



WINNERS' GUIDE

Thank you to everyone who took the time to enter the awards year. We received over 250 entries across all of our categories. This is a fantastic accomplishment and just goes to show how much incredible work is happening across the profession, demonstrating the people profession supporting our healthcare workforce, and ultimately improving the care given to patients.

We'd also like to say a very big thank you to all of our sponsors, as well as to the judges, who had a very difficult task of shortlisting and judging.

This Winners' Guide showcases the winners and finalists, and we hope that they will continue to share their stories with passion and with pride.

Congratulations to all our finalists and winners!

Julie Rogers, Sarah Morley & Janet Wilkinson



Julie Rogers
Chief Executive, HPMA



Sarah Morley
Co-chair HPMA



Janet Wilkinson
Co-chair HPMA



Addysg a Gwella Iechyd
Cymru (AaGIC)
Health Education and
Improvement Wales (HEIW)

Health Education and Improvement Wales Award for developing the profession and people professionals



WINNER

People Management Development Programme University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust

This project set out to give managers not just an understanding of HR processes but the judgement, decision-making skills, and support networks necessary to manage people with care and competence.

The team developed a well-respected People Management Development programme that is setting a new standard for management development. The programme adopts an interactive learning approach, using a range of expert facilitators, role play exercises, the use of case studies, group discussions around shared experiences, and communities of practice, creating a safe environment to apply new knowledge and explore decision-making.

222 people managers have attended the programme, with 99% reporting an improvement in their knowledge of HR practices and their understanding of the people management support available to them. 95% of participants said that they would recommend the course to a colleague.

All of the feedback and metrics gathered confirm that the programme has embedded real behavioural change, aligned with the restorative just and learning culture when managing staff.

In particular the judges appreciated the sense of co-production in the approach to help managers navigate through the complexity of employment policies, and the work of the communities of practice is particularly positive - managers learning from each other.

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HIGHLY COMMENDED



HR Business Partnering team development pathway

Warrington and Halton
Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

This initiative established a structured development pathway for the HR Business Partnering team, facilitating progression from Band 4 Assistant HR Advisor to Band 6 Senior HR advisor to Band 8A Business Partner to Band 8b Head of HR and OD by integrating the HPMa and CIPD competency frameworks. This approach emphasised personalised development plans, addressing individual aspirations and skill gaps. By incorporating staff feedback, the project has enhanced retention, supported career growth, and elevated skill development within the HR function.

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FINALISTS



Coventry and Warwickshire Health and Social Care Employability Academy – Changing Lives and Changing Culture

Coventry and Warwickshire ICB

The Health and Social Care Employability Academy is changing lives by helping people who've faced barriers into employment find meaningful roles in health and care. The Academy offers support for people such as care leavers and refugees, with confidence-building and skills training, interview prep and volunteering placements. In just 18 months, over 1,200 people have taken part, with hundreds now working, studying, or volunteering, across the NHS and care sector, building a stronger, more inclusive workforce.

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Clinical Leadership Immersive Programme (CLIP) Tier Two

Powys Teaching Health Board

The Clinical Leadership

Immersive Programme is available for clinicians at bands 6–7 and aims to create leaders who role model compassionate behaviours through four key areas: accountability, risk appetite, decision-making and self-awareness. Through a combination of scenario-based learning and experiential activities, participants reported, life-altering results from accounts of improved confidence to better patient and staff experiences.

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Award for health and wellbeing sponsored by HPMA



WINNER

The Reasonable Adjustments Team Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust

The Centralised Reasonable Adjustment Team is an innovative service that supports staff and managers to identify and implement reasonable adjustments for staff. The team worked in partnership with other departments such as occupational health, staff networks and the long-term sickness team and other providers such as Access to Work, as well as staff with lived-experience, to develop a service that met the needs of the people who would be accessing it.

So far the service has demonstrated some significant achievements including, over 600 staff members supported from June 23 to March 25; 123 staff with Access to Work (AtW) grant awards; 118 staff members have applied / are awaiting assessment via AtW. The team reports that AtW reclaim timescales have reduced, and claims are being processed swiftly and there has been a significant increase in the amount the Trust has reclaimed through ATW. Estimated managers hours saved = 964 hours and Staff survey results (2024) for question "Organisation made reasonable adjustments to enable me to carry out work" has increased from 74% to 77%.

