



Essex Partnership University
NHS Foundation Trust

EPUT

PEOPLE & EDUCATION STRATEGY 2024-2028

**Helping our people be the best
they can be.**



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Foreword from EPUT's Chief Executive

I'm delighted to introduce our new People and Education Strategy.

People are at the heart of all that we do at EPUT – our staff, partners and volunteers all play a part in providing high quality care to the people who need us, our patients.

We know that having the right staff in the right place is key to providing the best patient care. Our staff care for some of the most vulnerable people in our community in often complex situations, so it's vital that we continue to build a safe, compassionate and fair environment in which they are supported to deliver exceptional care and empowered to develop their careers.

Our staff are our greatest asset. Like all NHS organisations, we face challenges but I'm continually struck by their dedication, commitment and innovation, and I'm delighted this has been recognised at a national level with award nominations across a range of our community, inpatient and corporate services.

Creating conditions for success is pivotal to us attracting, retaining and developing the very best talent. We know there is more to do – our staff tell us there are improvements to be made across our culture and leadership – and work is taking place at pace across the Trust and with our system partners to address that.

We have made great progress in putting more staff into patient-facing roles. This year we have recruited twice as many newly qualified nurses than last, temporary staffing has reduced across our inpatient settings and we are seeing staff return to EPUT to continue their careers.

We are absolutely committed to helping our people be the best they can be, ensuring they have the tools in place to thrive. This five-year People and Education Strategy provides the foundations from which we will deliver on that commitment.



Paul Scott - Chief Executive



Welcome to our five year People and Education Strategy, which has been developed at one of the most challenging, and exciting, points in the history of the NHS workforce. The publication of the NHS Long Term Workforce plan in June 2023 has been described as a 'once in a generation opportunity to put staffing on a sustainable footing and to improve patient care.' EPUT plans to be at the forefront of this opportunity as it trains, retains and reforms its workforce in accordance with that plan to enable our own strategy. Our people strategy mirrors the priorities in the national plan to ensure that we have the workforce we need for the future. An important part of this is to ensure that we have the right culture in which our people can thrive and we therefore commit to the seven themes of the NHS People Promise:



We have already achieved a lot in key areas of the People and Culture directorate – vacancy rates for registered nursing is now at an all-time low at 15% from 26% in July 2022. Our workforce plan is above plan for 2023/24 and we have successfully recruited over 260 international nurses and Allied Health Professionals in the last two years. We know that since the pandemic, demand for mental health and community services have been significantly increased. We have more to do to ensure that our Trust has a workforce that is skilled, resilient and capable to deliver in the most challenging of times. In particular, our fourth organisational strategic objective - Supporting Our Communities to Thrive - will be met through inclusive recruitment practices and a specific success measure to enhance the numbers of marginalised groups into employment.

This strategy is part of EPUT’s enabling strategies to support the achievement of our strategic objectives, vision and purpose. This strategy enables our people to be the best they can be and builds upon the strategic and operational foundations set out in our operating model – enabling operational colleagues to support and care for our patients and families.

Delivered through our target operating model

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

We have four strategic objectives to achieve our vision:

We will deliver safe, high quality integrated care services.

We will work with our partners to make our services better.

We will enable each other to be the best we can be.

We will help our communities to thrive.

OUR VISION

To be the leading health and wellbeing service in the provision of mental health and community care.

OUR VALUES



Operating model

Our **Operating Model** is based around **six clinical operational delivery units** which are led by multi-disciplinary and multi-professional leadership teams. They are supported and corporately enabled from corporate business units including People and Culture. Below highlights our People & Culture business unit functions to enable optimal operational delivery:

Our six care units are responsible for place-based and Trust wide services:

- Mid and South Essex Community Care Unit
- North East Essex Community Care Unit
- West Essex Community Care Unit
- Psychological Services Care Unit
- Urgent Care and Inpatients Care Unit

In 2022/23, we received **512,065** referrals into our services and delivered **1,746,120** face to face contacts. We carried out **49,807** digital face to face contacts, held **317,942** telephone contacts and cared for **236,594** patients.



