



London Ambulance Service
NHS Trust



Human Resources Strategy

2008 - 2013

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1. Introduction

The London Ambulance Service NHS Trust (LAS) is the busiest emergency ambulance service in the world, providing healthcare that is free to patients at the point of delivery.

The LAS is the only London - wide NHS Trust and is at the frontline of the NHS in the Capital

The Trust currently has two principal functions: to provide an accident and emergency service (including urgent care) in response to 999 calls and a patient transport service which performs an important role by taking non-emergency patients to and from their hospital appointments.

As an integral part of the NHS in London, the LAS works closely with hospitals and other healthcare professionals, as well as with other emergency services. The Trust is also central to the emergency response to major and terrorist incidents in the Capital.

The LAS serves a resident population of more than seven million people in an area of approximately 620 square miles.

In 2007, the Trust handled more than 1.3 million emergency calls from across London and attended more than 865,000 emergency incidents.

The LAS is committed to developing and improving the service it provides to the people who live, work in, or visit London with the vision of being an organisation of well trained enthusiastic, caring people who are **all** recognised for their dedication to meeting the needs of the public and **all** our patients.

2. Context

There are a number of key drivers which influence the future direction of the LAS and in particular that of its HR strategy. This section outlines this context (as it currently exists) in relation to both the external and internal drivers.

External

- *“Taking Healthcare to the Patient: Transforming NHS Ambulance Services”* - published in 2005 sets the vision for the future provision of services delivered by Ambulance Trusts in England. It identifies fourteen specific national workforce recommendations covering recruitment, diversity, skill mix and future developments in training, education and leadership development. (Appendix 1).
- *Commissioning a Patient led NHS* – has seen the development of NHS London and associated infrastructure of NHS services within London. This provides a new focus to healthcare provision within the Capital in terms of future strategic plans and requires the development

of new productive relationships with our stakeholders. The LAS will have a greater profile within this new framework and is seen as key to the delivery of both emergency and urgent care in the Capital.

- *“Healthcare for London: A Framework for Action”* – currently out to public consultation, outlines the proposal for reshaping healthcare in London through which the majority of healthcare will be provided at:
 - Home
 - Polyclinic
 - Local hospital
 - Elective centre
 - Major acute hospital specialist hospital

This places a greater emphasis on the associated reshaping of services and responses delivered by the LAS in providing the right care in the right place to patients in London.

- *Foundation Trust application* – with Ambulance Trusts having the opportunity to apply for foundation status from April 2009 the Trust is mindful of the associated requirements for Human Resources and the workforce. As stated in *“NHS Foundation Trusts: A guide to developing HR systems and practices”* (DoH, July 2007), *“As high performing, knowledge and learning based organisations, NHS foundation trusts are expected to be model employers – maintaining and progressing high standards of employment practice and securing a culture which reflects their new organisation and delivers added value for the direct benefit of NHS patients”*. Integrated Business Plans of foundation trusts are expected to cover the following HR elements:
 - Management arrangements
 - Leadership and Board development
 - Legal requirements
 - Workforce plan
 - Organisation development
 - HR arrangements

This is the standard which will be applied irrespective of the foundation status of the organisation.

- *National performance targets* – require us to have a flexible, responsive and skilled workforce providing a timely, appropriate response to our patients, making best use of public funding and offering value for money.
- *Healthcare Commission* – conducts an annual health check on all Trusts on the use of resources and quality of services. The results of these health checks have a significant bearing on the reputation and public perception of the organisation together with the “feel good” factor of our staff.

- *Employment legislation* – remains dynamic with regular changes to existing legislation and the introduction of new. It is vital that Trust policies and practice reflect these changes, together with developing best practice in all aspects of employment.

Internal

- *Finance* – The period of significant funding growth is now over with the focus now on financial stability, efficiency and productivity.
- *Service Improvement Programme (SIP)* – is a seven year programme taking the Trust to 2012 and aimed at responding to the changing needs of patients, the changing external environment and developing an organisation which looks, feels and behaves differently. The SIP contains five supporting programmes, including the Organisation Development and People Programme and incorporates a major initiative to introduce new ways of working underpinned by excellent clinical leadership.
- *Employee Relations* – is a significant influencing factor on the progress of any workforce strategy. The Trust will continue its partnership arrangements, building on positive work to date and working within the context of strong union representation.

