



**Mersey Care**  
NHS Foundation Trust

Community and Mental Health Services

# PEOPLE AND CULTURE PLAN

2022 TO 2025







# A MESSAGE FROM AMANDA OATES, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF WORKFORCE



In recognition of the dedication you show to our patients, service users, carers, your colleagues and our wider communities every day, this plan is for you.

We want you to recommend Mersey Care as a fantastic place to work and one in which you

feel supported and safe. In refreshing the People and Culture Plan, we have reviewed the lessons learnt during COVID-19, the NHS operating context and significant challenges effecting people both in work and at home. The impact of this on all of our people and how we react, has never been more important.

As a result, key components of this plan will focus heavily on your health and well being, how we support you and how we collectively tackle your workload pressures. There will be also be greater focus on:

- Our people processes (recruitment and e rostering)
- Enabling system capability (and utilisation) to release time to care
- Supporting your development - enabling your growth in current and future roles within an environment of managerial and leadership excellence, so you can thrive.

We know that one of our biggest challenges is supporting our people's health and resilience. We recognise that there is a direct impact on our capacity to care and the quality and experience for our patients, service users and colleagues so we are committed to working with you.

We are now in our seventh year of the Trust's Restorative Just and Learning Culture which continues to evolve and develop. Building on this work, this year we launched the Trust's zero acceptance of racism, discriminatory and uncivil behaviours perfect care goal.

We have asked our people to take steps in becoming actively anti racist, with a clear expectation of the work we need to put in place to provide the appropriate education, challenge and support to take the actions we need to make Mersey Care a better place for ALL our people. I know we continue to apply our Restorative

Just and Learning Culture in practical ways to have kinder, fairer people processes that work for ALL our people. However, the trusts Workforce Racial Equality Data , Workforce Disability Equality Data and other people metrics, continue to highlight the disparities regarding inequalities and have accelerated a drive to take collaborative action. However, this is everyone's job and there is always more we can do.

The voice of our staff networks has never been more important and together we have shaped this new people and culture plan, including the audacious goal of "zero acceptance of racism, discriminatory and uncivil behaviours" . This is a new strategy which sets out our commitment to a systematic review of our culture. This will ensure that we contest and shift any values, structures and behaviours in our organisation that enable systemic racism, discrimination, incivility and disrespect to survive.

I am aware that there are still places in Mersey Care where restorative just and learning culture is still tentative, still not felt or visible, still hasn't achieved the cultural shift required, and we endeavour to continuously push to do more.

For more information on our Just and Learning resources and development opportunities, please go visit the [Just and Learning Culture section on YourSpace](#).

Your health and well being has never been more important. We have invested as a trust significantly in this area over the years and we continue to do so. We are currently reviewing our model for staff support, occupational health and well being to ensure we are more pro active and operationally aligned to services to ensure it works and supports our people more.

The review of our trust values in 2021 and the review of our civility and respect work has achieved so much already, however, through this people plan we wish to drive and transform our culture even more. I need everyone's help to do this.

**Thank you for bringing the 'best of you' to work at Mersey Care.**

**Amanda Oates**  
Executive Director of Workforce

At Mersey Care, we acknowledge that our organisational strength is our people and that it is through our people that we are able to create inclusive environments which foster compassion and learning. By working side by side with our staff, just and learning culture ambassadors, staff side colleagues, volunteers, patients, service users and their carers, we continually challenge and improve care for our communities.

Our Restorative Just and Learning Culture is all about Mersey Care striving to create a learning organisation; creating a culture of continuous learning and improvement that we know is critical to clinical excellence and NHS Patient Safety. The aspiration is an environment where staff feel supported and empowered to learn when things do not go as expected, rather than feeling blamed. This supports the development of a culture that instinctively asks in the case of an adverse event: "what was responsible, not who is responsible" and seeks to balance learning, restoration and accountability.

Our journey towards a Restorative Just and Learning Culture inclusive of civility and respect continues to be at the very heart of our People and Culture Plan.

