

# Creating Exceptional Employee Experience - Update for Assurance

People and OD Committee, 14 October 2025

Rachel Attwood, Deputy Director of P&OD

# Purpose

The purpose of this item is to provide the People and Organisational Development Committee with assurance in respect of the development of the Employee Experience Roadmap – *IMTP Commitment 2025/26, Q2*

# Introduction

## “Ideal Culture – Our Promise to you”

In 2022, and as part of our commitment to continuously improving our culture and ensuring PHW as a great place to work, we commenced work with our consultancy partner, Dragonfish, to develop our employee value proposition (EVP) - ‘Our People Promise’.

Having engaged extensively with colleagues across the organisation, including via interviews, survey and focus groups, and synthesised the wealth of information gained as a result, we developed a statement setting out ‘Ideal Culture – Our Promise to you’ which asserted that:

*“In appreciation of the deep commitment that our colleagues show to the health and well-being of Wales, we aspire to; **support you to work flexibly, take time to nurture your wellbeing and offer opportunities to develop.**”*

# People Strategy

## Exceptional Employee Experience

This aspiration has subsequently been captured within our refreshed **People Strategy 2025-35**, with one of our five key areas of focus having been identified as **Exceptional Staff Experience, prioritising wellbeing, flexible working options, and opportunities for career growth and progression, making Public Health Wales an employer of choice.**

Our Strategic Outcome for this area of focus reinforces our aspiration within ‘Ideal Culture, Our Promise to you’, stating that by 2025, our people will say:

***“I feel valued and respected. My wellbeing is a priority, I am empowered to work flexibly and I have opportunities for growth, development and progression.”***

This highlights the importance of creating a great work environment for people and enabling them to be at their best, recognising that this is crucial in attracting and retaining talented individuals in today's evolving work landscape.

# Our Commitment

## Three Priority Areas

In terms of the three specific priority areas identified within the IMTP Commitment:

**Working Flexibly** - Whilst we have a confirmed and established approach for agile working, enabling our people to achieve a better work-life balance, we know that not all roles offer the same degree of flexibility. We are committed to addressing potential inequities and ensuring that all colleagues are able to exercise some degree of flexibility in how and where they work.

**Wellbeing** – We know that ‘Fair Work’ is a critical building block for good health and wellbeing and that health and wellbeing should be front and centre of our decision making, with shared responsibility at all levels. Our focus must be on addressing wellbeing holistically and strategically, rather than simply as a series of stand-alone wellbeing initiatives. Our jobs should be well designed, and our people should experience a workplace where healthy behaviours are promoted.

**Opportunities for Career Progression** - We recognise the importance of life-long learning and providing opportunities for growth and progression and will support our people to develop within their current role and to explore new career pathways, or to transition to opportunities outside Public Health Wales.



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# Our Roadmap: A Strategic, Phased Approach

# Phase One: Discovery and Engagement (1)

1 September to 31 December 2025

**Objective:** Improve our understanding of existing employee experience and identify gaps and opportunities.

This will involve:

- Data gathering and discovery – gathering insights to understand current employee experience via survey and other feedback data, exit interviews etc. *Complete*
- Diagnostic – identifying most critical aspects that need improvement or reinforcement, considering these against the mapped stages of the Employee Lifecycle. *Complete*
- Gap analysis – working with SMEs, People and OD Partners and People Services, to gain insight, understand current and ongoing work and to identify key gaps and opportunities. *1 – 31 October 2025*
- Engaging stakeholders – ensuring input, including from Leadership Team, P&OD, SMEs, colleague groups and diversity networks to develop an approach that aligns with our culture and values. *1 November – 12 December 2025*

# Phase One: Discovery and Engagement (2)

1 September to 31 December 2025

## Phase One Deliverables:

- Current state analysis of Employee Experience within three priority areas – to include:
  - Analysis of existing data and most critical aspects needing improvement
  - Themes identified from engagement exercise
- “Gap Analysis” – and identification of opportunities

# Phase Two: Design (1)

1 January to 31 March 2026

**Objective:** Using insights from Phase One, design initiatives within the three priority areas that reflect employee needs and align with organisational goals.