3. Strategic Aims

Key strategic aims in the area of Human Resources for the LAS are to:

- Provide an overall workforce skill mix which meets the need to respond appropriately to the diverse population of London. In addition to our core front line staff, this will include having the right skills within non operational roles to appropriately support the provision of excellent patient care.
- Develop a flexible workforce and organisation which is responsive to the changing needs of the service and future developments in healthcare.
- Become an employer of choice
- Provide a model career framework
- Develop leadership capacity and capability for the future development of the LAS
- Support the Trust's Service Improvement Programme through excellence in Human Resource Management (HRM) and the Organisation Development and People Programme.

4. Organisation Benefits

The strategic aims identified are intended to deliver an organisation which, in the future, has the ability to respond readily to the changing needs of the public, our patients and the wider NHS, supported by excellent organisational leadership.

The LAS will attract and employ high quality staff who share the values of the organisation and who have a willingness to adapt as the organisation continues to develop. These staff will be well trained with the knowledge and skills to respond according to patient need.

We will see full benefits of the implementation of Agenda for Change with a flexible, responsive workforce.

The LAS will be recognised and respected as a fully integrated and vital partner in the wider NHS in London.

Most importantly, our patients will experience a high class delivery of healthcare, in particular (and in line with key national objectives) we will:

- Resolve patients' needs without their having to leave home.
- Take fewer patients to A&E Departments
- Achieve better survival rates for patients who are seriously ill or injured
- Achieve better patient satisfaction
- Achieve high levels of staff satisfaction
- Achieve organisational improvement

5. Implementing the strategy

5.1 Workforce skill mix

Workforce Planning

A long term workforce plan has been developed which recognises the change in knowledge and skill requirements to support the provision of a wider range of responses to patients and the introduction of a greater number of patient care pathways. The plan calls for a gradual move to a more highly skilled workforce and introduces a newly developed support worker role. This workforce plan will be reviewed regularly and will be responsive to future changes not currently incorporated within its assumptions.

Recruitment and Retention

Over the life of the previous HR Strategy, the Trust has successfully recruited (in terms of absolute numbers) to a growing workforce. This growth will continue although, as the workforce plan shows, there will be a

significant change in the skill mix of staff working to provide direct patient care. This planned change reflects the need for our patients to receive the appropriate response to their clinical and social care needs. It will mean the continued development and embedding of new roles and career pathways.

A career framework will be developed to facilitate the progression of staff within existing and developing roles within the LAS.

In recruiting to all positions we will aim to attract and recruit those people who demonstrate the values, attitudes and behaviours expected of a “world class” service.

The Trust will strive to maintain its current good record on retaining talent by continuing to listen to our staff through information gathered by via exit interviews, Staff Surveys, face to face team briefings and through staff involvement supported by the partnership working arrangements. Review and further development of processes including induction and Personal Development Review (PDR) will also support effective staff satisfaction and retention.

The LAS is committed to strive for a workforce which is more representative of the population it serves. The Trust will therefore continue to develop its “outreach” initiatives, working with community groups and other external partners to improve its ability to attract new staff from the diverse population of London and neighbouring areas.

Learning, Education and Development

The LAS, in common with much of the NHS, is now beginning to move towards a new model of delivery for education and training, working with Higher Education partners and incorporating work-based practice learning that allows theory and practice to sit as equal partners, using the expertise of experienced practitioners to assist staff in developing their practice. In addition, the provision of on-line learning will further enhance access to development and training for all staff.

Clinical training and education

The LAS’s Education & Training Plan recognises the aspirations and strategic direction of the organisation to deliver more post-registration continuing professional clinical development and training at workplace level whilst maintaining a programme of recruitment and pre-registration courses (including Paramedic and ECP) at our training centres and partner universities, providing a workforce that is skilled appropriately to satisfy the aspirations of the workforce plan.

Development of Higher Education qualification and internal diploma

Over the next 5 years, the LAS will develop an enhanced internal capacity for refreshing and enhancing skill levels, and developing existing Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) to Paramedic level together with upskilling existing paramedics to the new standards of proficiency. This will involve not only an enhanced in-house capacity, but greater levels of partnership working with both existing and future Higher Education (HE) partners, and will include the accreditation of all LAS delivered training and education.