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FINALISTS



The Employee Experience Framework (EEF): A Theory-Based, Co-Produced Tool to Strengthen NHS Staff Wellbeing

Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB)

The Employee Experience Framework is a concise, evidence-based tool developed within Aneurin Bevan University Health Board to support NHS staff wellbeing. Co-produced by a clinical psychologist and senior workforce leaders, the EEF translates complex wellbeing theory into six meaningful, actionable domains: belonging, control, feeling cared for, feeling valued, purpose, and fairness. It offers a holistic view of the psychosocial work environment by integrating relational and motivational dimensions, broadening the lens from individual reactions to the cultural and interpersonal conditions that shape staff experience. Its clarity and brevity make it a powerful lever for transforming NHS workplace culture.

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A Transformational Approach to Health and Wellbeing

University Hospitals Birmingham

The Trust's Health and Wellbeing Service underwent a comprehensive transformation, creating an integrated support framework across their region. Key achievements include financial efficiency, improved KPIs, increased service utilisation and delivering over 6,200 monthly staff wellbeing interactions. They have expanded mental health provision including menopause-CBT, implemented proactive health surveillance, and introduced innovative step-up/step-down support models. The transformation led to achievement of quality accreditation and award nominations, demonstrating sustainable excellence in staff support.

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The Capsticks Award for Innovation



WINNER

MWL Systemwide Benefits from Automation Mersey & West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

Mersey and West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust (MWL) is an Acute Trust which also offers shared HR, Employment, Occupational Health, Payroll & Pensions services nationally to NHS clients, which has been leveraging the benefits of Robotic Process Automation (RPA). As a national leader in the field of automation, MWL have transformed transactional activities to remove unwarranted variation by streamlining payroll, pensions, and HR provision to improve accuracy of services to staff by “getting it right first time” to improve employee experience, boost morale and provide efficiencies at scale of people services to the Trust and NHS partner organisations and health systems.

Outcomes include the automation of the Hiring process for Lead Employer Shared Service to support the hiring of over 3,000 Resident Doctors for the August changeover. In 2024, the TRAC Hiring bot was implemented enabling 24/7 processing via automation, with the bot working overnight, allowing staff to undertake other value add recruitment activities during office hours. Over 3,000 Resident Doctors were hired, saving over 430 hours and equivalent saving of c.£8k during this three-week period.

The team are sharing their journey with RPA, supporting other NHS organisations in Kent, Manchester and Newcastle in their automation journey. Their reach has now extended beyond the NHS, introducing RPA to a local government audience, with focus and discussion on RPA benefits around risk and governance.

The automation programme pushes the boundaries of this new technology across the NHS to support value add work that previously staff didn't have time to do and mitigating fears of automation replacing staff. The judges were impressed by its clear vision, direction and pace, with a continual learning loop to drive improvements.

For further information contact Claire Scrafton
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HIGHLY COMMENDED

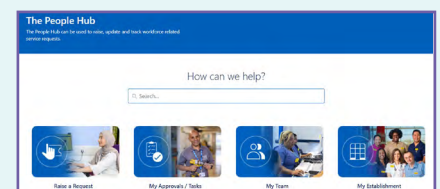


Talent Timebanking NHS England

Talent Timebanking is a unique, NHS-supported platform enabling Health and Care staff to build networks, exchange skills, and earn time credits to access peer-led career support, fostering inclusive career progression, growth and collaboration for all professions and career stages. Grounded in research on psychological ownership, discretionary effort, and talent stewardship, Talent Timebanking offers a genuinely innovative, flexible model that reimagines how we grow, develop, and retain talent.

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FINALIST



The People Hub - Transforming People Services with a new HR Service Management solution

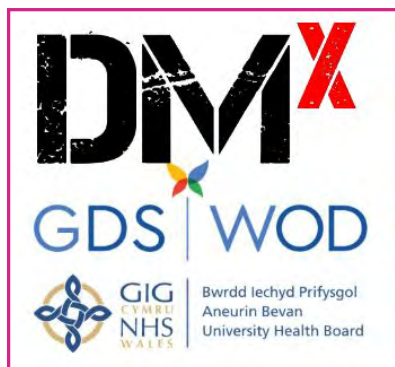
Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust

This is an innovative HR Service Management solution, designed to enhance the services provided by the People Directorate. It includes over 50 bespoke HR processes, will manage circa 150,000 requests and queries per year, includes an ER module where managers are supported to manage the life cycle of an ER case, manages Establishment Control processes and sends expiry notifications to employees and managers when action is needed. It is transforming the way the Trust staff interact with the Directorate by simplifying processes, building manager capability and so releasing time for patient care.

