

**NHS Leadership and Management Framework**  
**Public Board**  
**September 2026**

|                             |                                           |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <b>Presented for:</b>       | Information and Assurance                 |
| <b>Presented by:</b>        | Suzanne Dunkley, Chief People Officer     |
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| <b>Previous Committees:</b> | n/a                                       |

|                                                    |                                                                                                                                                       |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Exemption</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>YES</b> (restricted from the FOIA) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>NO</b> (available to the public under the FOIA) |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|                                               |                                |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Link to Strategic Objective</b>            | Support and develop our people |
| <b>Link to Provider Capability Assessment</b> | People and culture             |
| <b>Link to CQC Well-led Statement</b>         | Shared Direction and Culture   |
| <b>Regulatory Impact</b>                      | Regulation 17: Good governance |

| <b>Key points</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>Purpose</b>            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The NHS Leadership and Management Framework establishes consistent expectations for leaders and managers across clinical and non-clinical roles.</li> <li>It responds to national reviews of leadership and supports the delivery of the 10-year health plan.</li> <li>The framework is intended to professionalise leadership and management, strengthen capability and improve outcomes for patients, colleagues and communities</li> <li>The proposed LTH approach is integration not addition that connects the national framework, the Leeds Way, NHS Staff Standards and Inclusion and Belonging priorities.</li> <li>Implementation should be visible through recruitment, job design, appraisal, development, talent, career progression and governance.</li> </ul> | Information and Assurance |

| <b><u>Risk Appetite Framework</u></b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                       |                |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Level 1 Risk                          | Level 2 Risks                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | (Risk Appetite Scale) | Impact         |
| Workforce Risk                        | Workforce Retention Risk - We will deliver safe and effective patient care, through supporting the training, development, and H&WB of our staff to retain the appropriate level of resource to continue to meet the patient demand for our clinical services | Cautious              | Moving Towards |

## 1. Summary

The NHS Leadership and Management Framework establishes a consistent national foundation for the standards, development and accountability expected of NHS leaders and managers. It is an essential expectation rather than an optional development offer. The framework responds to longstanding concerns about leadership, governance and accountability and supports the leadership capability needed to deliver major change.

The proposed approach is integration, not addition – using the framework to reinforce the Leeds Way, NHS Staff Standards and existing leadership, talent and Inclusion and Belonging priorities. Implementation will be visible in recruitment, appraisal, development, talent, career progression and governance.

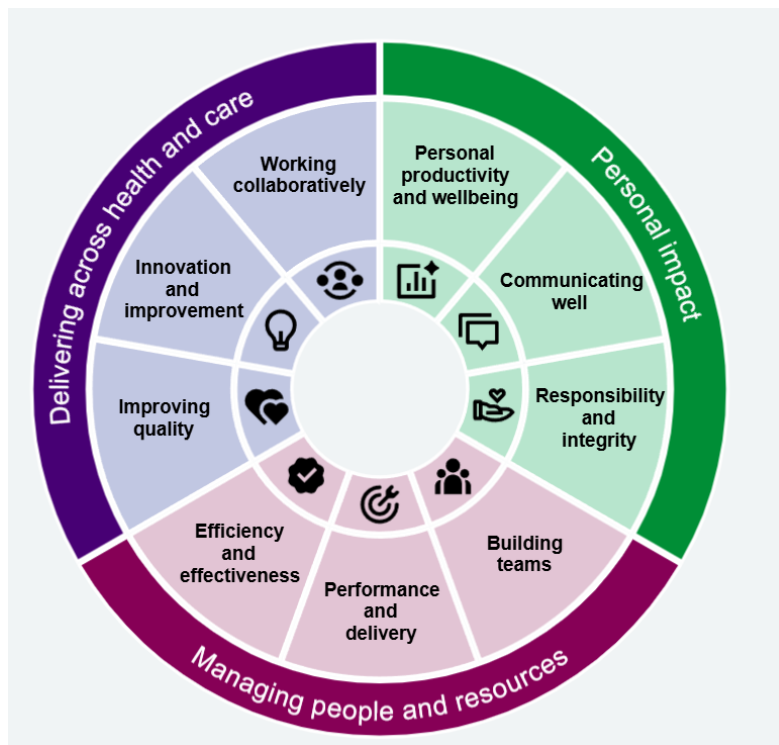
## 2. National framework and requirements