National Curriculum

The context within which ambulance services provide education and training for their staff is changing nationally. With greater emphasis on the merging of internally delivered training with HE-based development, the workforce review and the emerging financial/funding pressures for all training outside medicine and nursing, the Trust will design, plan and deliver staff training and development with a greater focus on HE provision. The Trust will work closely with the Strategic Health Authority in developing a robust infrastructure with appropriate funding to deliver future professional training. We will also develop stronger links with the Health Professions Council and professional bodies such as the British Paramedic Association to support the development of appropriate standards against which training is designed and assessed.

5.2 Leadership capacity and capability

Leadership and Management Development

Whilst a traditional 'managerial' or transactional approach is sometimes necessary, and is an important part of any leader's toolkit, it will no longer be the default style for the LAS, where empowering, transformational leadership will become the prevalent style.

The LAS will approach developing the leadership of the organisation in the same way we approach developing patient care, that is, by engaging and communicating with individuals to better understand and meet their existing and emerging needs, and by motivating and inspiring them to develop both themselves and the organisation to enable continual growth, effectiveness and success. In addition, the senior management team will clearly act as role models, providing examples of transformational, values-based leadership in action.

To ensure we develop these "role models" adequately, the Trust will participate in a national audit of leadership capacity within ambulance services (at national and local level) and will introduce measures necessary to meet the needs identified.

5.3 Model career

Talent Management and Succession Planning

The organisation will put in place a framework of access to dedicated, targeted development for staff from across all departments who have been recognised (or who may recognise themselves) as having the raw talent for leadership. Through a process of initial selection and appraisal, the strengths and potential of these individuals will be explored and, with their managers, a development plan will be designed that enables them to work toward reaching their potential through promotion.

The Trust will also work with the Strategic Health Authority in developing future leaders in the wider NHS.

5.4 Employer of Choice

Staff welfare

The Trust identified a new provider of occupational health and welfare services in 2007, providing an opportunity for a comprehensive overhaul of how staff are supported through issues relating to the effect of work on health and of health on work. There will be specific work-streams devoted to reducing long-term absence and improving access to occupational health services in general, and physiotherapy services to assist in recovery and rehabilitation after musculo-skeletal injuries, in particular.

Further improvements in manual handling training, practice and equipment will be explored. Links with other Ambulance Trusts will be developed to share practice, learning and to combine to influence the market for development of manual handling aids with a view to reducing the incidence and impact of patient moving and carrying, thereby reducing the risk of injury to our staff.

The existing staff support mechanisms introduced as part of the first Service Improvement Programme will be reviewed and developed. The LINC (Listening, Informal, Non-judgemental, Confidential) peer support scheme will be extended to ensure adequate support across the whole of the Trust, and additional staff will be trained in the trauma risk assessment arrangements. The role and scope of counselling services and of the Employee Assistance Programme will be reviewed to ensure adequate access for all staff and quality of service.

Training for managers and staff on signs, symptoms and interventions in cases of stress will be reviewed, and the Trust will continue to support academic research in these areas with a view to informing future policies and procedures.

Staff Benefits

The range of non-pay benefits available to staff will be reviewed. Currently, child care vouchers are offered, and the Trust has participated in salary sacrifice opportunities such as the former Home Computer Initiative. Similar opportunities will be assessed and considered in the future.

The Trust will actively explore the possibility of engaging with corporate suppliers of a range of benefits, goods and services to its staff, to enhance the pay and reward package available, build the Trust's position as an employer of choice, and enhance recruitment and retention of staff.

5.5 Flexible workforce – “Finding Solutions Together” (in partnership)

The Trust has enjoyed a close working relationship, through arrangements for joint consultative committees, with its recognised Trade Unions for many years. This relationship was enhanced and augmented in 2002 by the introduction of a formal Partnership Agreement.

