This policy supersedes all previous issues.
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GATESHEAD HEALTH NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

PERSONNEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

PP5: STAFF INVOLVEMENT, CONSULTATION AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING POLICY

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Our approach to partnership working is based on both formal and informal arrangements. Our formal arrangements are conducted through the Health and Safety Committee, Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) and sub groups of the JCC. In addition to these formal arrangements staff are involved in other ways such as team meetings, working groups and service development reviews.

1.2 The process of consultation with staff in these various forums will support the Trust’s compliance with statutory duties under a variety of Equality and Diversity legislation.

1.3 The outcomes of the staff attitude surveys and Improving Working Lives (IWL) focus groups will provide useful material for us to monitor achievements and identify areas for development. The DTI Partnership at Work project and the use of the Staff Involvement self assessment tool has allowed us to scope an accurate assessment of our position in the development of our approach to staff involvement.

1.4 Our partnership working with trade union representatives has been further strengthened in recent years with the joint planning and implementation of Agenda for Change. This partnership approach is continuing with the establishment of Union Learning Representatives (ULRs) and most recently the Learning for All Wilson Project, in conjunction with ULRs and the Trades Union Congress.

2 SCOPE

2.1 Our approach to partnership working underpins and facilitates the development of sound and effective employee relations. This policy sets out our approach to staff involvement, consultation and partnership working:

- Staff involvement – is about involving staff in decisions that affect their working lives and the healthcare that they deliver
- Partnership working – managers and staff representatives work in partnership to liberate the knowledge, skills and commitment of staff to improve patient care
- Consultation – take into account views of others.

3 AIM

3.1 We are committed to modernising health services in Gateshead and recognise that our success in doing this is underpinned by the enthusiasm, dedication and motivation of our staff. We have enjoyed considerable progress as a result of partnership working and staff involvement in the implementation of Agenda for Change, meeting the Practice Plus standard for Improving Working Lives, reaccreditation as an Investor in People and the introduction of new models of service delivery and changed job roles that respond to changing service needs.

3.2 It is the aim of these arrangements to maintain and further enhance effective employee relations to continue the process of modernising Trust services.
4 RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 The Trust Board has statutory responsibilities under a variety of legislation to consult with staff and their representatives.

4.2 The responsibilities of accredited staff representatives, staff participating in Trust working groups or partnership working arrangements are shown at Appendix 2. The responsibilities of managers are shown at Appendix 3.

5 RECOGNITION FOR STAFF SIDE ORGANISATIONS

5.1 We recognise those staff side organisations recognised by the NHS Staff Council which have members employed by the Trust.

5.2 The Trust’s staff side constitution document states the agreed membership, key principles, arrangements for meetings, AGM voting rights and positions of Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary.

6 JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (JCC)

6.1 The Trust’s Joint Consultative Committee will meet at six weekly intervals and will be chaired on a rotational basis by the Management Side Chair and Staff Side Chair. The chair will rotate on an annual basis from the first meeting of each calendar year.

6.2 Membership of the committee is shown at Appendix 1 responsibilities of members are shown at appendices 2 and 3.

6.3 Each staff organisation is entitled to reasonable paid time for each of its seats on the JCC. The Staff Side Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary will be entitled to a further 5.5 hours per week each to undertake their duties.

6.4 For those unions where separate facilities time has been agreed for specific purposes that facilities agreement may need to be reviewed jointly if those representatives are also officers of the JCC.

7 SCOPE OF THE JCC

7.1 The Trust’s Joint Consultative Committee exists to provide a forum for the active involvement of staff side organisations in regular discussions with managers of the Trust on developments within the organisation. In particular the committee is established to discuss and agree matters pertaining to groups of staff and to allow consultation relating to:

- strategic plans of the Trust, including the allocation of resources, which may have potential staffing implications;
- operational management issues which have a Trust wide impact on staff;
- changes in staffing arrangements which have potential impact upon other staff groups in the Trust;
- consultation on the full range of Trust Personnel Policies and Procedures;
• consultation on all Trust Policies and Procedures which have a general impact upon staff;
• all aspects of the job environment/working conditions which are of a collective nature.

7.2 The Joint Consultative Committee exists to complement and not replace other channels of communication or direct consultation between the Trust's managers and its employees. Matters which are individualised will not normally be discussed at the Joint Consultative Committee, unless there is a more general implication for other staff within the Trust.