The published national framework contains these core elements:

| Element                                  | National purpose                                                                       | LTHT implication                                                                                    |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Leadership and management code           | Non-negotiable principles and behaviours expected of all leaders and managers.         | Use as the behavioural foundation for leadership and management practice, aligned to the Leeds Way. |
| Standards                                | Essential competencies arranged across five stages of responsibility,                  | Align local expectations and development.                                                           |
| National curriculum                      | Development expectations aligned to each stage; publication is expected later in 2026. | Map and refresh LTHT development offers and consider alignment when the curriculum is published     |
| NHS College of Leadership and Management | National home for leadership, management and talent excellence.                        | Connect LTHT pathways, communities and quality assurance to the College offer as it develops.       |

## The Standards

The standards are arranged in 3 overarching focus areas. Each focus area contains 3 standards. Each standard has 3 competency descriptions appropriate to the level you work at. These are shown in the wheel.



| Focus Areas                                                                             | Standards                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Personal Impact - Leading and managing yourself                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritise for personal productivity</li> <li>• Communicating well</li> <li>• Responsibility and integrity</li> </ul> |
| 2. Managing People and Resources - Leading and managing people and teams                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building teams</li> <li>• Performance and delivery</li> <li>• Efficiency and effectiveness</li> </ul>                 |
| 3. Delivering across health and care - Leading and managing the organisation and system | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving quality</li> <li>• Innovation and improvement</li> <li>• Working collaboratively</li> </ul>                 |

## The Stages

| Stages       | Who they support                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Fundamentals | <p>The essential baseline for every leader and manager, including those preparing for their first role.</p> <p>Fundamental stage outlines the basic skills and knowledge required of every leader and manager – together with the stage specific competencies – and supports those preparing for their first steps into a leadership or management position by setting out the minimum standard and expectations for those leading or managing in healthcare settings</p> |

| Stages  | Who they support                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|---------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Stage 1 | <p>New leaders and first-line managers.</p> <p>This stage supports individuals in their first supervisory, leadership, or management role, typically with responsibility for just one team or line of accountability.</p> <p>The competencies help new leaders and first-line managers understand what is expected of them as they begin to take responsibility for the work of others, in addition to their own.</p>                                        |
| Stage 2 | <p>Mid-level leaders and managers.</p> <p>This stage supports individuals who have been operating as accountable leaders or managers for a number of years.</p> <p>The competencies enable these experienced professionals to navigate the bridge between senior leadership and frontline delivery, aligning team performance with broader organisational goals.</p>                                                                                         |
| Stage 3 | <p>Senior-level leaders and managers.</p> <p>This stage supports individuals delivering operationally and accountable at a senior management level.</p> <p>The competencies enable these established leaders to translate organisational strategy into action, lead larger or more complex areas, and influence across functions or systems.</p>                                                                                                             |
| Stage 4 | <p>Board-level leaders and managers.</p> <p>This stage supports individuals operating and accountable at the most senior level of their organisation, including executive directors, non-executive directors and board members.</p> <p>The competencies enable these leaders to set or oversee strategic direction and vision, shape organisational culture, and collaborate with peers and stakeholders to deliver national and ministerial priorities.</p> |

\* Pending publication of the detailed national competency framework

### Translating the National Code through the Leeds Way

LTHT is not creating a competing framework. The national code (**Appendix 1**) will be translated into familiar local expectations through the Leeds Way.



| Leeds Way value          | The National Code                             | What this looks like in practice                                          |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Kind</b>              | Compassionate and inclusive leadership        | Listen, support wellbeing, value difference and develop others.           |
| <b>Open &amp; Honest</b> | Self-awareness, reflection and accountability | Seek feedback, create psychological safety and hold honest conversations. |
| <b>Responsible</b>       | Delivery, improvement and sound decisions     | Own outcomes, use evidence, manage risk and improve services.             |
| <b>One Team</b>          | Collaboration, partnership and talent         | Work across boundaries, build partnerships and help others succeed.       |

### Proposed LTHT integration

The framework will be embedded across the colleague lifecycle and existing organisational systems:

| People process           | Proposed integration                                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Code and Leeds Way       | Translate the national code into familiar Leeds Way expectations and examples of effective and ineffective practice.                                           |
| Role and stage alignment | Provide guidance to identify the stage that reflects current responsibility, complexity and accountability.                                                    |
| Recruit and appoint      | Review leadership and management responsibilities in job descriptions, person specifications, interviews and selection.                                        |
| Appraise and self-assess | Incorporate annual self-assessment and evidence-based development conversations into appraisal. Position the tool for development, not as a performance score. |

| People process                               | Proposed integration                                                                                                                                                             |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Develop management and leadership capability | Map current clinical and non-clinical offers to the standards; address gaps in core management practice; align to the national curriculum and modular learning as these develop. |
| Grow talent and careers                      | Use the framework to strengthen career conversations, progression pathways, succession and diverse talent pipelines.                                                             |
| Assure and improve                           | Use policies, metrics, quarterly assurance and organisational learning to reinforce expectations.                                                                                |

### Alignment with the NHS Staff Standards

The NHS Staff Standards and the Leadership and Management Framework should be presented as one connected agenda. The Staff Standards set minimum expectations for colleague experience, while the Leadership and Management Framework describes the leadership and management capability and behaviours needed to deliver those expectations consistently.