Working in partnership recognises the role that staff and their representatives have in contributing to service development, service delivery, and improving patient care by constant review of policy, working practices and procedures. It also promotes effective communications between the partners, along with joint ownership and acceptance of issues, concerns and solutions

Supported by the renewed Partnership Agreement the Trust will continue to develop effective partnership working so as to:

- deliver improved services to patients/users
- ensure high standards of modern employment practices
- improve mutual understanding between the Trust, its staff, their representatives, partner organisations and service users
- provide a platform for partners to contribute their experience and ideas to the development and implementation of the workforce implications of policy on health and social care
- ensure more effective implementation of policy
- provide a transparent and streamlined structure for Trade Union, employer and staff engagement.
- recognise the importance of Trade Unions in providing a voice for staff and their shared responsibility for active and effective communication with staff.

The programme of regular joint partnership conferences and events will continue and be devolved to a more local level where staff as well as their representatives will be actively involved.

The formal staff consultative structures and staff involvement arrangements will be reviewed and new arrangements introduced that provide an opportunity for all staff groups to contribute to service development and delivery. The consultative arrangements will be aligned with management structures to ensure a forum for meaningful debate, devolving consideration and decision to the appropriate level.

These arrangements will provide, in turn, a formal forum for staff involvement in regular review of working arrangements (including working patterns for operational and support staff) and practices to better support the requirements of "Taking Healthcare to the Patient: Transforming NHS Ambulance Services". A model of a more flexible approach to work and attendance at work will be developed and implemented.

5.6 Service Improvement Programme

The LAS has introduced its second major Service Improvement Programme with the aim of being responsive to the changing needs of patients in London and becoming a truly "world class" ambulance service.

***"Vision:** A world-class ambulance service for London - an organisation of well trained enthusiastic, caring people who are **all** recognised for their dedication to meeting the needs of the public and **all** our patients*

***Purpose:** The purpose of the London Ambulance Service NHS Trust is to provide the highest standards of telephone-answering, triage, treatment and transport to patients requiring our care. These duties will be carried out with integrity, common sense and sound judgement.*

We will be compassionate and courteous at all times and will work hard to maintain the confidence of the public as we strive to build a modern, world class ambulance service for London"

The Organisation Development and People (OD and People) Programme contains a comprehensive portfolio of projects to support this overarching vision.

The OD and People programme will deliver better patient care through **re-shaping the workforce**, not only to meet the requirements of the New Front End Model (appropriately skilled and confident to use their skills, and a much wider range of care pathways), but also to create a workforce that is more representative of the population of London, and which lives the CRITICAL Values, treating everyone as they themselves would wish to be treated.

It will also bring about a **cultural change** to develop an organisation that looks, feels and behaves differently; a learning organisation that works cross-functionally in a customer-focused, team based way (both internally and with

external partners), within a culture of mutual challenge and accountability for personal behaviour and performance.

Within six years **new styles of management**, which support staff and promote staff involvement and development, will be embedded, with leadership (underpinned by clinical, managerial, inter-personal and communications skills) at all levels.

Projects currently active within this Programme include:

OVERVIEW OF OD & PEOPLE PROJECTS
<p>Staff and Union Engagement</p> <p>To develop strong partnership arrangements which enable meaningful engagement and involvement of both trade unions and staff.</p>
<p>Recruitment & Induction</p> <p>To revise the recruitment process to enable the organisation to assess and recruit candidates for values, attitudes and behaviours. This project will also help LAS to deliver diversity targets for achieving a more representative workforce and insuring fairness and equity for all candidates. The induction process will also be revised to reflect these same themes.</p>
<p>Leadership Development</p> <p>To establish and support new styles of leadership at all levels underpinned by the right skills; through continuing the current leadership programmes available and developing new leadership programmes. The product will be comprised of a number of courses and qualifications aimed at specific groups within the organisation to support both the New Ways of Working and OD and People Programmes.</p>
<p>Individual Performance Management</p> <p>To develop a comprehensive performance management process that is accepted and used by all staff members. This performance management framework will enable all staff to accept responsibility and accountability for their personal performance, rewarding and recognising good performance, whilst identifying and supporting staff with poor performance, and where necessary enabling appropriate exit strategies.</p>

Workforce Re-Configuration

To develop the workforce plan that supports the Operational Model by providing the appropriate skill mix and implementing a staff profile that is representative of the population of London.

Modularised Training

To provide all staff with access to appropriate professional development through training and development packages delivered through a variety of media.