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HILL DICKINSON

Hill Dickinson Award for 'Passionate about OD'



WINNER

Connecting the Dots: How complex Social Network Analysis demonstrates improved NHS Senior Leadership Capability after a 10 month leadership programme Aneurin Bevan University Health Board

Directorate Managers are a business-critical role in clinical leadership teams at the Health Board, forming a key part of the leadership triumvirate of clinical teams. The team designed a 10 month leadership programme for this group, called DMx which included 5 facilitated face-to-face events, interspersed with 4 action learning half day events, supported by online resources and community. In addition they activated randomised peer trio networks between each formal sessions to ensure accountability of behaviour change and learning.

The programme addresses key issues: the problem solving, decision making and wellbeing support of this group. Using mathematical modelling and specialised software, they quantitatively measured the quality of relationship connectivity before and after DMx. This methodology offered precise measurement of the programme's effectiveness in creating stronger professional connections. The quantitative results validated that DMx successfully addressed the COO's objectives by fostering a more resilient management network capable of leveraging collective expertise for faster, more effective patient care delivery.

The data demonstrated that after the programme, DM connectivity had improved significantly in all three areas (up to 60%) and this has been sustained over the course of the year. This means that DMs are a closer and high performing network of managers who are better connected than ever.

The judges were impressed at the long term vision shown by this team who showed a passion for OD and have a clear plan on how to sustain this programme and share the learning across the whole of Wales.

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FINALISTS



Empowering LGT Staff to Lead, Grow and Thrive

Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust

In 2023, the team launched a new strategy "LGT - Lead, Grow, Thrive", a suite of high-impact, multi-professional programmes that are delivered in-house, ensuring cost saving and sustainability. In two years, their Career Coaching Clinics, Management Essentials, Operational Leaders and Senior Talent Programmes have developed over 800 leaders. 3,000 more have accessed workshops and training. The team are passionate that leadership transcends banding, and with the right support anyone can lead and inspire.

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MTW: Exceptional Leaders for All

Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust

The Exceptional Leaders for All (ELfA) leadership development programmes (Emerging, Developing & Strategic Leader) have made a measurable impact across Maidstone & Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust. Evaluation shows that 77% of participants reported a positive change in leadership behaviours, directly meeting their learning objectives and improving team performance. The programmes have enabled hundreds of leaders at all levels and all staff groups to develop leadership skills and insights thus supporting patient outcomes & culture change.

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MILLS & REEVE

Achieve more. Together.

Mills and Reeve Award for achieving impact through open & inclusive leadership



WINNER

Royal Free London Freedom from Racism Programme

Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust

This cultural transformation programme has developed leaders at all levels to bring greater equity and fairness at RFL, by commissioning expert trainers, brap, a Birmingham-based human rights charity, to deliver training sessions across RFL.

Its achievements include 60+ senior executives and leaders trained through racialised affinity groups in anti-racism principles and practice over 5 months. A further 250+ managers trained to lead diverse teams. Nearly 200+ junior BAME staff (bands 4 - 6) graduated from the Withstand Development Programme creating a leadership pipeline which has uplifted the number of BAME promotions across the Trust from 43.79% to 63.55% since the programme was launched in 2022. Monthly coalition meetings and working groups facilitate ongoing anti-racism practice.

The RFL Board underwent training in 2023 and have committed to ongoing anti-racism follow-up sessions every quarter to strengthen their leadership understanding. BAME representation at Board level has increased by 10% since the work began as members now drive forward anti-racism change with rigour.

The judges were impressed by how through this programme, which is aligned with London Workforce Race Strategy recommendations, transformational anti-racism cultural change has been delivered at scale across all levels.

