



Sussex Community
NHS Foundation Trust

People Strategy

2023-2026



*Excellent care at the
heart of the community*



Welcome from Caroline Haynes, Chief People Officer

Welcome to the Trust's People Strategy. I am pleased to share with you how we will reach our goal of being a great place to work.

We have achieved so much in the last few years to improve the experience of our people but we know that challenges remain to attract and retain staff, to support wellbeing and drive greater inclusion. We recognise that there is more to do.

We are facing challenges with the current high cost of living, the impact of the pandemic, an older workforce, labour shortages and changes in the way we work and deliver some of our services. Although those challenges will evolve over time, there will remain a focus on attracting new people to the NHS, retaining those already with us, developing new roles to meet changing service needs, staff wellbeing and diversity and inclusion.

This strategy provides a roadmap that will help us ensure we address those challenges and drive improvement for all our people.



Caroline Haynes,
Chief People Officer
January 2023

Our context

Our new People Strategy supports our Trust strategy and is set in the context of wider external and internal factors, together with feedback from our people about what is important to ensuring a positive employee experience at Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust (SCFT).

The strategy is underpinned by the NHS People Promise and our own core SCFT values. It is a vehicle enabling us to attract, support, develop and retain our people in order to have fantastic staff delivering excellent care at the heart of the community.

It is widely reported that workforce is a huge challenge for the NHS as a whole. Increases in staff numbers are not keeping pace with demand for workforce and services. Staffing shortages are the biggest limiting factor of the pace at which health and care services can recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (King's Fund 2022). We are committed to working together with our partners in our integrated care system (ICS) to find joint ways of addressing these challenges. The NHS offers 350 different careers and we will work together to promote these and support a wider range of people to know about opportunities and consider working for the NHS.

The pandemic has led to a shift in expectations of how we work and connect with each other and what employees need and expect from an employer. It has necessarily accelerated technological changes and we will build on what we have learnt to maximise digital

opportunities and modernise processes. The importance of attention to wellbeing, especially mental health, has been highlighted and offering resources and wellbeing support is vital to enable people to be able to be well at work and perform their roles effectively.

We know that people may feel differently about what they need from work and that flexibility is very important. Work-life balance is the main reason given for people leaving. Flexibility is more than when and where people work; it is about offering different roles and new routes into careers and recognising that work with SCFT may complement other parts of someone's life – as a carer, in another role, or volunteering in the community for example. A worldwide study (Gartner 2021) showed that since the beginning of the pandemic, 67% of employees have increased expectations for working flexibly.

As an organisation working across a large geography we take our environmental responsibility seriously and the People Strategy complements our organisational Green Plan by enabling staff to improve the travel choices we make, to use resources effectively and seek greener alternatives.

☆ A great place to work

In the years ahead, we will attract new recruits to our organisation and our people will speak positively about the opportunities for learning and development they have had, how their wellbeing is always prioritised and that they have a true sense of belonging.

Our criteria for success:

- ☆ Fewer people will leave our Trust and through improvement in how we recruit and more agile ways of working, we will have a reduced vacancy rate.
- ☆ As we deliver new and innovative patient pathways, we will enable our people to work in ways that prioritise skills, values, tasks and competencies and complement traditional roles.
- ☆ Our people will know where they are and where they are going on our career framework. Continuous opportunities to learn and develop will be enabled by our Learning Academy which will utilise the breadth of knowledge and opportunities across our system.
- ☆ Our people will have a greater sense of belonging, as we reduce the disparities in the experiences they have at work and continue to ensure they have the freedom and support to speak up.
- ☆ Through a more coordinated and proactive approach to occupational health and wellbeing, more people will feel supported to be well at work.



We have developed a deeper understanding of the make up of our workforce and this has informed the strategy.

For example, we know that in the last year (August 2021 to July 2022):

- 10% of our starters left within the first 12 months
- 45% of our leavers had been with the organisation less than two years; almost a quarter of nurses leaving have been with SCFT less than a year
- Two thirds of our staff in their 20s are likely to leave in the first two years of employment
- 15% of our leavers are over 50
- Almost half of new starters are already working in the NHS
- Those who live closer to their workplace are less likely to leave

We want to support people in their early career with us, recognising that people may want to experience other organisations, explore other roles, or work in different geographical places so we will seek to understand more about individual aspirations and develop ways for people to return to SCFT, should they leave.

We will ensure we are promoting opportunities to people beyond the NHS, especially to communities who may not have previously considered the NHS as an employer.

