is really positive and a good reporting system to have in place.

Louise Sullivan highlighted that when the course booking feature is in place, there will be this reporting system for all in person training from then on. For all other training held through Clinical Skills, data is gathered in reports which are presented at OSDT and then come to this committee.

Gordon Jamieson noted that, if we can optimise what reports the Turas system can provide then this would be best. A central reporting system was trialled previously and it was found a lot of information was missed.

Alana Macphee referred to the ALS and BLS training compliance numbers, stating that these numbers may not be accurate as the training, when, available for the Sothern Isles has a low uptake due to Clinicians unable to take time to attend. Louise Sullivan noted that the Southern Isles attendance is good due to the sessions being infrequent compared to Western Isles Hospital staff, sessions are regularly held so staff may delay signing up.

9. HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 9.1 Health and Safety Update Summary
 - 9.1.1 Health and Safety Update Report
 - 9.1.2 Health and Safety Training Statistics
 - 9.1.3 Peoplesafe Update
 - 9.1.4 Approved Health and Safety Committee Minutes

Iain Macaskill presented the attached papers and went on to highlight the main updates.

The Health and Safety team have been supporting APU regarding the Ligature assessment. From the work that has been carried out, the team are awaiting a for the ligature safe doors to be fitted before a report can be completed.

From the Fire Safety Audit that was carried out at St Brendan's, the report has been received which will be circulated for discussion at the Fire Safety Committee. Iain Macaskill noted that the team have planned a trip for March.

Iain Macaskill shared the proposed fire risk assessment dates which has been drafted to ensure each area is covered and tested four times a year. Along with these tests, statutory checks will take place by a warden from each individual area and an audit will be completed. In clinical areas where full fire drills cannot run, desk top drills will be completed. Iain Macaskill stated that Quarter 1 Fire Risk assessment has been very successful, and highlighted the issues that need to be addressed. These will be escalated to the Fire Safety Committee.

Following on from the four recently approved policies, the team are reviewing the Fire Safety Policy and the Health and Safety Policy. The Lone Worker Policy and Driving For Work Policy are currently under review.

Iain Macaskill informed the committee that the Peoplesafe trial went ahead successfully with ten units used and a positive response from staff. A proposal case is now being drafted to establish the staff groups who would use these devices, such as lone community staff.

There were a total of 6 Datix reports of staff incidents through the month of January, five of which were near misses, including two RTA near misses caused by icy conditions. Iain Macaskill noted that these incidents are all investigated when reported.

In the month of January, there were a total of three violence and aggression incidents reports, this shows an increase by two since the December report. Iain Macaskill stated that the reported incidents are reviewed when reported.

Iain Macaskill referred to the last page of Item 9.1.2 Health and Safety Training Statistics Report where the table highlights where the compliance rates need to sit, at 85%, compared to where they currently sit. Compliance rates for the four mandatory units have increased significantly over the most recent months, however, a further increase is needed to meet the 85%.

Sheena Wright thanked Iain Macaskill for the helpful report noting that it is positive to see improvements and targets in place for this to continue.

Iain Macaskill highlighted that the Health and Safety Team have reached out to staff in areas where they do not have access to computers and offered sessions in the library to allow staff time and support to complete their Turas Modules, this has been well received.

10. WHISTLEBLOWING

10.1 Whistleblowing Q2 Report Summary

10.1.1 Whistleblowing Q2 Report 2024/2025

10.2 Whistleblowing Q3 Report Summary

10.2.1 Whistleblowing Q3 Report 2024/2025

Louise Sullivan presented Quarter 2 and Quarter 3 Whistleblowing Reports, stating that there were no concerns raised in either report.

Sheena Wright noted for information that herself and Lousie Sullivan are working on the annual update, and ask from Scottish Government, which needs to be completed by 31st March.

Speak Up Week is scheduled to run from the 30th September to the 4th October 2025.

11. WELLBEING UPDATE

Stuart King informed the committee that the Wellbeing Group meeting every second month. The report provides examples of the regular dedicated Comms which are sent to staff around financial wellbeing, physical and mental health.