Our staff are our biggest asset. We care for patients, carers and families across Essex, Bedfordshire and Luton, and provide services including: inpatient mental health services, community health care, urgent care, community mental health and social care. The table below highlights the substantive staffing breakdown and by professional group (Q3, 2023/24):

Staffing group	Sum of FTE budgeted	Sum of FTE actual
Nursing and Midwifery Registered	2079.31	1779.83
Additional Clinical Services	1623.84	1531.67
Administrative and Clerical	1253.62	1291.62
Allied Health Professionals	424.31	372.65
Estates and Ancillary	327.5	268.09
Medical and Dental	364.71	288.05
Add Prof Scientific and Technical	489.33	459.18
Grand Total	6564.62	5991.1

Our strategy has five core pillars which form our framework for Trust-wide People and Educational delivery.



Engagement

- Engagement has taken place at Board level internally and with Chief People Officers in Mid and South Essex, Herts and West Essex and Suffolk and North East Essex.
- We have also spoken extensively to staff at all levels internally, including across the People & Culture directorate and lived experience ambassadors.
- The views of our main higher education partners, Anglia Ruskin University and Essex University, are also incorporated into the findings
- We have spoken to Chief People Officers at East London and Central and North West London Trusts, and colleagues at NHS England, to ensure that sector, regional and national best practice is reflected
- Consideration of private sector people strategies have shown strong similarities with the approaches taken in the NHS. However, in the private sector there is a larger focus on investing in digital transformation
- The diagnostic summarises the feedback from all of the above.

Diagnostic: Where are we now?

Workforce



“Workforce planning should be part of what every unit does on an ongoing basis. It should not just be done for them by a separate team”

“Each unit should be thinking about what they need today and tomorrow - not just in terms of numbers but also in terms of diversity and inclusivity, skill mix, development, sharing of expertise, and working across professional disciplines”

- **Recruitment** has been very successful as EPUT has attracted high numbers of new staff, including international recruits and more newly qualified nurses than before, taking our vacancies to below 10% at the end of 2023. We will now focus on key community roles e.g. social work, allied health professionals and community nursing.
- **Retention** across the Trust has improved with turnover at less than 10% at the end of 2023. Our focus is on listening to and responding to staff feedback, such as from staff surveys, and to support enhanced career development and high performing team cultures.
- **Temporary staffing** has reduced across inpatient settings by over 60% in 23/24 but agency staffing remains higher than we would want it to be in some areas.
- **Medical** vacancies are safely covered with agency locum doctors but we will continue to aim to recruit more substantive medical consultants.
- **Digitisation** could give us great opportunities to improve our people processes, colleagues' experiences and reduce costs.
- **Workforce data analytics** can help give us greater insight and support our decision-making and governance.
- **Workforce planning** can be developed into a continuous approach to improving service delivery.
- **Induction** and efficient on-boarding already supports the arrival of many hundreds of new colleagues each year and we want to work to improve everyone's arrival and welcome to EPUT even further.
- **Embed lived experience** within the mental health **workforce** (e.g. peer support workers and lived experience advisors).



“We want a consistent culture across EPUT where staff are willing to solve problems creatively with their teams and other directorates and where permission and guidelines are not used as absolute rules. We want our culture to move towards greater empowerment across the organisation so we can all find patient centric solutions.”

- Since the North Essex Partnership and South Essex Partnership NHS Trusts merged over six years ago, we have continued to develop our culture across EPUT with a **single set of values and behaviours**. Where there are differences, and we can learn from each other, we will share best practice to enable us all to be the best that we can be.
- Similarly across the different systems and **three Integrated Care Boards** we work within, we have opportunities for further learning, partnership approaches and sharing across the different geographical areas of our organisation.
- Our staff survey results show that our colleagues’ **experiences at work** are significantly improving in many areas.
- Where people do not behave in line with our values and behaviours we will challenge this and will ensure that where **performance** and **behaviour** are not consistent with our vision for a high performing organisation, this is addressed.
- Our Speak Up, Listen Up, Follow Up campaign has been very well received and people are feeling more confident about **speaking up**.
- We have signed up to the **NHS Sexual Safety Charter** which will help us to ensure the sexual safety of our staff and patients across all our sites.
- **Quality Improvement** is developing steadily across the Trust and our new Quality of Care Strategy will enable everyone to feel part of improving processes, patient safety and overall performance and delivery.
- **Well-being** is at the centre of our culture and our staff are our number one asset – we need to build on our current offer with staff and build psychological safety as our priority.