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HIGHLY COMMENDED



Neurodiversity at Work programme

Royal Devon University
Healthcare NHS
Foundation Trust

This programme is changing how the Trust supports neurodivergent staff by combining lived experience, staff voice, and inclusive leadership. With leadership backing, through co-designed training, manager guidance, a thriving staff network, this strategic initiative is improving confidence, visibility, and practical support. With over 950 staff engaged in less than a year this work is firmly embedded into their People Promise commitment.

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FINALISTS



A Systemic Shift: Embedding Anti- Racism to Transform Organisational Culture

Liverpool Women's NHS
Foundation Trust

Through the Anti-Racism Hub, the Trust has implemented the Actively Anti-Racist Improvement Plan, work that is underpinned by inclusive leadership, a commitment to equity, and a culture of accountability. Leaders at every level are supported to challenge bias, centre lived experience and embed anti-racism into everyday practice. This strategic, systems-based approach works to ensure all patients and staff experience safety, dignity & equitable care in a just workplace.

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Leading improvements in sexual safety across the NHS

NHS England

This transformative programme is improving culture around sexual safety across the NHS. Collaborative leadership has inspired all NHS organisations and over 400 healthcare partners to sign the Sexual Safety in Healthcare Charter. Through extensive collaboration with stakeholders, it offers a suite of adaptable resources to empower local organisations to implement and sustain effective sexual safety practices, including a Sexual Misconduct People Policy Framework, e-learning, and an assurance framework to assist NHS organisations to undertake their own analysis and build vital infrastructures locally.

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Award for Learner of the Year sponsored by HSJ Jobs



WINNER
ENGLAND

James Stokes, Staff Engagement and Wellbeing administrator Birmingham Women's and Children's NHS Foundation Trust

James was the first care leaver to join Birmingham Women's and Children's NHS FT and has during his level 3 award developed a national training package so others can understand what it's like to grow up in care. James' eagerness to learn and develop has contributed significantly to his success in his role on the wellbeing team. He uses his own lived experience as a care leaver to help others and is an ambassador for the trust's commitment to the Care Leavers Covenant, attending community events to support the career aspiration of young people in local communities. He uses his experience to influence and has attended Downing Street and presented at the CPO webinar. James's commitment towards community outreach events, attending workshops, seminars and conferences, has helped shape the way NHS organisations, especially BWC, see care leavers, especially the recruitment and retention of care leavers to diverse job roles in the Trust.

The judges thought that James was inspirational, and in spite of the challenges he has faced during his lifetime he has developed into a confident young man who has taken the learning he has acquired and put it into practice and is now hungry for more. James thoroughly deserves this award.

HIGHLY COMMENDED



ENGLAND

Neil Forman, People Analyst

*Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS
Foundation Trust*

Neil completed his Level 4 Data Analysis Apprenticeship this year, applying his learning by creating the Trust's first interactive dashboards for people metrics. The dashboards directly contributed to an £8.1 million saving year to date. Not only has Neil provided live data in a meaningful way, but he's also educated senior managers on data trends/analysis, enabling them to use the dashboards to forward plan in order that they are making informed decisions, impacting the efficiency and effectiveness of services, and ultimately improvements in patient outcomes.

Neil really impressed the judges with his commitment to learning and how he has taken this learning and put it into practice to bring about significant improvements and savings within the trust. Due to the improvements he has made he is now being contacted by other organisations and consultancies to adopt his approach. One of these consultancies said it was the best people data they had seen in the country.

Award for Learner of the Year sponsored by HSJ Jobs



WINNER
WALES

Matthew Doyle, ECOD Manager - Digital Learning Cardiff and Vale University Health Board

Matthew Doyle is an exceptional learner and ECOD Manager for Digital Learning at Cardiff and Vale UHB. Since joining from Cardiff University 18 months ago, he has shown remarkable dedication to shaping a brand-new role while balancing studies and family life. Matt achieved a distinction in his Diploma for Digital Learning and is now pursuing a Level 5 qualification in Coaching and Mentoring. His learning has had real impact, most notably in developing critical e-learning for the UHB's electronic prescribing rollout. Matthew's commitment, innovation, and collaborative spirit make him a standout learner and a true asset to the people profession.