This will include:

- Undertaking research to better understand how we can improve employee experience within the priority areas. *1 January – 31 January 2026*
- Benchmarking against “good employers” (e.g. via “Great Place to Work”, Glassdoor etc.) and peer organisations across the NHS. *1 January – 31 January 2026*
- Working with SMEs to determine next steps, including the design of specific programmes and initiatives/ interventions that align with our culture and values and setting clear goals – establishing measurable outcomes for wellbeing, flexible working, career growth and employer reputation. *1 February – 31 March 2026*
- Integrating the Employee Experience Roadmap and People Strategy implementation plan

# Phase Two: Design (2)

1 January to 31 March 2026

## Phase 2 Deliverables

Recommendations, including identified measurable outcomes, defined owners and timelines, in respect of initiatives for:

- An equitable approach to Flexible Working and what may be needed to achieve this (e.g. technology and tools to support flexibility)
- A holistic and strategic approach to Wellbeing
- Career progression pathways linked with ongoing Job Families work and systemic approach to leadership

# Phase Three: Implementation (1)

1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027

**Objective:** Commence roll out and embedding of initiatives identified via Phase Two

➤ *as captured within the IMTP Commitment (Q4, 2026/27): Implement the employee experience road map – 31 March 2027*

## **Deliverables:**

Specifics will be dependent on the outcome of Phases One and Two, but are likely to include initiatives to address:

- Normalising flexible and agile working, while ensuring equity of opportunity, building on the core pillars of 'Work How It Works Best' – where the work needs to be or where it is best done, the needs of others and individual needs or preferences
- Investigating and mitigating the potential risks of harm arising from agile working, such as isolation and challenges for productivity, learning, and organisational culture
- Continuing to prioritise staff health and wellbeing, ensuring “good work” and working conditions, and looking at the fundamental aspects of job design, to create the conditions for a well workplace and to enhance employee wellbeing

# Phase Three: Implementation (2)

1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027

## Deliverables (*continued*):

- Identifying and addressing organisational causes of burnout and providing access to mental health resources and well-being support
- Facilitating open and honest career conversations to meet individual and organisational needs
- Developing clear career pathways for progression, through our Job Families approach
- Working to embed the Employee Value Proposition and employer brand throughout the working lifecycle, from attraction to exit
- Promoting and supporting employee networks to foster inclusion and belonging

# Phase Four: Evaluation

1 January to 31 March 2028

**Objective:** Evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the initiatives identified and to determine where further refinement may be necessary

➤ as captured within the *IMTP Commitment (Q4, 2027/28): Evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the employee experience road map – 31 March 2028*

## **Deliverables:**

Monitoring and assessment activity – using identified measurable outcomes (from Phase Two ) and the best way of determining these using approaches which integrate with the ongoing measurement of employee engagement and People Strategy implementation plan



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# Potential Measures of Success

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## - For Consideration

Whilst specific measurable outcomes will be developed as part of the design phase, potential success measures could include:

- Positive feedback from employees on the overall employee experience, gathered through various feedback mechanisms - particularly in areas related to work-life balance, wellbeing and career development
- Increased employee retention rates
- Better work-life balance, with flexible and agile working as the norm - and any potential harms minimised
- Improved employee wellbeing - including reduced burnout
- Clear and accessible career progression pathways
- A workforce that embraces diversity and inclusion, actively taking action to improve representation
- External recognition as a great place to work and as an “Employer of Choice” - as evidenced by awards and certifications (e.g. Great Place to Work®)
- Increased talent attraction and retention - supported by a strong Employee Value Proposition and employer brand



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# Roles and Responsibilities



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## Key Stakeholders

Encompassing touchpoints throughout the employee lifecycle, creating exceptional employee experience will involve multiple stakeholders. Roles and accompanying responsibilities will include:

- **Executive Leadership** – to sponsor and champion the roadmap, allocate resources and ensure initiatives align with organisational strategy and culture
- **Employee Experience and Engagement Colleagues** – to analyse employee feedback via existing data and through engagement conversations, to identify gaps and opportunities within current experience
- **Subject Matter Experts** – to translate identified needs into actionable initiatives and develop metrics to measure success
- **People and OD Partners and People Services Team** – to share experiences as part of initial engagement, and then to work with managers to embed new initiatives and practices introduced as part of Phase Three
- **Colleague Groups and Diversity Networks** – to provide input in terms of current employee experience (any “pain points” and needs, together with constructive feedback in terms of what is working well)
- **Communications Team** – Design of clear and transparent communication initiatives, including for roll out of new processes and promoting positive success stories



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# Potential Risks

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## For Consideration

- Gaps in data and insight available to make informed decisions
- Lack of colleague engagement, leading to a roadmap that does not meet organisational and colleague needs
- Need for stakeholder expectations to be managed effectively
- Delays in developing and implementing initiatives due to capacity and competing priorities
- Difficulty in identifying metrics to measure success
- Lack of identified funding at present for introducing new initiatives or any external support required
- Potential resistance to proposed initiatives and new ways of working – including not being valued as business-critical
- Initiatives not resonating with different employee groups

# Recommendation

The People & OD Committee is asked to take Assurance in respect of the development of our Employee Experience Roadmap for **How We Will Create an Employee Experience that Prioritises Wellbeing, Flexible Working, Opportunities for Career Progression and Makes Public Health Wales an Employer of Choice** (*IMTP Commitment 2025/26, Q2*)



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