

Northern Health and Social Care Trust
Feedback Report to Trust Board

Report from:	TeamNORTH People & Culture Committee
Author of Report:	Carol Diffin, Non-Executive Director
Lead Director:	Jacqui Reid, Executive Director of HR, OD & Corporate Communications
Presented By:	Carol Diffin, Non-Executive Director
Date of Meeting:	28 th May 2026

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the business undertaken by the TeamNORTH People & Culture Committee and to offer the views of and the advice of the Committee to Trust Board.

Strategic Objectives (select)

<i>Build Northern Partnerships and Integrate Care</i>	<i>Continue to improve Outcomes & Experience</i>	<i>Deliver value by optimising Resources</i>	<i>Nurture our people, enable our talent and build our Teams</i>	<i>Improve population Health and address health and social care inequalities</i>
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Summary of Committee Business

A copy of the draft minutes of the Committee meeting are enclosed



Draft Notes
12052026.docx

A copy of the final minutes of the February 2026 meeting are enclosed



Final P&C
Committee Minutes

TeamNORTH People Report



7.0 Team North
People Report _Apr2

Resourcing Update



5.0 Workforce
planning and resou

Recruitment and Resourcing

- Sustained focus on vacancy reduction in key areas such as medical recruitment with vacancy levels reducing from 18% to 11%, recruitment performance i.e. Time to fill, and agency spend management

- Demand pressures remain significant, with over 3,000 recruitment requests managed through the 'Corporate recruitment scrutiny' NHST vacancy control process April 2025 – March 2026.

Looking ahead to 26/27

Workforce Planning & Resourcing

Strengthening and stabilising our **Medical workforce**

Focus on **strategic workforce planning** (agency reduction)

Potential **new partnership** with 3rd party recruitment provider for bands 2-4

Absence and Stress



6.0 Absence and
Stress.pdf

The Trust has the second highest absence rate regionally at 8.01% against a target of 7.6%. A structured programme of interventions is underway, including early intervention, enhanced manager capability, and strengthened occupational health support. The Committee noted that while approaches are aligned regionally, delivery is dependent on leadership capacity, consistent management practice, and effective staff engagement.

Appraisals

End-of-year appraisal compliance is currently 66% against a 70% target. Improvement actions are in place, including the introduction of team appraisal pilots and greater management oversight

Reports Approved by the Committee

Medical & Dental Education Annual Report



4.0 Medical
Education Annual R

The Medical Education Annual Report highlighted continued progress in training provision and positive feedback from learners, whilst noting ongoing enhanced monitoring of General Surgery within Antrim Hospital and the associated impact on staff workload.

Items for Escalation to Trust Board

1. There will be significant **reorganisation of Allied Health Professional (AHP) services** following the external review, presenting an opportunity to strengthen multi-professional and neighbourhood-based care models.
There is a **material risk associated with reduced AHP digital workforce capacity**, which may compromise the safe oversight and optimisation of digital systems (including encompass), with potential implications for patient safety, service efficiency, and innovation. This has been raised with the regional group in the first instance.
2. **Workforce sustainability risks remain**, including limited funding to support new nursing registrants beyond Q1 and constrained investment in workforce enablers such as e-rostering and training.
3. Financial plans are dependent on achieving **agency expenditure reductions** to offset workforce funding gaps, creating a material delivery risk. These savings are contingent on successful and timely recruitment, vacancy reduction, and workforce transformation activity,

while ongoing operational pressures continue to necessitate agency usage to maintain safe services. As a result, there is a risk that assumed savings may not be realised at the required pace or scale, potentially exacerbating financial pressures and impact service resilience if not activity mitigated.

4. While absence reduction, appraisal compliance, and workforce productivity improvements are being actively progressed, **delivery is finely balanced against resource constraints and requires sustained leadership focus and organisational discipline.**