The judges were really impressed with Matthew's hunger and passion for learning and sharing that with others. He not only undertakes formal programmes but learns from Youtube videos and others to make what he is doing even better. He is reflective and identifies gaps in his own knowledge and takes proactive steps to reduce those. He has used his skills to develop some innovative and interesting programmes. His managing attendance at work package was described by one consultant as one of the best he had done – no mean feat!

FINALIST



WALES

Kirsty White, Medical & Dental Contracts Manager

NHS Wales Employers, NHS Confederation

Kirsty exemplifies a deep commitment to continuous learning and professional development. Building on her success in achieving a Chartered Management Institute (CMI) Level 7 qualification in Strategic Management and Leadership, she is currently undertaking her CIPD Level 5 qualification in Leadership and Management, demonstrating her desire to not only deepen her strategic and operational understanding but also align her learning with best practice in people management, OD, and HR leadership. She has embraced a steep learning curve in her role and, in under a year, has contributed to the development and adoption of several All-Wales policies.

The judges were impressed by her commitment to building her knowledge and skills as a self directed learner who is described as an inspirational manager by one of her colleagues. Kirsty consistently demonstrates strong potential through the quality and impact of her work. She actively seeks out opportunities to learn, ask critical questions, and challenge existing processes in a constructive way.

Browne Jacobson Award for Excellence in Employee Engagement



WINNER

OUH Rewards Advent Calendar Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

The OUH Rewards Advent Calendar was a creative, innovative internal communications campaign utilising channels including posters, digital screens, virtual staff briefings, and cascade via HR teams to boost frontline staff access to discounts and benefits. It generated 42,000 visits to the OUH Rewards staff intranet site, 4,000 entries to prize giveaways sponsored by local businesses and organisations, and 940 orders for their Home & Electronics scheme. The aim of the Calendar was to make it easy for busy frontline NHS staff to access the discounts and benefits available to them.

This internal communications campaign was strategically aligned with the OUH People Plan theme 'Making OUH a great place to work' which includes the aim 'People choose to work at OUH because we recognise and reward everyone'.

The judges thought that OUH's Advent Calendar stood out for its originality, creativity, and reach. By turning staff rewards into a fun, daily digital reveal supported by posters, screens, briefings, and community partnerships, they cut through to all 15,000 staff. What set this apart was the innovative simplicity: transforming a traditional advent idea into a highly engaging platform that created excitement, tangible benefits, and organisational buzz on a shoestring budget.

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HIGHLY COMMENDED



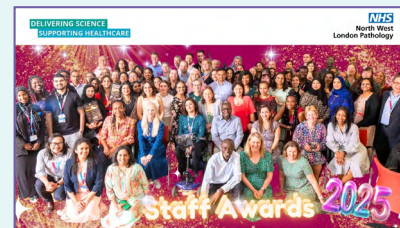
Neurodiversity Inclusion & Support Group

Bolton NHS FT

Bolton NHS Foundation Trust are committed to improving neurodiversity inclusion by creating a more supportive and understanding workplace for neurodivergent colleagues. Their approach includes a thriving monthly Neurodiversity Support Group offering a safe space, resources and sensory aids; a popular "Neurodiversity in our workplace" toolkit; and a series of neurodiversity awareness training sessions. These initiatives foster a culture where neurodivergent colleagues feel supported and empowered to speak up, contributing to broader organisational change and improved employee engagement.

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FINALIST



Transforming Engagement: A Strategic Commitment to Learning, Leadership, and Inclusion in a Pathology Network

North West London Pathology (hosted by Imperial College Hospital NHS Trust)

North West London Pathology's employee engagement strategy for their workforce centres on professional growth, visible leadership, inclusivity, and recognition. Initiatives include a Training Academy, comprehensive induction, CPD sessions and structured promotion pathways. Staff engagement groups and workforce committees ensure frontline voices shape organisational change. These efforts have halved vacancy rates, reduced turnover, and improved NHS Staff Survey engagement from 28% in 2018 to 72% in 2024. Their approach, shared nationally, reflects their commitment to continuous improvement and empowered, motivated teams.

