

NHSE Staff Standards

People Committee
13 August 2026

Presented for:	Information and Assurance
Presented by:	Suzanne Dunkley, Chief People Officer
Author:	Nikki Hosty, Director of OD and Inclusion
Previous Committees:	NONE

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Exemption	☐ YES (restricted from the FOIA) ☒ NO (available to the public under the FOIA)
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Link to Strategic Objective	Support and develop our people
Link to Provider Capability Assessment	People and culture
Link to CQC Well-led Statement	Shared Direction and Culture
Regulatory Impact	Regulation 17: Good governance

Key points	Purpose
- 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. - The NHS Staff Standards will not be implemented as a separate programme of work. They will be embedded within and strengthen our existing organisational priorities with implementation being aligned to our emerging organisational values, our inclusion and belonging agenda, and our wider people and culture improvement work. - 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	Information and Assurance

Risk Appetite Framework			
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 Staff Standards establish a new national framework for colleague experience and represent a fundamental shift in NHS accountability. Colleague experience will now be monitored and assessed alongside other key organisational performance measures, including quality, finance and operational delivery.

Responsibility for coordinating delivery and providing organisational oversight will sit within the People Function, working in partnership with leaders across the Trust. The People Function will ensure that implementation is integrated with existing organisational priorities, including the Trust's values, Inclusion and Belonging strategy and People Plan, and will provide regular assurance to the People Committee on compliance, progress and impact.

2. NHSE Staff Standards

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

Board Responsibilities

Boards are expected to:

- Demonstrate visible leadership and accountability.
- Review current performance and establish a baseline.
- Ensure required Board-level champions and governance arrangements are in place.
- Agree and oversee a Trust-wide implementation plan.
- Monitor progress through staff survey indicators and local workforce intelligence.
- Engage colleagues, colleague networks and trade unions in co-production and assurance.

How Success Will Be Measured

A new NHS Staff Standards Score will be introduced through the NHS Oversight Framework in 2026/27, supported by NHS Staff Survey measures across all six standards.

The score will influence:

- People & Workforce segmentation.
- Overall organisational segmentation.
- Regional assurance and provider capability assessments.
- Future CQC intelligence and scrutiny.

Next 12 Month Activity

- Senior level ownership and accountability established
- Baseline assessment completed
- Clear, prioritised action plan in place (alignment to values, inclusion and belonging workstreams)
- Colleague, colleague network and trade union engagement embedded
- Standards integrated within existing People Strategy
- Leadership and manager colleague engagement upskilling programme
- Staff standards dashboard
- NOF assessment

3. Financial Implications

There are no new financial risks beyond what we have already committed to. We will soon review the resources within the People Function, which has included the commencement of the appointments to the recent vacancies. Improvement work will continue to be embedded and supported through LTHT's evolving Values and Inclusion & Belonging Improvement Plan.

4. Risk

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

5. Communication and Involvement

Internal and external communications and engagement activity will position the Staff Standards within the broader Trust strategy, ensuring alignment and integration rather than duplication. Colleague networks, Clinical Service Units, Corporate Departments, professional groups and colleagues across the Trust will continue to play a central role in delivery, working in partnership with the Colleague Engagement Network to embed the standards into everyday practice.

6. Impact on Equality and Health Inequalities

While focused on the workforce, the Staff Standards will support the Trust's wider commitment to health equity, recognising colleagues as members of the communities we serve and contributing to sustained, system-wide improvement. This work is underpinned by Our Values and the Inclusion and Belonging Plan, which together provide a strong foundation for creating a more inclusive, equitable and supportive working environment.

7. Publication Under Freedom of Information Act

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

8. Recommendations

- The NHS Staff Standards will not be implemented as a separate programme of work. Instead, they will be embedded within and strengthen our existing organisational priorities. At Leeds Teaching Hospitals, implementation will be aligned to our emerging organisational values, our inclusion and belonging agenda, and our wider people and culture improvement work.
- The Staff Standards provide a national framework and minimum expectations for colleague experience, but many of the required actions are already reflected in the Trust's existing ambitions around compassionate leadership, inclusion, wellbeing, flexible working, speaking up, and creating a culture where everyone feels they belong.
- Our focus should therefore be on integration rather than addition, using the Staff Standards to bring greater coherence, accountability and visibility to work already underway, while identifying and addressing any areas where further development is required.
- By aligning delivery to our values and inclusion and belonging strategy, we can avoid programme fatigue, create a clearer narrative for colleagues, and ensure that improvements in colleague experience are seen as everyone's responsibility rather than the responsibility of a standalone programme team.

Author

Nikki Hosty, Director of OD and Inclusion

July 2026