

**LONDON AMBULANCE SERVICE NHS TRUST**

**STAFF COUNCIL**

**Friday 24 February 2017**

**Conference Room, HQ Waterloo, 14:30-16:30**

**Present:**

Karen Broughton	Director of Transformation and Strategy
Mark Hirst	Interim Director of Workforce
Paul Woodrow	Director of Operations
Tony Crabtree	Deputy Director of Workforce
Andy Bell	Acting Director of Finance
Tim Stephens	Trade Union side/Unison chair (Chair)
Eddie Brand	Trade Union side/Unison secretary
Steve Johnson	Unison South West
Brian Robinson	Unison East Central
Clive Tombs	GMB Branch Secretary
Brian Eldridge	GMB South East
Peter Hannell	Unison North West
Marcus Davis	Unison Central
Julie Cunnane	Unison North East
Wendy Cox	GMB EOC
Brendan Kemp	GMB Regional Organiser

**Inn Attendance:**

Gill Heuchan - Assistant Director, Workforce Development and Support (for occupational health update)

**1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

**1.1. Welcome**

Ahead of the main business of the meeting, the Council noted for the record their thanks and appreciation of Eric Roberts' role contribution and over many years, and offered their support and condolences to his family. Tim Stephens confirmed that the trade union side had held its annual election and confirmed that he was now trade

union side chair, and Eddie Brand had taken Eric's role as trade union side secretary. Tim welcomed all to the meeting and introductions were made.

## 1.2 Apologies

Apologies were received from Andrew Grimshaw, Sandra Adams and Phil Thompson.

## 2. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2016 were approved as a true record.

## 3. **ACTIONS/MATTERS ARISING**

- **Vehicle checks:** Tim Stephens referred to the intention to publish a bulletin on protected time for statutory vehicle checks. He was not aware that this had been taken forward, but stated that staff felt that more time was needed than is currently provided at the start of the shift. Staff also believe that the introduction of "perfect ward" has added to the time pressures.

Paul Woodrow replied that protected time issues should be considered within the roster review process beginning in late Spring/early Summer. Staff Side will be involved in this work, and all suggestions and contributions are welcome. Similarly, staff side has been invited to participate in the medicines management group, so should feed back issues or concerns on "perfect ward"/use of the Ipad in that forum. However, the changes to medicines management were necessary as this had been a major issue identified by CQC.

- **Issues at local hospitals:** Tony Crabtree confirmed that this item had simply been a request for staff and staff side to add any local detail or intelligence about issues about handover or turnaround at hospitals, so as to complement existing knowledge.
- **Rest Break policy:** Mark Hirst confirmed that a proposed draft policy had been shared with staff side ahead of planned discussions. Unfortunately the meetings had not taken place, and it was imperative that these were arranged for the coming weeks. The Trust Board is very keen to see new arrangements and the aim was to agree these with staff side.
- **Paramedic Banding:** Mark Hirst confirmed that 7 core roles that required paramedic registration had been identified and the job descriptions submitted for banding. Each was now confirmed in band 6. All paramedics eligible to move into band 6 would receive any associated pay increase and arrears in salary payments in March.

There is now a national job description template for the band 5 newly qualified paramedic (NQP) role. This would be shared with staff side. A project Board has been established with a meeting imminent. Staff Side confirmed receipt of an invitation to participate and that a representative would attend.

It was noted that the NQP role was more of a challenge in London, not least due to the number of staff (around 500). Tim Stephens raised a concern about the two year qualification period for NQPs, which he felt led to a “two tier” paramedic service. He also feared that these staff would be lost to other Trusts due to cost of living issues, and requested consideration of a reduced qualification period. Mark Hirst agreed that the “fast track” option should at least be considered for some staff.

Eddie Brand requested that mentoring payments continue for those staff who do not see any immediate increase in their salary as a result of the re-banding exercise, with eligibility ending when they receive their first incremental payment. Mark Hirst agreed discuss this with ELT colleagues outside the meeting

- **Operational Partnership Forum:** progress was now being made on the outstanding actions from OPF.
- **WRES:** Mark Hirst proposed that Melissa Berry be invited to the next meeting to provide an update, and that WRS became a standing item on future agendas.

Peter Hannell raised a concern about the proportion of BAME staff recruited via the universities, and asked whether the LAS Academy would produce a more positive pathway and opportunity to increase the number of BAME paramedics.

Mark Hirst agreed, and confirmed that the workforce strategy that is being drafted included extensive reference to WRES issues. The Trust has been successful in obtaining £500k in HEE funding to support BAME initiatives, and it is also proposed that at some stage to dedicate an entire cohort at the Academy to BAME staff.

#### **4 CQC INSPECTION AND FEEDBACK**

- 3.1 The CQC inspection is now complete, and Karen Broughton gave an indication of initial, informal, confidential feedback.

#### **5. PERFORMANCE/FINANCE/CONTRACT WITH COMMISSIONERS (2017/18)**

- 5.1 Andy Bell gave a presentation on the financial position. Year to date is “on plan” but the planned year-end deficit is at risk due to increased demand and the need for

associated capacity and resource. Additional funding has been agreed with Commissioners and we are now working with CCGs to release these. The capital plan is unaffected, including the procurement of 140 new vehicles. Full details are available in the Trust Board papers.