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Award for Best Use of an 'Avoidable Employee Harm' Approach

sponsored by Bevan Brittan



WINNER

Developing and Embedding a Culture of Compassionate Practice Welsh Ambulance Services University NHS Trust

WAST have been early adoptors in reducing the harm ER processes can cause. Working in partnership with trade unions and ABUHB, the work was launched in 2022/23 and followed up with training for managers, Investigating and Disciplinary Officers. They redeveloped initial assessments with a lens on mitigation and seeking alternatives to investigations to embed an approach which better protects their people. The team participated in 100 conversations and those outcomes were included in their action plans. They have reduced cases and timelines and increased understanding and awareness and recently had their progress assessed independently by Danube University, Austria.

The work sat as part of the WAST cultural change journey which included other aspects such as sexual and psychological safety across the workforce. Consistent engagement with the Executive team, senior managers and TU partners supported organisational adoption, with research, data and learning being shared. Compassionate practices and avoidable harm are now a part of their organisational language.

The judges were particularly impressed by the passion of the team which included a deep understanding of the particular nature of ambulance trusts, the need for dedicated investigating officers, the challenges of taking line managers and People professionals out of their comfort zones, taking a partnership approach and being able to put individual people at the centre whilst also demonstrating clear organisational impact.

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FINALISTS

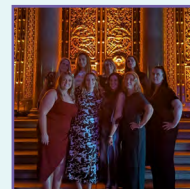


Creating a Whole System Approach to reducing Avoidable Employee Harm in West Yorkshire: the first train- the-trainer model with a focus on inequalities

*West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership &
Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing Hub*

The team adopted a partnership approach from the outset to design and embed the systems, processes and programme content. Combining two large-scale training events with a concurrent focus on developing cohorts of train-the-trainers has ensured a robust and sustainable delivery plan that matches capacity and system readiness for change. The team wanted to ensure sustainability and adaption to their local workforce needs and capitalise on their integrated care system (ICS) approach to collaborative working. The judges were particularly impressed by the use of an EDI lens and intersectionality considerations to ensure that the whole person is considered when aiming to reduce avoidable harm.

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Enhanced Case Reviews: Embedding Compassion into Every Case

Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust

Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust introduced a proactive and compassionate approach to managing employee relations cases through Enhanced Case Reviews. This practice prioritises employee wellbeing, learning, and early resolution. By systematically analysing past cases, both internal and external, with operational HR, union partners, and investigation officers, the team identified key themes, improved processes, and significantly reduced harm. The results include faster resolution times, fewer dismissals, and more proportionate outcomes. Their approach has fostered a culture of reflection, accountability, and continuous improvement, aligned with the HPMA's 'Avoiding Harm' philosophy, while demonstrating real change and measurable impact since implementation.

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Social Partnership Forum Award for Partnership Working between Employers and Trade Unions



WINNER

North West/NCA Wellbeing and Attendance Management Policy and Process Collaboration Northern Care Alliance

The Northern Care Alliance launched a new Wellbeing and Attendance Management Policy in January 2024. The policy which took 2.5 years to co-create in partnership with trade unions, HR, EDI, managers and colleagues has superseded all existing sickness policies and created a genuine focus on compassionate leadership. They met monthly, with several extended workshops working together to agree the policy line by line. They presented the policy together as a partnership at policy review meetings and created a NW Community of Practice with other organisations and their TU teams. This shift in their approach, although lengthy, enabled the organisation to move from the traditional, punitive and rigid trigger sickness management processes to adopting an enhanced, person-centred approach to each colleague's wellbeing.

The judges were impressed with how collaboration with Trade Union colleagues and wider key stakeholders has been at the heart of this programme from day one and continues to be today, helping them to shift focus to the holistic wellbeing of their people.

They thought it showed real ambition to look at a difficult issue through a different lens and be bold in how to best tackle this starting at the outset with social partnership working at its heart. There are clearly transferable and scalable lessons to be shared more widely from their approach to supporting attendance using a wellbeing approach.

For further information contact Sharon Lord
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FINALISTS



Partnership Approach to Embedding Sexual Safety

South Western Ambulance Service

SWASFT launched their Sexual Safety Charter in February 2023 via a letter that was signed by Executive Directors. This was accompanied by a VLOG that included their Chief Executive, Executive Director for People, FTSU Guardian and UNISON who each described their hope for the journey SWASFT was about to embark on. This partnership approach continued through the Trust's Just and Learning Culture Forum, where the People Partner Team, Operational Leaders and UNISON colleagues meet every three months to have open, safe and impactful discussions that has enabled co-creation of solutions in the form of policy and process changes, working to achieve the safest possible workplace for their people.

