Attraction Recruitment and Retention Strategy Update  
Report by Sharon Hammell, Resourcing Strategy and Planning Lead for Fiona Hogg, Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development and Programme Senior Responsible Officer

The Board is asked to note the progress update and provide feedback.

1. Summary

This paper updates the Board on progress towards the development of our attraction, recruitment and retention strategy, including partnership working and mitigation of housing and related issues.

The Board is asked to note progress made since recruitment challenges were discussed at the May 2019 board meeting, and to provide feedback. This will help ensuring the developing strategy is aligned to Board expectations.

2. Background

In line with other NHS Boards in Scotland, NHS Highland has been experiencing challenges in attracting and recruiting staff. These challenges include national shortages of specialist roles as well as those specific to NHS Highland’s remote, rural, urban and island geographies, where for example, we may be competing with the tourist industry to fill vacancies and for accommodation. In addition to day to day operationally-led mitigation of these issues, a more strategic approach is now required to overcome these challenges and to build a sustainable pipeline of recruits to ensure NHS Highland has a resilient workforce with the right skills in the right location.

3. Assessment/options/issues for consideration

3.1 Approach to the First Three Months

The first three months of the Resourcing Strategy and Planning Lead contract has focused on understanding NHS Highland’s attraction, recruitment and retention challenges and the identification of quick wins.

- Enhancing NHS Highland’s digital footprint is the first quick win. A compelling and up to date digital “storefront” is key to ensuring our brand and values are promoted in a professional way to potential candidates, stakeholders and potential partners for joint attraction and recruitment activity. A review of current web content is underway to ensure that out of date content is removed. We are reviewing our social media channels to build a comprehensive list of recruitment related accounts on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook and we are working with Highlands and Islands Enterprise, which uses LinkedIn effectively to promote the HIE brand and attract new recruits to improve our own LinkedIn presence.

- Other quick win activity planned for January 2020 includes a re-launch of NHS Highland’s exit questionnaire. Retaining high performing colleagues is one route to maintaining our resilience and helps reduce the financial and human resources employed in attracting and recruiting new people. Increased completion rates of the exit questionnaire will build a more comprehensive understanding of why staff leave our organisation and enable an evidence-led response to feedback. Encouraging colleagues who have made the decision to leave will further indicate to staff that our organisation is listening to them and acting on the feedback gathered.
• The Medical Workforce Productivity Project Management Office (PMO) work is well underway, with revised locum approval and booking processes in place from November 2019. In addition, more targeted recruitment activity to address long-term vacancies is being tested and new roles are being developed to reduce reliance on locums. Where possible, on call requirements are also being reduced across services where call outs are low and emergencies are rare, with cross cover provided from other departments. These new arrangements are now in place in urology, radiology, ophthalmology departments and are reducing demand on individual doctors and increasing capacity in hours.

3.2 Increasing Influence and Impact through Stakeholder Engagement

Early engagement with Highland-based stakeholders to identify common challenges and opportunities is also underway, which has confirmed multi-agency willingness to work in partnership to overcome challenges and work collaboratively to promote the Highlands as a great place to live and work.

Organisations engaged to date in relation to collaborative working include:

• Highlands and Islands Enterprise
• Convention of the Highlands and Islands
• Scottish Rural Medicine Collaborative
• Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership
• NHS Grampian
• Remote and Rural Healthcare Educational Alliance (RRHEAL)
• British Medical Association (BMA)
• The Scottish Ambulance Service
• Police Scotland
• The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
• Community Planning Partnerships
• Talent Scotland
• Scottish Government Marketing Teams

Outputs to date from engagement activity include:

• A workshop on 14 January with the Highland Council, the Scottish Ambulance Service, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Developing the Young Workforce, Skills Development Scotland and the University of the Highlands and Islands to explore how we might help each other optimise apprenticeships within our respective organisations.

• Active membership of the Convention of Highlands and Islands which has influenced the reconvening of the Attraction and Recruitment Working Group. The Group is expected to reconvene in February 2020.

• Developing an NHS Highland and joint response to the Scottish Government’s Housing to 2040 consultation. This offers an opportunity to make the case for improved provision of social and privately rented accommodation for new recruits to NHS Highland. Developing a joint response with our stakeholders will increase our influence on housing policy and create opportunities for identifying any quick wins to mitigate the impact of accommodation availability, which is the most commonly cited challenge in the recruitment process. The consultation closes on 28 February 2020.
Scoping conversations about a whole system approach to attraction and recruitment in the Highland region with members of the Scottish Government’s CivTech team. The latter sits within the Scottish Government’s Digital Directorate and brings together public sector expertise and private sector creativity to solve problems, develop new products and deliver better, faster and easier services. These conversations have been initiated by NHS Highland and will be led jointly by Highlands and Islands Enterprise and NHS Highland. They are at an early stage. Should there be an appetite to develop a CivTech Challenge which seeks a strategic, Highland-wide, whole system approach to addressing attraction and recruitment challenges; this will be progressed with a broader base of stakeholders.

3.3 Proposed Priorities for the Next Three Months

One of our Medical Staffing team leaders will take on a 6 month project role to support the changes and improvements in Medical Staffing, which will also impact our wider recruitment approach. There will also be a dedicated recruitment team leader in place for 6 months, whose role will be to review operational processes and effectiveness within the team, which will free up some of the time for the Head of Recruitment and Medical Staffing to oversee the ongoing implementation of our Job train recruitment system and ensure we use this to best effect to speed up and enhance our processes.

In addition to following up on the activity described in section 3.1, which will include face to face meetings with colleagues in Argyll and Bute, it would be helpful to develop a high-level stakeholder strategy and plan to sit alongside the developing attraction and recruitment and retention strategy. This will help ensure organisational visibility of key relationships, who leads engagement for each stakeholder relationship, as well as visibility of outputs from stakeholder engagement activity. This should also help avoid duplication of effort and ensure regular contact and follow up with our key stakeholders.

The first draft of our attraction, recruitment and retention strategy document will be produced by the end of March 2020.

3.4 Priorities to the end of September 2020

As work progresses to develop the draft attraction, recruitment and retention strategy by the end of March, the priorities for the second half of the Resourcing Strategy and Planning Lead contract which runs to the end of September 2020 will be clarified and supported with proposed funding requirements.

4 Contribution to Board Objectives

Our attraction, recruitment and retention strategy is a critical part of the transformation of NHS Highland and in achieving our objectives to deliver Better Health, Better Care and Better Value, through an engaged, motivated and resilient workforce delivering excellent quality services in an organisation where our values are embedded in all that we do.

5 Governance Implications

Staff: this work is aligned to our Culture Fit for the Future Programme which continues to engage with the Highland Partnership Forum, the Joint Partnership Forum, Highland SLT and the A&B HSCP SLT to ensure progress updates are provided.
Financial: The Finance Sub-Committee will consider any funding requirements, noting that no new money will be sought and instead budget will be found from other areas within the Corporate budget subject to Finance Sub-Committee approval.

6 Risk Assessment

No specific risks have been identified associated with this update.

7 General Data Protection Principles Compliance

There are no risks to compliance with Data Protection Legislation.

8 Planning for Fairness

Fairness along with Dignity and Respect are core principles of our Culture Fit for the Future where our values are embedded is all we do as an organisation. This will also apply to this Programme and how we deliver it.

9 Engagement and Communication

The main engagement and communication with staff is likely to be aligned to our Culture Fit for the Future programme communications and engagement plan. External communications and engagement will in the main be undertaken through the stakeholder strategy and plan.

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