We have however gone even further, to be an employer with zero acceptance of racism,

discrimination, and unacceptable behaviours from and towards our workforce and our patients/service users, carers and families. In this plan we show how we are taking a holistic approach to anti-racism by focusing on three key principles of education, challenge and support.

It has been an unprecedented and exceptionally difficult three years within the NHS. The impact of the COVID- 19 pandemic on staff resilience and engagement is still apparent and recognised nationally, regionally and locally. We know that we must work tirelessly to make sure that every individual in our workforce feels connected to our **Culture**; feels **Engaged** with our vision and feels that they absolutely **Belong**.

Simply put, our People and Culture Plan aims to provide a people centered focus to the choices we make, as we steer and support our workforce to deliver the Trust's strategic goal to "strive for perfect, whole person care that helps people live longer, happier lives".

To do this we recognise that we must continue to focus on "creating a compelling place to work where we attract, retain and develop the best people to deliver the best care and be the best they can be".



# A MESSAGE FROM AISLINN O'DWYER



As Chair of the People Committee and the Trusts' newly appointed Wellbeing Guardian, I welcome this refreshed People Plan 2022 to 2025, updated as a result of the publication of the National People Plan, "We are the NHS: People Plan 2020/21".

We want Mersey Care to be a great place to work where staff are safe and healthy, physically and mentally, and able to work flexibly. I am fully committed to ensuring Mersey Care is an organisation that does not accept racism, or discriminatory and disrespectful behaviour, a commitment shared by the whole Board.

COVID-19 has demonstrated the huge resilience of our staff, who have worked tirelessly to deliver compassionate care, to the highest of standards, during the Pandemic. I offer the huge thanks of the whole Board, to all our staff, for all they have done, during this hugely challenging time.

We commit to continued support for all our people, with a focus on equality and inclusion; health and wellbeing and continuing to make Mersey care a great place to work. We are looking to make further inroads with the Restorative Just and Learning culture approach. That, alongside Mersey Care's values, support our commitment to providing Perfect Care, and I look forward to working with you all to make this vision a reality.

Take care, and stay safe.

## Aislinn O'Dwyer

Non-Executive Director, Chair of the People Committee and Health and Wellbeing Guardian

# A MESSAGE FROM IAN RAVEN



The Joint Staff Side here at Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust is an integral and an important part of this organisation.

We work in partnership with all stakeholders across the Trust to ensure our members' voices are heard and more

importantly listened too, as staff advocates we expect nothing less.

This year's People and Culture Plan seems more ambitious than ever. As part of the wider NHS, the Mersey Care workforce has experienced unprecedented demands and every team has gone above and beyond to support the daily delivery of the services we provide. Indeed, these are exceptional times.

Staff Side have and will continue to be a vital part of the Trust by ensuring that the support for colleagues, as outlined in this plan is a fundamental expectation of working for Mersey Care.

Whilst the plan sets out the organisation's goals for its employees, Staff Side will continue to work collaboratively to support and hold the organisation accountable.

We will also continue to build on the work we have jointly undertaken in relation to Restorative Just and Learning Culture and support the work needed to make Mersey Care an anti-racist organisation, ensuring all policies and how they are enacted have these principles at their core.

## Ian Raven

Chair of Staff Side  
Branch Secretary Unite the Union

# PEOPLE PLAN

1. Our 2022 to 2025 People and Culture Plan is underpinned by the NHS People Promise and is framed around four pillars which are:

- Looking after our people: We will ensure that we create the conditions that enable our people to feel supported and well, including a focus on retention, health and wellbeing and attendance
- Belonging in the NHS: We will ensure that all our people are treated fairly, and any inequalities addressed. We will support our people to feel safe and empowered to speak up and bring their whole selves to work and to feel proud and fully engaged in the work they do, including a focus on BaME disparity and equality across all protected characteristics
- New ways of working and delivering care: We will plan for the future and then implement and embed change effectively including a focus on new roles, the workforce to deliver multidisciplinary care, e-job planning and e-rostering and volunteer services
- Growing for the future: We will support our people to develop and reach their potential, including a focus on international recruitment, widening participation, temporary staffing, medical training, and clinical placements.