“The creation of a compassionate, respectful, kind and psychologically safe culture that inspires staff to high performance requires some fundamentals to be in place.”

- NHS England rated **EPUT’s Workforce Race Equality Standard action plan as outstanding**, which shows the Trust is on the right path. We now need to ensure that the actions taken positively shift the experience of black and ethnic minority staff.
- We have committed to the **NHS Equality, Diversity Inclusion (EDI) Improvement Plan** and the high impact action therein.
- We recognise the importance of **leadership at Board level**. All our Board members will have **EDI objectives**.
- Executives sponsor and support our **staff networks**
- We will develop our leaders to ensure that they are equipped to take an **appropriate and consistent** approach to tackling abuse of staff, leading to staff feeling supported and engaged.
- **Bullying and harassment are not acceptable** and we know how this can particularly affect black and ethnic minority and disabled staff, impacting on their morale, sickness and performance.
- We actively seek out black and ethnic minority talent through our **RISE development programme** to help us address that black and ethnic minority staff make up over a quarter of the workforce but are mainly represented in the lower pay bands.
- We actively use our **WRES and Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES) data** at Trust level to monitor disproportionate promotions for white staff and formal disciplinary/capability processes and will monitor this more closely at care group level through our Accountability Framework.





“Culture ties inextricably with leadership and management. Our leadership capability and capacity needs to keep in step with the vision for our organisational culture – one where learning, empowerment and care is at the heart of what everyone from board to ward does everyday.”

- **Devolved** leadership to the care units has been established through our Accountability Framework. This distributed leadership has been welcomed, and we can use this to develop more consistent practices across the Trust.
- There are a number of **nationally recognised and award winning teams** across the organisation, demonstrating outstanding leadership that we must continue to champion.
- Our staff survey results show that people are experiencing their **immediate managers** as being more supportive and we need to ensure that we continue to ensure that the Board, our **senior management teams** and the **frontline workforce are well connected**.
- There has been a strong focus on **Board and Executive development** in the last year.
- **A new leadership programme** is being designed for a wider group of leaders at different levels of the organisation to support them in **empowering their teams** and in creating conditions of **high performance**, with a **compassionate and inclusive** approach.
- There are **multiple training opportunities** for managers and leaders at all levels of the organisation and we need to make sure these are more widely advertised and targeted to ensure maximum impact.
- A new leadership model that looks not only inwards but **outwards to our system colleagues** so there is greater collaborative action and trust between partners.





“There is an opportunity for education and learning to refocus staff on cultural transformation by ensuring that learning has at its core an understanding of the patient experience.”

- The Trust has made **positive progress on recovering the mandatory training** position following the pandemic.
- The **Leadership Development Programmes** are very accessible and the RISE programme is particularly successful.
- We aim to create more opportunities for staff to **learn in the environments where they provide frontline care.**
- We have an opportunity to develop a **leadership role with our system working and can support** partner organisations with education and learning.
- As a **regulated provider of apprenticeships** we have an opportunity to be more innovative in how apprentices are utilised across the organisation to ensure we maximise our impact and the apprenticeship levy.
- We will engage more proactively with our higher education institution partners to provide the **best environment for students.**
- We want to have **strong partnerships** with our two local higher education institutions and further education colleges so we can jointly realise the benefits of growing and developing our prospective students, learners, staff and future leaders.
- The **National Staff Survey and National Quarterly Pulse Surveys** are better utilised across the organisation so it becomes more than a one-off activity and instead, intertwined into our decision-making, organisational learning and governance processes.