The Mental Health Contacts have been launched after attending a refresher workshop. The contacts are similar to the Confidential Contacts however, they have a mental health focus providing a listening and signposting service for staff. Continual Comm's will be circulated weekly to remind staff of the service available. Stuart King noted that data from the contacts will be gathered anonymously to allow reports to be created to inform the Board of the topics, length and frequency of the conversations needed.

Stuart King stated that a series of Wellbeing Focus Groups are being scheduled in March, with some in person and some online. These sessions are to gather information from staff on what is going well and what isn't going well which will allow the group to look at what improvements and supports are needed. Stuart King asked all members to encourage staff in their departments to attend these groups.

12. AGENDA FOR CHANGE – NON-PAY ELEMENTS

Diane Macdonald presented the AfC Non-Pay Elements highlighting that there is little update to report since the last meeting.

The Reduced Working Week has been fully implemented however, there has to date, been no direction on any further reduction this year. There has been a strong message from all Boards to the Scottish Government for the reduction to be held off until 2026. In preparation, locally, information has been sourced from all managers regarding a further reduction.

There are a total of 26 applications in process for the Band 5 and 6 Reviews, with three fully submitted. A further two staff side have completed training and have joined the job matching team. Diane Macdonald stated that RCN have a planned visit on the 17th and 18th June which will encourage and support staff through the application process.

Protected Learning Time continues to be looked into through national working groups with no confirmation as of yet with how this will look for each job family. Stuart King stated that a Protected Learning Time draft proposal needs to be submitted by the end of February by each national working group, adding that by the next committee meeting, he hopes to have a more detailed update.

Naomi Macdonald asked if there is a restriction to how many staff can apply for the Band 5 and 6 Reviews. Diane Macdonald noted that there is no restriction on numbers, however, staff need evidence of additional clinical skills or management responsibility to apply.

13. iMATTER 2024

13.1 iMatter Summary

13.1.1 iMatter 2024 National Report

Stuart King presented the iMatter 2024 National Report which was circulated shortly after the last Staff Governance Committee Meeting.

The report is an overall Board report which shows we are at 62%, which is near average when compared to other Boards and continued progression from previous years.

The Employee Engagement Index for NHS Western Isles sits at 75.

The iMatter Action Plans have increased to 66% agreed, Stuart King noted that this was the clear focus last year and will remain this year to highlight the importance and to ensure this increase continues.

Stuart King noted that there hopes to be some improvements to iMatter including, a question that focuses more on asking staff if an action plan was created and followed up with. Once Protected Learning Times is implemented, there is as plan to also have a question added focused on this.

Moving forward, awareness sessions will continue to be available to Managers as and when necessary to ensure the upward trajectory continues.

Stuart King highlighted that the Board are in a positive position, however, there is always room for improvement.

14. FOR INFORMATION

14.1 PCS(ESM)2025-1 - ESM Pay 2024-25 - Performance Related Progression

This circular was noted for information.

Diane Macdonald stated that this circular will be progressed through the Remuneration Committee.

15. AOCB

There was no other concerning business noted.

16. Evaluation

	YES	NO	COMMENTS
Was there was sufficient time to review the papers between receipt and the meeting?	✓		
Were you satisfied with the content of the agenda?	✓		
Was the agenda items were placed in the correct order / prioritization?	✓		
Was there was enough time allocated to all items?	✓		
Were the executive summaries were appropriate for the papers?	✓		
Was the purpose of each paper was clear?	✓		
Was there were sufficient refreshment breaks?	✓		
Are there any significant issues which should be raised to the Board?		✓	
Do you have any suggestions for improvement or additional comments about this meeting?		✓	Please send any suggestions to Claire Paterson

17. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Venue: Microsoft Teams

Time: 10:00am
Date: 15th May 2025

Month / 2025	Paper deadline / 2025	Meeting Date / 2025
February 2025	30 th January 2025	13 th February 2025
May 2024	1 st May 2025	15 th May 2025
August 2025	31 st July 2025	14 th August 2025
November 2025	30 th October 2025	13 th November 2025

The Chair thanked members for their input into the discussion and brought the meeting to an end.

END