The rationale for reframing our people priorities is all about :

- Keeping the messaging clear and simple
- Continuing to enhance and innovate the Trust's Restorative Just and Learning Culture
- Designing our Trust operating model to reflect our new organisation (post acquisition of North West Boroughs and post COVID-19)
- Bringing colleagues together from across physical, mental health and social support to deliver coordinated care
- Emphasising the importance of creating psychological safety as a fundamental requirement for learning, improvement, staff wellbeing, patient care and experience
- Ensuring all teams and leaders have the tools, skills and support to create an inclusive, safe, learning environment that is fully aligned to

clinical excellence and in doing so supports their resilience and effectiveness

- Acknowledging equality, inclusion and belonging of our workforce is not the same for all groups of staff and thereby calling for collective action to change this especially around our commitment to becoming an anti-racist organisation
- Recognising the very real impact of staff absence and resilience and these are areas of considerable concern. We need to help people stay well in work and in the event that they do become ill, ensure that we are providing the best possible support to aid their recovery and return to the workplace.

## Unprecedented change

For Mersey Care and the NHS this is an unprecedented period with accelerated change and organisational growth. We recognise the anxieties change brings and endeavour to inform, engage and support our people throughout.

We recognise this significant period of change requires different skills and attributes. As a learning organisation, we fully commit to prioritising education, training and development. We follow the principle that developing our people's capability today, is creating the capacity to deliver care tomorrow. Creating the culture in which we all want to bring our whole self to work, making use of the full range of people's skills and experience to deliver the best positive patient care and colleague experience.

Our size, the geography we cover and the scope of services we deliver has extended over the years. Our People and Culture Plan is a step on an important journey as we navigate through these challenging times nationally, as a Trust, in our new directorates and at team level.

We continue our ambition to strengthen our organisation to create a more integrated model of care for our patient population. This will support us to provide a wider breadth of opportunity to recruit and retain staff through enhancing the opportunities for our staff to develop and grow within the organisation.



Our People and Culture Plan gives us an imperative to think about the most important strategic priorities for our people, developed with our people, for our people.

### Partnership working

A key strength for Mersey Care is the strong commitment and ethos we have to partnership working with our staff and staff side colleagues and this will continue to be the way we operate; recognising that our staff side representatives play a central role in conveying the thoughts, feelings, aspirations and fears of our workforce. By working together, we always aspire to doing the best we can for our people.

### Our Trust Values

Following our Trust's growth in 2021, we took the opportunity to review and update our staff charter, values and behaviours framework to make sure it remains inclusive and relevant to all staff, including those who joined us from other organisations. This exercise was carried out in partnership with staff, using the Your Voice, Your Change, to engage with you about our future values. Our People Promise and Charter highlights what is expected of you in supporting our Restorative Just and Learning Culture and what you can expect from the Trust in return.

Our values, practices and behaviours are at the heart of this People Plan, and how our staff do things is as important as what we do. Mersey Care's values and Staff Charter were co-produced through an extensive engagement process with colleagues across the trust, service users and carers.

Our values are the golden thread within our aspiration to deliver Perfect Care and have been embedded within all of our people management and development policies and practices.

Mersey Care has changed significantly in the last seven years; our workforce has expanded from 3,500 to circa 12,000 people, all of whom are employed to improve the lives of the people we serve.

**C**ontinuous improvement

**A**ccountability

**R**espect

**E**nthusiasm

**S**upport

Check out the [People Promise and Charter document](#).