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Social Partnership delivering real change and improvements in South Yorkshire

NHS South Yorkshire ICB

Since the establishment of South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board in 2022, the SY Social Partnership Forum (SY SPF) and its members have been a fundamental part of governance and decision-making in the South Yorkshire Integrated Care System, with effective partnership working between eight trade unions, eight employers and other key partners, collectively representing approx. 50,000 employees, to bring about real change and improvements. The strength of this collaboration has been evident in key projects delivered including collective approach to job evaluation and regional capacity and establishing staff side voice in the South Yorkshire Commitment to Carers Board.

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People Team of the Year sponsored by ward hadaway



Shared Services Team North London Partners Shared Services (hosted by London Royal Free)

NLPSS is an NHS shared service organisation with 200 staff, brought together in a spirit of partnership to deliver a range of HR services to 8 different organisations in north London. Across five services (recruitment, OH, medical staffing, lead employer and payroll) and 8 NHS customers, the team have created a unique corporate spirit by re-engineering processes around the user experience and empowering staff to do whatever it takes to ensure user satisfaction, with great results.

After taking two years to establish themselves, the last 12 months saw them exceed all expectations, successfully boosting staff engagement and reducing costs while speeding up and improving service delivery, and crucially, releasing time for front-line staff to better engage with patient care. They are now being held up by NHS England and others as a vanguard model for others as they tackle the scaling people services journey.

The judges thought that the team demonstrated a very strong vision through their 'North Star' vision (excellent patient care through an outstanding employee experience), coupled with a clear sense of purpose across People, Process, and Technology. What particularly stood out was the passion and commitment evident at all levels of the team. They have a real sense of 'Team' – not just in name, but in spirit and execution. The breadth of what they have achieved, combined with the valuable insights they've provided for both the wider HR community and regional learning is exceptional.

For further information contact Gareth Jones
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HIGHLY COMMENDED



The Temporary Staffing Team

Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

The team has transformed how their bank works, reducing temporary staffing spend by £13.1m in 2024/25. With data-driven strategies and strong collaboration, they boosted bank fill rates by 21%, improved staff retention and enhanced patient care. Placing bank workers at the heart of their service, they've built a highly engaged, effective workforce. Their values-led, cohesive approach sets the benchmark for sustainable, high-quality, patient-focused staffing across internal and external temporary workforces.

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FINALISTS



HPFT People and OD Team

Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust

This is a passionate, creative, solutions-focussed, cohesive team with a continuous quality improvement and innovation ethos. They meet regularly as a team to review performance and impact, using quantitative data plus qualitative feedback from proactive staff engagement. They agilely respond to service needs, continuously evolving to provide the right support and achieve the right outcomes, with an exemplary set of people metrics.

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Resourcing Team

The Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust

Last year the team supported the reduction of agency spend from 6.9% to 3.3%, generating £8.7 million savings. They maintained zero agency usage for healthcare support workers and eliminated agency reliance for admin and clerical roles. Their integrated Resourcing Partner model has improved recruitment speed, consistency, and divisional support. The team leads with professionalism, purpose, and innovation to deliver sustainable workforce transformation.

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Deputy People Leader of the Year sponsored by KPMG



WINNER

Shelley Williams, Deputy Director of Workforce and OD Aneurin Bevan University Health Board

Shelley plays a pivotal role in the division and is “highly regarded as an expert within the organisation.” She has championed innovative approaches to domestic and international recruitment, widening access initiatives, business partnering and avoidable employee harm through HR policies and processes.

Her commitment to continuous professional development extends beyond her own growth, demonstrated through her leadership of the People Network, where she aligns program delivery with the local and national agenda and supports the ongoing professional development of the wider Business Partner community. Her professional credibility is reinforced by her participation in national panels and discussions alongside senior leaders, and by her team’s contributions to over 20 national groups across healthcare workforce domains. She is the current All-Wales deputy chair of the deputy executive director of Workforce and Organisational development and a participant in the Aspiring Executive Director Talent Pool.

Her leadership style combines supportive compassionate mentorship with constructive challenge and she demonstrates exceptional skill in leveraging people’s capabilities to develop innovative working models that enhance service quality.

