

Key Issues Report Issues for referral to reporting Committee/Group

Originating Committee/Group and meeting date:	People and Organisational Development Committee – 12 March 2026
Chair:	Sarah Boulton, Non-Executive Director
Lead Executive Director (as appropriate):	Kate Read, Chief People Officer

Subject	Details of Issue	Action*
Assurance Reports	<p>The Board Assurance Framework was received, and the dynamic nature praised. One strategic risk, BAF5 regarding workforce, was aligned to the committee. There has been no change to the risk rating, but the action plan has been updated. Completed actions have been removed, several actions have been amended or newly added, and timelines for the national Band 4–9 Nursing and Midwifery profiles have been revised. A new action has been introduced to ensure regular review of the impact of the administrative and clerical standardisation and centralisation programme. In addition, the previously identified assurance gap relating to additional hours payments has now been formally incorporated into the framework.</p> <p>The Chief People Officer provided an update on emergent and topical issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The agreed Agenda for Change (AfC) pay rise will be paid at the end of April, with NHSP staff also receiving the increase. • Regionally, aggregated workforce plans indicate a 3% reduction over the next three years, driven by a planned reduction in bank and agency staffing, rather than substantive posts (with a particular focus on reducing bank usage). • ESNEFT is one of only three Trusts in the East of England to have submitted skill mix changes this year, demonstrating forward planning, alignment with the 10-Year Plan, and preparation for the transition from analogue to digital ways of working. • In terms of horizon scanning, ESNEFT is well positioned to consider a shift from acute to community provision, although further work is required to support the workforce growth needed for this transition. • Work is underway to develop enhanced and advanced roles, particularly for AHPs; this would be valuable to explore in more depth at the July meeting. 	Assurance

Subject	Details of Issue	Action*
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant work is required during the year to review generic job descriptions across Bands 4–9 Nursing and Midwifery, particularly for colleagues in community settings, to ensure the programme progresses in a timely manner. <p>Workforce report</p> <p>The Trust’s vacancy position is currently positive, supported by early and proactive recruitment activity for newly qualified nursing and midwifery staff, despite wider regional recruitment pressures. Nursing retention has improved, underpinned by better rostering arrangements, and overall workforce planning for the next financial year is progressing positively. However, the anticipated reduction in sickness absence has not yet been realised, and while the Trust remains committed to the challenging 4% target, further improvement work is underway. Alongside this, there has been continued progress in EDI activity, digital HR support and leadership development, with high uptake of the HR Helper chatbot, ongoing reverse mentoring, and a phased relaunch of wellbeing, appraisal and leadership development programmes, reflecting sustained effort to strengthen the overall workforce offer</p> <p>National staff survey</p> <p>The Trust received an exceptionally strong response to the staff survey, with over half of staff participating, providing a robust snapshot of staff experience during a period of significant organisational change. While the results showed declines across a number of measures and limited movement in others, performance remained strong in areas such as flexible working and reducing discrimination, with improvements across protected characteristics. Key areas of concern include appraisal quality, workload and staffing pressures, confidence in speaking up, and feeling valued. Significant preparatory analysis has already taken place, and improvement activity is aligned to the People Promise themes, with a major focus this year on supporting leaders to have meaningful conversations with their teams, building on evidence that local listening and team-based review of survey results leads to positive impact.</p> <p>The upcoming appraisal cycle will place greater emphasis on valuing staff and supporting them effectively, following work to simplify the process and engage staff networks. Wellbeing activity this month is focused on burnout, using evidence-based approaches to strengthen control, capacity, contribution and community. Speaking up remains a key priority, with a new Responding to Concerns toolkit launched to support managers - and all staff - in ensuring concerns are handled well as well as raised.</p>	

Subject	Details of Issue	Action*
	<p>Leadership Development intranet pages to encourage staff to explore the full range of opportunities available.</p> <p>Recent and upcoming initiatives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch of Bands 5–6 Development Programme (Nov 2025) • Enhanced accessibility through flexible apprenticeship pathways • Future Leaders Programme for high-potential staff • Visible Leader Alumni and Leadership Onboarding launching in early 2026 • Intranet refresh for improved visibility of resources 	
Workforce productivity and best value/transformation	<p>There is a strong shift towards value for money and productivity, with planning now required to clearly triangulate activity, workforce and financial assumptions. Productivity has improved year-to-date and compares favourably with peers in non-elective and elective activity. ESNEFT is also working collaboratively with regional partners on aligned bank rates, and nonmedical bank rates are now consistent with AfC following a two year process. There are four taskforces being established for the coming year, focused on inpatient frailty, optimising elective activity, improving cancer care and the administrative and clerical review. These will be central to delivering the required efficiency and productivity improvements.</p>	Assurance

*Key:		Approval	Positive action required regarding an item of business or support for a decision
Escalation	Support/decision required by reporting committee to resolve an issue within its remit	Alert	Proactive notification of subject matter/risk that reporting committee is currently dealing with or mitigating which may require future action/decision
Assurance	Evidence or information to demonstrate that appropriate action is being taken within a reporting committee's remit	Information	No action required. Reporting to update on discussion within a reporting committee's remit