Train – Growing the Workforce

Continue efforts to reduce vacancies, and reduce the use of temporary staff, through improved, targeted domestic recruitment and student conversion

Meet establishment targets in Time to Care, particularly the additional clinical registered posts

Widen apprenticeship offer, both in terms of apprenticeship courses and uptake

Work in partnership with Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board and Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust to deliver the Health Care Support Worker (HCSW) Academy and retain more HCSWs for the longer term

Increase the number of people with learning disabilities and mental health conditions entering into paid employment with EPUT and our partners, positively impacting employment as one of the social determinants of health in the region

Establish programmes with schools and colleges in Essex to encourage pupils to join EPUT and enter into clinical undergraduate degrees

Increase the numbers of staff moving from agency to bank, and from bank to permanent contracts

Ensure the learning environment for students, including routes to raising concerns, is improved in partnership with higher education institutions



Retain – Embedding the right culture and improving retention

In line with NHS England guidance, hold regular organisation-wide cultural reviews and ensure actions are met

Develop and implement new a Equality, Diversity and Inclusion action plan, delivering against NHS England's 6 High Impact Actions, focusing on executive accountability, tackling racism on our wards and upholding the Behaviours Framework

Development and implementation of employee value proposition for EPUT

Ensure staff support offer is enhanced to include practicalities of involvement in and impact of the Statutory Inquiry

Embed new Freedom to Speak Up approach, including proactive interventions that allow staff to come forward sooner

Establish regular in-person Executive engagement in the community and on wards, and include in objectives

Remodel staff recognition to ensure there is consistent, in-person, and senior acknowledgement of achievements, and recognition that counts towards appraisal and progression

Establish regular drumbeat of staff feedback via procurement of staff engagement platform, that also supports the annual staff survey

Continue to deliver Here for You internally and consider scaling up to support partners

Embed NHS Flexible Working Principles across the Trust and optimise use of office space

Focus on creating a culture of accountability across the organisations, supporting staff to meet standards, and communicating the consequences of not doing so

Reform – Working and training differently

Introduce more new roles into the organisation, increasing targets for Trainee Nurse Associates, Physician Associates and Advanced Care Practitioners, and family and carer focused roles identified in Time to Care programme

Exploration of artificial intelligence human resources helpdesk system, in collaboration with system partners

Full optimisation of existing people systems including Electronic Staff Record

Continue to pilot virtual reality training at scale with system partners, and embed use of e-learning platforms that provide extra-curricular development opportunities for all staff

Establish workforce data function and effective database to house all workforce related data

Develop leadership programme for Senior Leadership Group at scale, providing opportunities to develop at system and regional level

Roll out restorative supervision across all services, building on work of North Essex Care Unit

Provide more training and development in community and ward settings where staff are close to patients and service users

Support development of Electronic Patient Records and electronic Prescribing Management Administration

Ensure that medical and non-medical education oversight and delivery is aligned, and regularly reported to the Executive Team and Board.

Embed succession planning and talent pathways at all levels in the organisations, starting at very senior managers

People and Education Metrics

We have assigned key driver metrics for each pillar of the strategy, as we believe they provide the best measures of success for the People and Education Strategy:

Train

- Meet nursing establishment targets for the Time to Care programme
- Trust-wide vacancy rates improves to 8%
- Registered nursing vacancy rates fall below 12%
- Temporary staffing spending reduces by TBC%
- Apprenticeships grow as a main provider and the levy spend increases to 80%
- Compliance with all mandatory and essential to role training improves to 95%
- Recruitment time to hire improves by 10%
- Increase number of people with learning disabilities/mental health entering employment year on year
- Strengthen our HEI partnerships and university hospital status further through membership with the University Hospital Association (UHA)