The judges thought that Shelley was a ball of energy, drive and connection, a well-respected leader who always does the right thing, and who has demonstrated impressive outcomes across a wide range of work, both within the board and in the wider DD network and Welsh system.

FINALISTS



Brendan McConaghy, Co-Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development

*Belfast Health and Social
Care Trust*

Brendan is a visionary leader and former clinician, who brings a unique combination of data-informed leadership, strategic vision and compassionate delivery to his role. Over the past 12 months, Brendan has led the encompass rollout, championed open and inclusive culture, and delivered significant improvements in onboarding, engagement, and staff wellbeing. Brendan is recognised Trust-wide for his strategic thinking and decision making, as well as his authenticity and credibility.



Angela Jones, Deputy Director of Workforce & Productivity Solutions

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Angela is a bold, authentic, and widely respected leader across NHS Wales. Her influence stems from deep expertise, integrity, and an unwavering commitment to people and patient safety. A driving force behind the successful International Recruitment programme, she led the recruitment of over 1,000 healthcare professionals to Wales, transforming workforce capacity. She always steps up to lead complex, high-stakes projects with a clear focus on outcomes that matter.



Jess Hobbs, Deputy Chief People Officer

*Devon Partnership
NHS Trust*

Jess is a compassionate leader with extensive experience of leadership within the NHS. Core to her effectiveness is the demonstration of clear boundaries and accountability, fostering an environment where her team can thrive. Jess consistently champions workforce inequalities evidenced in a number of ground-breaking initiatives. Her leadership contribution within the One Devon People Digital Programme showcases her commitment as a system partner and significant ability to drive system-wide initiatives.

People Leader of the Year

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WINNER

Christine Joy, Chief People Officer South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board

In 2024/25 Christine led major organisational and HR transformation with calmness, expertise, unwavering support for others and significant influencing skills. Representatives from all sectors said that, without her, South Yorkshire would not have achieved significant workforce and economic improvements. Her 2024/25 achievements include making it 'normal' to work across sectors; becoming an antiracist system; reducing agency-worker costs by 82%; £11m annual savings; £18m new investment; 700 more monthly patient-care episodes and being chosen as 1 of 3 national trailblazers. Her workforce strategy coproduced with NHS, social care, local authority, voluntary and mayoral office partners expanded how the organisation defines and supports the workforce to include paid and unpaid roles across all sectors.

Christine is committed to creating compassionate and inclusive cultures. This is evidenced by promoting the voice of all colleagues, breaking glass ceilings and transforming ways of working. Examples include her programme to develop senior leaders and her comprehensive talent management strategy to increase inclusivity in recruitment, people progression and nurturing talent. Her successful mentorship programmes, career development opportunities and diversity initiatives resulted in a more engaged workforce, with increased opportunities for underrepresented groups.

Christine's ability to influence and collaborate with a diverse range of partners, fosters a culture of collaboration and innovation. The judges thought that Christine is an exceptional people leader who demonstrates significant compassion and kindness in everything she does and whose motivation is always 'how to make the biggest impact on patients'. A highly deserving winner.

FINALISTS



Emma Newton,
Director of People,
Liverpool Royal
Hospital

*Liverpool University
Hospitals NHS Trust*

Over the past year Emma has successfully established a high-performing leadership team at hospital level, while skilfully navigating complex matrix structures across multiple hospitals and specialisms. She demonstrates exemplary leadership, strategic vision, and a deep commitment to compassionate, inclusive practice, with a proven ability to deliver impactful outcomes—ranging from cultural transformation and improved staff experience to financial efficiencies and enhanced care delivery.



Sarah Simmonds,
Executive Director
of Workforce and OD

*Aneurin Bevan University
Health Board*

Sarah's collaborative and compassionate leadership has achieved huge impact across her organisation. Sarah's team delivered £16.9 million in savings over 18 months while improving patient care through reduced agency usage and better staffing. Notable achievements include a nationally award-winning "avoidable employee harm" program saving £700,000, sourcing 450 international recruits, and implementing innovative workforce solutions. Her collaborative approach extends beyond her division evidenced by her team's active participation in over 20 national groups, positioning her as an influential voice on a national scale.

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