7.3 Information communicated by the management side to the staff side will be information that can be shared with the broader membership of any staff side organisation. However, it is recognised that in certain situations it may be appropriate to receive staff side comments in confidence. Should such situations arise this will be discussed on a case by case basis between the management side and staff side prior to any discussion taking place.

7.4 The Joint Consultative Committee is recognised as an integral part of the Trust's consultation machinery for Trust wide policy issues relating to staffing matters and agreements that are reached within the committee will normally be subject to final approval by the Trust Board or a designated meeting empowered to take decisions on behalf of the Trust Board i.e. the HR Committee.

7.5 Full time officers can only be invited to be present at Joint Consultative Committee meetings to discuss specific issues through prior agreement with both Chairs.

8 MAKING AND COMMUNICATING DECISIONS OF THE JCC

8.1 Effective consultation at the Joint Consultative Committee should involve discussion, consensus and agreement. Where agreement on matters cannot be reached, the management and staff side Chairs will meet and agree how the particular matter should be addressed, following separate discussion within both the management and staff sides.

8.2 Both sides acknowledge the need to communicate with those they represent in order to:
• be able to adequately represent the views of both staff and managers throughout the Trust and thereby engage in constructive discussion on their behalf.
• communicate back the discussion and decisions of the Joint Consultative Committee after each meeting.

8.3 All Directors, Divisional Managers, Heads of Service and Staff Governors will receive a copy of the minutes of the Joint Consultative Committee. A copy will be shared with staff on the intranet. It is the responsibility of managers to make copies available to staff who do not have access to the intranet.
9 SUB-COMMITTEES OF THE JCC

9.1 Sub-committees of the Joint Consultative Committee will be established as required. When Sub-committees are set up, their format and scope will be discussed and agreed at the full Joint Consultative Committee as per Appendix 4. Recommendations developed within Sub-committees will be approved by the Joint Consultative Committee.

10 STAFF REPRESENTATION IN SUPPORT OF TRUST WORKING GROUPS

10.1 It may be necessary for a staff representative, whether an accredited representative or not, to be nominated to join specific time-limited working groups within the Trust.

10.2 It is necessary for a representative so nominated to discuss with their manager at the earliest opportunity whether this commitment can be accommodated, the time commitment that would be needed and frequency of meetings. Sufficient advanced notice of any meetings must be given to facilitate release to attend such groups and to arrange cover if necessary.

11 COMMUNICATING DECISIONS OF WORKING GROUPS/PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

11.1 When accredited staff representatives participate in working groups or partnership arrangements they have a role in communicating views on behalf of their members during discussions and decision-making and for communicating discussions and decisions of these forums to their members.

11.2 When other staff are nominated to participate in such forums their responsibilities for communicating discussions and seeking views from colleagues should be clarified.

12 TIME OFF AND FACILITIES TO SUPPORT STAFF INVOLVEMENT

12.1 Time Off and Facilities for Accredited Staff Representatives

12.1.1 Reasonable paid facility time is to be allowed for recognised staff officials to carry out consultation and partnership working and to undergo training relevant to their accredited role.

12.1.2 Where staff representatives are required to attend official Trust business in hours outside of their normal rostered commitment time off in lieu will be given and the hours granted should accord with the hours actually spent.

12.1.3 Where possible, staff representatives should attempt to ensure that for regular meetings shifts are swapped in advance to allow attendance during work hours.

12.1.4 For cases where there are particular difficulties either with time off in lieu or swapping shifts, the Central Team will attempt to identify
a central allocation of £5k to allow for a level of replacement costs. Where back-fill cover is required, a quarterly submission should be counter-signed by the relevant department manager and forwarded to the Director of Health Development who will be responsible for arranging reimbursement to the relevant local budget.

12.1.5 Managers will, as far as possible, support staff representatives to attend official meetings but it must be recognised that this support will be subject to the needs of the service.

12.1.6 Further planned time-off will be facilitated to enable staff representatives to undertake specific partnership working e.g. to maintain Agenda for Change and participate in time-limited working groups.

12.1.7 Location and timing of meetings will be taken into account to facilitate attendance.

12.2 Time Off and Facilities to Support Other Staff Involvement

12.2.1 ULRs are entitled to reasonable paid time off for their duties and training. This is approximately 4 hours per month for ULR duties plus time to attend bi-monthly ULR network meetings and training as necessary.