At SCFT we recognise our role in the community as a large, stable employer, especially important at a time of economic uncertainty. We are committed to being an anchor organisation, proactively recruiting from our community and taking action to add social and economic value to our community. We aspire to being known in the community as an employer of choice; a great place to work.



Some of our achievements

Since our last strategy was published:

- We have four thriving and continuously growing staff networks, recognising the value of diverse experience and the importance of supporting all staff to have a positive experience at work.
 - Our leaders have been supported and developed, with 200 leaders attending our 2019 conference and 633 people taking part in leadership development activities in 2021/22.
 - The Kickstart scheme has supported 19 people, with nine going on to substantive employment with us.
 - 103 apprenticeships across nursing, allied health professionals, finance and nurseries, supporting career progression opportunities.
 - A comprehensive menopause support package has been rolled out to help raise awareness and improve access to resources and support.
 - Our Connect team has offered 36 debriefing sessions, 42 reflective practice groups, 25 mediation sessions and 143 one to ones, which individuals and teams have found invaluable.
 - We have allocated £82,200 in wellbeing support to teams based on what they told us they needed.
 - Quality Improvement sessions in 2021/22 were attended by 269 people, helping them to make local service improvements.
 - We have launched a Healthy Teams Resource, which is being used by teams across the organisation.
 - We have recruited 101 internationally educated nurses (as of the end of 2022) and are using the learning to inform wider recruitment.
 - We offered an average of 6,883 bank shifts per month to ensure our services are safe.
 - We held 90 careers conversations in 2021/22 with staff in a range of roles, enabling them to explore their career options at SCFT.
 - Volunteers continue to enhance our workforce, with 192 volunteers supporting services and 1,168 volunteers supporting our COVID mass vaccination programme.
- It is important to remember that most of those achievements were delivered during the pandemic.
- In 2021, 73% of staff completed the NHS Staff Survey – our highest ever response rate – with 71% doing so in 2022. There were positive results relating to compassionate culture and leadership, and our most improved scores related to support from managers. Staff also said the organisation takes positive action on health and wellbeing. However, we know the experience of staff can vary and we will work to reduce the variation in how some staff feel about their experience of working for SCFT.

Our new People Strategy

Our new strategy builds on the success of the previous strategy, developing further work already in progress, and supports our aspiration to be a great place to work and our ambitions to halve the number of leavers and to recruit 100 clinical apprentices.

In developing this strategy, we have engaged with staff in a variety of roles and professions across the organisation including our StaffSide colleagues. We will continue to engage as we work together to deliver the strategy, recognising, more than ever, that the strategy may need to evolve and adapt to any changing context.

Through delivering this strategy, we will improve processes to ensure we are getting the basics right, we will communicate our offer clearly, we will be innovative in our ways of working and we will ensure we understand the impact of what we do.



Welcoming

We will offer attractive jobs and our organisation will represent our whole community

We will do more to promote SCFT as a local employer of choice

We will improve the first 100 days in the Trust for all new starters

We will improve our end to end recruitment processes and remove barriers to joining us

We will offer more apprenticeships and employment experience options

We will create new roles that focus on the skills, values, tasks and competencies to complement our existing roles

We will lead system-wide improvements in workforce deployment

We will offer more developmental roles and increase opportunities for people to work across the organisation and system

We will develop proactive ways of keeping in touch with people about what matters to them, so that more staff choose to stay at SCFT

We will develop clear and easy processes for people wishing to return

Belonging

People will be proud to work for us, living and experiencing our values every day

We will ensure every leader has the knowledge, skills and expertise to create a healthy team

We will continue to evolve our occupational health and wellbeing offer to respond to emerging needs and do more to ensure that all staff have their fundamental wellbeing needs met

Learning from our staff networks, we will reduce the discrepancy in staff experience so that all staff can report a positive experience of working for SCFT

We will live our commitment to eradicating racism and all other forms of discrimination in our employment

Learning

We will offer clear career pathways to new and existing staff and actively encourage a 'learning for all' approach

We will launch a new management and leadership development programme

We will continue to strengthen our just culture, learning from incidents and concerns and sharing our successes

We will improve our strategic partnerships with educational institutions and other learning partners

We will increase our fluency in quality improvement and promote innovation and research

Delivering our strategy

The delivery of the strategy will be reported to and monitored by our Trust Board through the People Committee.

The Workforce Committee will ensure the actions described in the delivery plan are delivered through its cycle of business, and those of its sub-committees.

Targets and measures will ensure we deliver against our plans and robustly assess the impact.



If you need support in understanding this document, or if you need the information provided in an alternative format, please ask a member of staff or contact us.

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