Talent Management

To provide a clear career development framework for all staff that allows staff to progress their career according to their choice and at their own pace, whilst recognising and providing the opportunity for talented staff, anticipating and targeting opportunities for talented individuals and ensuring equality of access.

Training Restructure

To restructure the clinical education part of the department to meet the following requirements:

- greater emphasis on front-line staff's clinical development and continuing professional development than is currently the case
- facilitating the proposed changes to the workforce profile and skill mix; the main focus will move to paramedic development
- an enhanced internal capacity for upskilling EMTs, and developing existing EMTs to Paramedic and in upskilling existing paramedics to the new standards of proficiency.

These projects will provide significant support to the introduction of New Ways of Working underpinned by enhanced clinical leadership on the "new look" complexes.

5.7 Development of excellence in HRM

Good people management skills are a core requirement for all managers. Well implemented HR policies and best practice, properly aligned with the organisation's strategic aims, make significant and measurable improvements to overall performance and to patient outcomes and experience. The HR function will continue to provide the highest level of support in these key areas through the development and implementation of sound, up to date HR policies and practice.

The HR function has an important role to play in supporting managers to deliver, not only the necessary workforce developments, but also wider service reform.

Building on the restructure of the Senior Human Resource Management team in 2007 providing senior level support across the Trust, the LAS will continue to develop the capability and capacity of the Human Resources team to ensure that the HR function is equipped to contribute effectively to the future challenges of modernised service delivery and its associated workforce implications. Continuous Professional Development (CPD) will therefore be a key focus in performance reviews for all HR staff.

6. Supporting the strategy

Delivery of the strategic aims and the approach to implementing this strategy will be managed and monitored through the MSP (Managing Successful Programmes) framework for the projects contained within the OD and People Programme and through team and individual objective setting.

Excerpt from “Taking Healthcare to the patient” – recommendations:

Develop the workforce

1. Ambulance clinical training needs to be designed around the case mix they deal with. Course content should therefore be reviewed.
2. The Department should support SHAs in ensuring the NHS has the right staff with the right skills to meet patient needs, as well as helping to identify and remove barriers to robust workforce planning in urgent care.
3. The Department, working with key stakeholders, should develop guidelines on patient pathways to promote consistency between urgent care providers.
4. The training of ambulance clinicians and call handlers should have greater commonality with that of other health professionals and their career pathways should be integrated with the wider NHS, so that people undertaking similar tasks and gaining similar competencies have the opportunity to train and develop together.
5. To aid integration, there should be a move to higher education delivered models of training and education for ambulance clinicians. Initial registration should be at diploma or foundation degree level.
6. There should be improved opportunities for career progression, with scope for ambulance professionals to become clinical leaders. While ambulance trusts will always need clinical direction from a variety of specialties, they should develop the potential of their own staff to influence clinical developments and improve and assure quality of care.
7. The Department, in conjunction with SHAs, should review funding arrangements where necessary to facilitate consistent access to funding. Funding of ambulance clinician education and training should be consistent with the arrangements for other non-medical clinical professions.
8. Ambulance services, PCTs, acute trusts, foundation trusts and SHAs will need to work together to review funding arrangements and priorities for the training of the overall urgent care workforce.
9. The Ambulance Service Association, the British Paramedic Association, NHS Employers, NHS Careers and NHS Jobs work together to market ambulance clinician roles as a profession with excellent opportunities for development and progression across the NHS.
10. Ambulance services should take increased steps to support the

recruitment of black and minority ethnic staff.

11. When recruiting and designing new roles, ambulance services should also focus on the competencies, underpinning education, attitudes and behaviours required to deal with patient need and consider the increased use of and diversification into intermediate grades (between PTS and emergency ambulance grades) as well as more advanced and specialist clinical grades.
12. The recruitment and development of ECPs should continue at pace, encouraging recruitment from a variety of professional backgrounds, including within the NHS.
13. ECPs should be regulated as a profession in their own right with the Health Professions Council and prescribing responsibilities should be actively explored. This should include the development of a national curriculum for ECP training, with education programmes nationally accredited by the HPC and delivered by HPC approved higher education institutions, alongside HPC arrangements for CPD and clinical mentoring.
14. The Department should work with SHAs and ambulance services to develop a five year workforce development plan.