12.2.2 Reasonable paid time is to be allowed for nominated staff to participate in working groups or partnership arrangements, where this is discussed and agreed in advance with their manager. As much notice as possible of meetings, where involvement is agreed, must be given to the manager to enable release to be arranged.

12.2.3 Release will be facilitated wherever possible to enable staff involvement but in all cases the needs of the service are paramount.

12.2.4 Where staff are required to attend official Trust business in hours outside of their normal commitment, time off in lieu will be given and the hours granted should accord with the hours actually spent.

12.2.5 Where possible staff should attempt to ensure that for regular meetings shifts are swapped in advance to allow attendance during work hours.

12.2.6 Location and timing of meetings will be taken into account to facilitate attendance.

13 MONITOR AND REVIEW

The outcomes of the staff attitude surveys will provide useful material for us to monitor achievements and identify areas for development. The DTI project and the
use of the Staff Involvement self-assessment tool has allowed us to scope an accurate assessment of our position in the development of our approach to staff involvement. We will use the self assessment tool in future to gauge whether we have improved. The Wilson project will monitor the activity of ULRs and will hopefully show an increase in their involvement within the Trust. The Investor in People Profile self assessment tool will also enable us to measure the extent of staff involvement.
Appendix 1

Membership of Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust JCC

For the Management Side representation will be as follows:

- Chair - Chief Executive
- Vice Chair – Director of Health Development & Modernisation
- Secretary – Head of Personnel
- All Trust Executive Directors (or nominated Deputy)
- Senior Personnel Representative

The Management Side will also ensure that a minutes secretary is provided to the Committee for all parts of the meeting.

For the Staff Side representation will be as follows:

- UNISON – Six seats
- Unite (Amicus and TGWU) – Two seats
- One seat per recognised organisation.

Deputies will be able to attend in place of all Committee members.
Appendix 2

Responsibilities of accredited staff representatives

Ensure staff views are fully represented and members of staff supported in dealing with workplace issues.

Promote good understanding and relations between management and staff

Participate in consultation and exchange of views

Assist with the efficient flow of information between management and staff

Share information and knowledge

Meet with management and discuss areas of common purpose with a view to preventing problems

Provide representatives to fill each seat allocated on the JCC

Staff representatives will keep each other updated and informed, realising they may not be at every meeting where decisions are made and items discussed

Ensure that the time and resources allocated to their role will be used appropriately and cost effectively

Elect and accredit representatives in accordance with TU/professional organisations constitutions

Notify the Head of HR the number and location of work groups for which each respective will be responsible

Give reasonable notice of time off requirements
Responsibilities of staff (non-accredited) participating in Trust working groups or partnership working arrangements

Ensure views of colleagues are fully represented when attending forums as a representative of a group of staff

Promote good understanding and relations between management and staff

Participate in consultation and exchange of views

Assist with the efficient flow of information between management and staff

Share information and knowledge

Ensure that the time allocated to their attendance at working groups or partnership arrangements is used appropriately and cost effectively

Give reasonable notice of meetings to manager
Appendix 3

Responsibilities of managers

Promote good understanding and relations between management and staff

Ensure the efficiency and success of the Trust for the benefit of all

Participate in consultation and exchange of views

Assist with the efficient flow of information between management and staff

Share information and knowledge

Meet with staff side and discuss areas of common purpose with a view to preventing problems

Ensure managers at all levels are familiar with the agreements and arrangements relating to facilities time

Provide resources to accredited staff representatives:

Use of notice board

Use of email and internet

Accommodation for meetings

Access to handbooks, policies and procedures

Stationery

Access to telephone, fax machine

Provision of facilities for deduction of TU/professional organisation subscriptions from payroll

Facility for representatives to meet with full time officers by arrangement
CONSULTATION SUB-COMMITTEE - PERSONNEL POLICIES

STAGES TO BE FOLLOWED

1) The sub-committee meets to discuss the first draft of a Personnel Policy. The Staff Side and the Management Side will have a representative(s) and there will be appropriate Personnel representation -depending on the individual policy. Deputies may attend for all members.

2) Following the discussions in the Sub-committee a senior member of Personnel staff will amend the draft.

3) Comments from both the management and staff side will be received back by a nominated Personnel representative by a designated date. Once the sub-committee has agreed final comments and amendments the policy will be re-drafted and the final draft will go to the Joint Consultative Committee for comments or approval. The policy will be redrafted as necessary.

4) The final policy will be approved by the HR Committee and distributed in accordance with the Policy Standards Protocol.