

HTA Board meeting, 5 December 2024

Agenda item	4.2 People Strategy
For information or decision?	Information
Decision making to date?	N/A
Recommendation	The HTA Board is asked to note the progress update and comment by exception on the issues raised
Which strategic risks are relevant?	Risk 3: Staff
Strategic objective	Efficient and Effective
Core operations / Change activity	Change activity
Business Plan item	Develop a People strategy that sets the direction for our organisational development and builds on the values and behaviours work from 23/24
Committee oversight?	Board and RemCo
Finance and resource implications	TBC
Timescales	Completion by March 25
Communication(s) (internal/external stakeholders)	TBC
Identified legislative implications	N/A

People Strategy

Purpose of paper

1. The purpose of this paper is to provide the Board with background information on the ongoing development of the HTA's People Strategy 2025/26-2027/28.

Background

2. The last HTA People Strategy ran from 2019 to 2021. This Strategy included the development of the home-working contract, a review of non-pay benefits and improved communications across the HTA. Since, 2022 and coming out of the pandemic, the HTA has devoted time to organisational development in terms of agreeing a Vision and Mission, devoting time to developing new Core Values and agreeing the underlying behaviours and competencies required. In addition, the HTA has devoted time to team building across the organisation and helpfully used organisational development tools (such as the Strength Deployment Inventory) to help build relationships in a more hybrid and remote workplace. We have also developed a new 3 year organisational Strategy and recognised within this, and more widely, that development of a new People Strategy is now a necessary further step.
3. As the Board is aware, the People Strategy will seek to address a number of challenges. We acknowledge that staff turnover has been relatively high at the HTA for several years before and after Covid and elements of the People Strategy have been identified as enablers to help improve that statistic. A gap in the organisation's collection of staff feedback, exacerbated by the transition to outsourced HR, has meant that it has not always been clear what changes should be made to improve recruitment and retention. Hence, the recent Staff Survey was identified as a key approach to helping gather staff opinions that could then be used to support detailed engagement and development actions to support a full People Strategy later in 2024/25.

Staff Survey 2024

4. The survey was live between 24 May – 21 June 2024, a total of 20 working days, and a total of 49 responses were received, representing a participation rate of 85.9%. It is very encouraging to have enjoyed such a good response rate which is indicative that staff have seen the value in taking time to feedback their thoughts about what is working well and what could be improved. The results of the Staff Survey were shared with all staff once they became available and likewise the report has also been shared with the

HTA's remuneration committee (Remco).

5. The CEO appreciates the importance of responding fully to the findings and, likewise, directors on the Senior Management Team (SMT) and senior managers on the Business Delivery Team (BDT) have indicated they are committed to doing so. We can take heart from the positive buy-in from staff in terms of the very high response rate indicating that staff see the value in contributing. This gives confidence in the findings being representative of the staff as a whole. However, the results are a mixed picture and clearly indicate we have work to do with some "hard truths" coming through for senior staff.
6. In general, the survey provides an excellent source of invaluable information that will allow us to explore in detail what staff like and what they don't like about the HTA at this juncture, upon which we are basing further work and engagement.

Development of the new Strategy

7. We are currently engaged in developing a People Strategy for the next three years (2025-2027) that will look to improve and enhance staff experience by using the results of the staff survey and further engagement to identify clear areas to focus improvement and to get steers from staff as to what changes and actions they would like to see to improve their experience. At the core of the strategy will be the HTA's CORE values of collaboration, openness, respect and excellence. The aim is for the Strategy to commence from April 2025.
8. The strategy will confirm the HTA's vision for its staff and what changes and improvements will be made to improve their experience. It will contain a set of commitments by senior leaders and staff to be met over the period of the Strategy, with a list of deliverable actions and timescales. It will also outline planned reviews of progress, including future Pulse and Staff Surveys, across the life of the Strategy to ensure commitments are being met.
9. The draft high level **objectives** of the strategy are as follows:
 - The vision for the HTA People Strategy will be to attract and retain the best individuals to deliver our organisational commitment, and to develop exceptional leaders.
 - The Strategy will set out how we will lead, manage and value staff, whilst supporting their professional development, to promote a culture that allows people to thrive and who are proud to work at the HTA.

- The Strategy will demonstrate the HTA's commitment to its people and how this commitment can achieve success.
 - In developing the new Strategy we will embed our core values of collaboration, openness, respect and excellence.
10. We have been doing this by engaging with staff through a consultation period in October and November, supported by specialists from the HR team, to develop realistic and attainable actions based within the Employee Value Proposition (EVP) categories below (an EVP is essentially what the HTA, as an employer, offers in return for a person's skills, experience, and abilities):
- EVP for the HTA People Strategy:
 - Total reward package (pay and non-pay benefits)
 - Performance and recognition
 - Leadership and management
 - Learning and career development
 - Environment, culture and communication (how we work, including home/hybrid working)
11. Dedicated consultation sessions were progressed throughout November, where staff have been asked to review feedback already received through the staff survey and other engagement to consider the areas of focus, and receive support from HR and others to consider what standard or best practice EVPs might look like, including examples of what happens in other, similar bodies.
12. There is a balance to be struck with how we discuss some HR issues as a group that includes junior staff, managers and senior leaders, given some sensitivities around the themes that have been identified and emerged from the staff survey results. Therefore, the consultation sessions have been tailored so that colleagues feel that they have a safe environment where they can talk and are encouraged to speak openly and freely to ensure we are capturing what changes staff would like to see in the organisation.
13. Sessions have been led by various leaders from within HTA and the broader HR team at CQC and we have really appreciated the freshness and difference of perspective and approach that they bring.
14. We have had really positive feedback from staff so far on our 'thinking rounds' approach and how it has led to some really open discussions that allow staff to get their points across. We will seek formal feedback on our process after it has completed.

15. The intention is to identify clear actions that staff would like to be taken forward that are realistic and deliverable and that, from an HR perspective, are considered likely to actually deliver the changes that staff would like to see. Once a list of actions and priorities has been identified, we will need to review the resource impact of those actions and finalise an agreed list of actions that can be delivered within the life of the strategy. This will need to be completed during December and will then require a final review with staff planned for January 2025.

Conclusion and next steps

17. There is still a lot of work left to do to finalise the strategy and we hope to present a draft version of it to Remco early in the new year at their January meeting. We will also discuss the implementation of the strategy with Remco at that point, and consider resource requirements and risks.

Recommendation

18. The Board is asked to **note** the progress made on the development of our new People Strategy.