# OUR PEOPLE PLAN PRIORITIES

People plan pillar	People Plan Workstream	What will good look like?
<b>Growing for Our Future</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education, Development and Training</li> <li>Talent Management and Succession planning – readying our people</li> <li>Workforce planning and modelling</li> </ul>	<p>Development for all colleagues to build on their potential.</p> <p>We have regular proactive learning from when things don't go so well, as well as from our successes.</p> <p>Staff performing highly and safely</p>
<b>New ways of working</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>System design (integrated care system)</li> <li>Organisational redesign and implementation</li> <li>Systems and infrastructure</li> </ul>	<p>Our organisation is built with integrated, patient focused efficient and effective structure with enabling organisational effectiveness support</p> <p>Our workforce plans are forward focused, agile and linked to the "Together we are Mersey Care organisation design" and service plans</p> <p>Our services are appropriately staffed.</p>
<b>Looking after Our People</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Team Health</li> <li>Leadership Development</li> <li>Health and Wellbeing</li> <li>Employee Lifecycle</li> </ul>	<p>Compassionate leadership is enabled with leaders proficient in leadership knowledge, skills and attitudes.</p> <p>Teams are high performing and cohesive.</p> <p>Our people are safe, competent, healthy and well in their mental and physical wellbeing.</p>
<b>Belonging in the NHS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restorative Just and Learning Culture</li> <li>Engagement and empowerment</li> <li>Belonging</li> <li>Equality, Diversity &amp; Inclusion (EDI)</li> <li>Anti-racism</li> </ul>	<p>People are proud to work here, feel supported, recognised and that they belong.</p> <p>People feel able to speak up and enjoy coming to work.</p> <p>People learn and make improvements.</p>





## Civility and Respect

The Trust's in-depth focus on the value of respect began in 2018, and four years on our respect and civility campaign continues to be an important aspect of our Restorative Just and Learning Culture approach. The Respect & Civility work has gained considerable momentum and remains at the heart of our Corporate Induction, Leadership Development programmes and our Team Canvas.

Whilst we accept we should not have to ask people to be polite, we cannot be complacent. Incivility, disrespect and at worse bullying can turn an idyllic job into something that you start to dread. Mersey Care wants to make sure that we operate in a workplace where respect and civility is enacted every time, and at every contact. We need all colleagues to support this approach and challenge poor behaviour compassionately if it occurs.

Our bystander CARES model and #IWillSpeakUp provides staff with the encouragement and toolkit's to do this both respectfully and professionally. Key to demonstrating our respect in action is that when our people 'speak up' that we 'listen up' and 'follow up'. As we recognise that respect and civility is a critical component of psychological safety and our quest to be a learning organisation.

## Our People Promise



The national people plan includes a promise to everyone who works in the NHS, the desire to help make the NHS a better place to work by ensuring staff are safe and health, physically and mentally well and able to work flexibly.

We will continue to engage with our workforce to understand if these promises truly feel alive in Mersey Care. We ask quarterly through our Culture of Care Barometer and again in the annual NHS staff Survey and we commit to listening and take action based on what we hear.

## In summary

The refreshed People Plan establishes 15 Workstreams within a framework that provides meaningful connections between people and trust delivery.

By leveraging these, we will strive to generate, maintain and increase commitment from our people to deliver outstanding services for the communities we serve, whilst we harness a supportive work environment and culture for our greatest asset to thrive – our people.

Critically, the four NHS People Plan pillars are fundamental to the delivery of Mersey Care's overall organisational health which research has highlighted will turn and drive organisational performance, underpinned by consistent performance management and behaviours.

## How will we deliver our plan?

The development of this plan has been led by the workforce function; however it is co-owned and co-delivered together with our leaders, managers, staff and staff side colleagues.

That said, this plan belongs to you and all of our colleagues at Mersey Care, its success depends on our collective leadership and commitment to ensure shared ownership and contribution.

A high level action plan has been developed to support this plan and more detailed Workstream plans are in place with clear objectives. The workforce function will work closely with clinical directorates and corporate partners to achieve, so that you, our colleagues, can hold us to account, so that you can ensure that we deliver on our promises to you.

The plan will also have a specific focus on improving performance across workforce key performance indicators - getting the basics right for our people.

These indicators are split between regulatory targets as described by the NHS Oversight Framework and internally set Trust targets.

To further recognise the Trust's aspiration to deliver Perfect Care the internally set targets have been ambitiously set by us to encourage the very best performance we believe we can deliver.






# WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP FOR OUR PEOPLE



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