Paul Woodrow reported that the Trust has experienced levels of demand that are consistently 6.5% to 7% above forecast and contracted levels. At times the increase has been as much as 145 to 15%. Whilst additional resource and demand management measures have been deployed, this is still an extremely challenging position. The agreed A8 performance trajectory had been broadly on track until November, but had slipped as a result. Job cycle time had also extended. A key issue for the Trust was that there are significant performance variations across different CCG areas.

Tim Stephens requested that utilisation be included in future reports. Clive Tombs added that this would give an indication of the pressure crews are under due to missed breaks, overtime, late finishes etc. he also challenged staffing levels and the current rotas.

Paul Woodrow confirmed that staffing levels had increased in real terms since the rosters had been introduced, but again reminded staff side of the need to undertake a further (and regular) review(s). He questioned whether utilisation rates were the best measure or assessment of pressure or productivity, but regardless the Trust has advised Commissioners that the Trust cannot sustain the current levels and increases in activity.

What is needed is whole system support, demand management and better use of e.g. 111 services. Inappropriate use of the Service by care homes and GPs is also an increasing issue. This should lead to a review of how services are commissioned. There is no consistent national approach, but ARP may alter that. Paul offered to spend more time on the detail of the activity and demand at a future OPF meeting.

Karen Broughton advised that the 111 model is changing, with the aim of achieving better co-ordination of care through integrated hubs, including clearer referral pathways and e.g. crisis teams. CQC has noted and will report the difficulty that LAS crews have in referring patients.

In terms of the contract, agreed in January, whilst additional funding has been identified to increase staffing levels, we also have to achieve a challenging cost improvement programme, improve productivity, improve demand management and reduce job cycle time. It should be noted that all NHS organisations are financially challenged. Although there has been a planned financial deficit, it is a requirement that the Trust move to surplus by 2018/19. New response models will be required, including to meet the ARP assuming this is agreed by Ministers.

There will also be a review of available technology and the Trust's estate. In terms of estate, a strategy is being prepared but inevitably changing the estate takes time. Tim Stephens confirmed that he and Clive had been invited to a meeting about the estate review.

## **6 WORKFORCE ISSUES**

- 6.1 **Annual leave:** Mark Hirst summarised the position as being similar to rest breaks, in that new arrangements are required for managing annual leave and a series of urgent meetings will be arranged.

6.2 **Operational management structure:** Mark confirmed the intention to undertake a review of the operational management structure, incorporating feedback on what works well and not so well in the current arrangements. The review would this time include the CTL role.

6.3 **Smokefree policy:** Tony Crabtree confirmed that the existing Smokefree policy had been revised and updated to reflect current NHS requirements and expectations. With effect from 1 May 2017 smoking would not be permitted anywhere on Trust premises, including existing designated (unenclosed) areas. Smoking would also not be permitted whilst identifiable as a member of NHS staff.

## 7. “LONDON PACKAGE”

7.1 Eddie Brand referred to a long-standing request by staff side to review a range of issues relating to the cost of living and working in London. It was agreed that the matter would be reviewed outside of the meeting to consider what areas are still outstanding and whether these could be taken forward.

## 8. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH MODEL

8.1 Gill Heuchan gave an update on the introduction of a revised model for occupational health and associated support services, soon to be subject of a tender evaluation process. Instead of having a range of parallel services, the intention is to move to a more holistic approach via a single provider of OH, physiotherapy, counselling and employee assistance programme. Unison and GMB have accepted invitations to be part of the tender evaluation process.

Peter Hannell stated that staff were concerned that local delivery of physio and counselling services would be lost, and believe that the review had been driven by a desire to reduce cost.

Gill responded that there had been no option but to re-tender the services as current OH and physio contracts ran only to the end of March. The existing Employee Assistance Programme contract renews or ends on 31 March too. This had given an opportunity to review service provision, but this was not based upon cost and, in fact, additional investment would be required. The aim was to provide better support to staff, and also move to a more pro-active approach setting out to keep staff well and not just deal with the situation once they are unwell.

It was decided to include counselling in the specification along with the other three services. The new provider will be expected to offer phone/face to face/group counselling as well as the current model of psychotherapy. Similarly, the specification for physiotherapy requires at least pan-London provision. There will also be wellbeing training for managers and staff.

## 9. ELT RECRUITMENT/APPOINTMENTS

9.1 Recruitment of a new Chief Executive is underway, with interviews scheduled for mid-March. Staff side has been invited to participate in the associated engagement event.

9.2 It is anticipated that the post of Director of People and Organisation Development will be filled by the end of May.

**10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**10.1** Eddie Brand noted for the record that this would be Tony Crabtree's last Staff Council meeting, as after over 30 years with the Trust Tony would be leaving the Trust at the end of April. He and the Council thanked Tony for his contribution, input and his many years of support and attendance at the Staff Council

**11. Date of Next Meeting**

**11.1** The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 9 May, 1100-1300, Conference Room, HQ, Waterloo

The meeting ended at 1215

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