The integrated approach will particularly support the Staff Standards relating to line management, health and wellbeing, flexible working, violence prevention and reduction, tackling racism and sexual safety. It also reinforces the Trust ambition for compassionate leadership, inclusion, wellbeing, speaking up and a culture where everyone feels they belong.

NHS England published the NHS Staff Standards on 6 July 2026, establishing a new national framework that sets out the minimum expectations for colleague experience across NHS provider organisations.

Developed in response to commitments set out in the NHS 10 Year Health Plan, the NHS Staff Standards are a mandatory framework designed to promote better, fairer and more consistent employment experiences for NHS colleagues. Delivery against the Standards will be monitored through the NHS Oversight Framework (NOF), with performance informing organisational assurance and oversight arrangements.

As a result, colleague experience is now recognised as a core measure of organisational performance and is expected to receive the same level of Board scrutiny, leadership focus and accountability as quality of care, operational performance and financial sustainability.

The standards aim to:

- Improve colleague experience and engagement.
- Reduce turnover and improve retention.
- Improve organisational performance and productivity.
- Strengthen patient safety and quality of care.
- Reduce variation in colleague experience across the NHS.

## The Six NHS Staff Standards

The standards focus on six priority areas:

1. Promoting Flexible Working
2. Line Management
3. Health & Wellbeing
4. Violence Prevention & Reduction
5. Tackling Racism
6. Championing Sexual Safety

### 3. Financial Implications

There are no new financial risks beyond what we have already committed to. Implementation will primarily be integrated through existing people, leadership and organisational development priorities. Resource requirements will need to be considered through detailed implementation planning.

### 4. Risk

Workforce retention and morale remain a risk (Cautious). This work aims to embed the NHS Leadership and Management Framework into day-to-day practice, promoting a consistent approach and shared responsibility for helping colleagues feel safe, they belong and feel valued.

| Risk                          | Potential impact                                                                                          | Control                                                          |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Fragmentation</b>          | The Framework, Leeds Way, Staff Standards and leadership offers are experienced as competing initiatives. | Use one narrative                                                |
| <b>Compliance only</b>        | Completion becomes the goal, with limited quality in reflection or development conversations.             | Assure quality and capability themes, not just activity.         |
| <b>Capacity pressure</b>      | Managers and People teams lack time or practical support to embed.                                        | Phase delivery and provide simple tools, prompts and learning.   |
| <b>Inconsistent adoption</b>  | Different areas apply expectations unevenly.                                                              | Set minimum expectations, support locally and monitor variation. |
| <b>Data without action</b>    | Capability themes are collected but do not shape improvement.                                             | Translate insight into development action.                       |
| <b>Leadership credibility</b> | Senior leaders do not visibly model reflection, feedback and development.                                 | Begin with senior team sponsorship and participation.            |

### 5. Communication and Involvement

A phased approach is proposed, with implementation refined as further national tools and curriculum detail become available. The immediate organisational focus should be on alignment, practical support and credible assurance.

| Phase            | Focus                                                                                                                                            |
|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Mobilise</b>  | Confirm sponsorship, governance and one integrated narrative.                                                                                    |
| <b>Design</b>    | Complete the alignment to the Leeds Way and Staff Standards; align appraisal, self-assessment, recruitment, development and talent arrangements. |
| <b>Implement</b> | Introduce practical tools, leadership development, feedback and local support.                                                                   |
| <b>Assure</b>    | Report quarterly on adoption, quality, capability themes, integration, variation and impact.                                                     |

## 6. Impact on Equality and Health Inequalities

Inclusion and belonging are embedded throughout the national framework. LTHT implementation should strengthen compassionate leadership, psychological safety, equitable opportunity and open dialogue to seek to understand. Colleague networks and people with different lived experiences will be involved in the implementation of the framework.

## 7. Publication Under Freedom of Information Act

This document is accessible in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

## 8. Recommendations

The Board is asked to:

- Endorse one integrated LTHT approach connecting the national framework with the Leeds Way values.
- Commit to visible participation in ongoing development.

## 9. Supporting Information

Appendix 1: The National Code

Appendix 2: NHSE Staff Standards (presented at People Committee, August 2026)

**Author**

**Nikki Hosty, Director of OD and Inclusion**

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