Retain

- Improve on how staff treat each other with greater respect and are polite to one another 74.25% (78% target)
- Achieve above 12-month rolling average Freedom To Speak Up Guardian cases against peer organisations
- Staff have regular appraisals and 1-1s with their line manager (Trust target: 95%)
- Senior Leadership Team engage with the frontline teams consistently across the year (minimum of 8 practice-based days to frontline teams per year)
- Improve career progression for staff (ethnic background, gender, disability) WRES 60% (currently 52.7%) WDES 62% (currently 54.7%)
- To reduce discrimination at work from patients/service users, their relatives or other members of the public. WRES 30% (currently 33%) WDES 28% (currently 32.9%)
- To reduce discrimination at work from manager/team leader or other colleagues. WRES 20% (currently 26%) WDES 10% (currently 15%)
- To reduce bullying and harassment of employees. WRES 10% (currently 14.8%) WDES 20% (currently 24.4%)

Reform

- Improved aggregate score for NHS survey questions that measure perceptions of leadership culture 75.6% (80% target)
- 80% of senior leaders (Band 8d and above) are on leadership development programmes.
- 80% of senior leaders (Band 8d and above) have a succession plan in place.
- Workforce planning is triangulated with financial and performance activity, using predictive modelling where required
- The Digital Training team will have a minimum of 10 immersive 360° scenarios available for staff and patients on a variety of training and support topics.
- The Digital Training team will have a minimum of 15 Virtual Human simulations available for staff and patients to access
- Year on year improvements in engagement – staff survey response to 50% (currently 45%).
- Restorative supervision is part of supervisory practice across all care units.
- Year on year improvement on staff wellbeing (61.2% 2022) – 65%

Leadership Compact

We want our senior leaders and staff to create cultures of success and environments which are psychologically safe. All staff need to have a voice and feel able to speak up, and to know they will be actively listened to and their concerns acted upon. Staff well-being is of paramount importance to the Trust and it will be through our consistent, respectful and inclusive behaviours that will achieve high quality care for all.

The following leadership compact describes the expected standards required by leaders and all staff across the Trust:

Senior Leaders

Care - Leaders consistently demonstrate compassion with their staff and take a genuine interest in their lives and well-being. They actively role model what high standards of care look and feel like, both in clinical or non-clinical roles. Leaders care for themselves and others so they are psychologically able to manage the challenges of leadership - they create a just culture of fairness, openness and learning.

Learn - Leaders are role models for personal and professional development. They equally encourage all of those in their teams to develop the values, skills and knowledge to be their best for patients and their families. Reflective learning is part of the appraisal and 1-1 process so that shared learning and action becomes 'how we do things around here'. Feedback is regularly provided and time for critical reflection promotes individual and organisational learning.

Empower - Leaders give their teams the ability to make decisions and act in the best interests of the patients and their families. Power and responsibility is proactively shared amongst the wider leadership teams and frontline staff. Leaders hold their teams to account for delivery against clear expectations. Leaders will encourage individuals and teams to look outwards, towards greater partnership and support joint endeavour (e.g. across ICS footprints)

All Staff

Care - All staff are civil, polite and friendly to each other and respectful of their team members. Staff operate with a 'one team' approach (e.g. across teams and systems) and a philosophy that has compassion at the centre of their values. Patients, their families and colleagues can expect excellence in care and contribute actively towards having psychologically safe cultures. Staff from our partnerships can expect the same approach to compassion, inclusion and collaboration.

Learn - All staff proactively review their learning needs regularly with their line managers, recognising that their knowledge and skills are at the core of safe and effective delivery. Time is taken to complete training, education and learning which meets and exceeds requirements in order for patients and their families to receive standards of care which are at the very highest level. Learning is shared across organisations and systems and there is a curiosity to look outwards from our own organisation.

Empower - All staff take decisions to positively impact the lives of patients and their families. With decision-making comes accountability and responsibility to deliver expected outcomes and follow through on expectations. Whether they are in clinical or non-clinical roles, all staff are expected to deliver against the very highest standard of care: our patients and their families will receive and expect the very best level of care and support.



Improving the People and Culture Directorate

The People and Culture Directorate must become a high-performing corporate service, consistently putting staff in a position to provide the best care to patients and services users, and enabling their colleagues to be the best they can be.

In order to do so, we will focus on four high impact domains:

