St Raphael's Hospice

Meeting of the HR Committee held at St Raphael's Hospice, London Road, Cheam, Sutton, SM3 9DX with video call access.

At 10:00 on Tuesday 7th October 2025

Members:	Paul Holmes (PH – Chair of Committee & Trustee)
	Hazel Borthwick (HB – Co-opted Committee member)
	Manjit Lall (ML – Committee member - virtual)
	Norman McWhinney (NM – Committee member & Chair of Trustees)
In attendance:	Nick Stevens (NS – Joint CEO - virtual)
	Rebecca Trower (RT – Joint CEO)
	Natalie Page (NP – Head of People Services)
	Ginny Toubal (GT – Volunteer Services Manager – item 2)
	Karen Monaghan (Governance – KM – virtual)

Actions arising

Agenda item	Action	Responsible	Timeline	Ref.
4. Update on HR activity	Prepare business case outlining future payroll options	NP	Before next meeting in January 2026	07.10.25/01
	Pay Policy, including Long Service Awards presented to RemCo in December 2025.	NP	December 2025 meeting	07.10.25/02
	Progress structured line-manager training and coaching plan	NP	Ongoing	07.10.25/03

1. Welcome, apologies for absence and declarations of interest

The Chair welcomed Committee members to the meeting. There were no declarations of interest in relation to items on the meeting agenda.

2. Volunteer Services Update & Dashboard

GT presented an overview of Volunteer Services activity since the previous meeting.

Workforce and engagement: Volunteer numbers remain steady, with 195 individuals in active roles and fifteen applications in progress. Two volunteers have left, primarily student counsellors completing CPD placements. Retail volunteering currently totals 272 roles (including shop assistants, co-pilots, drivers, a PAT tester and one retail admin role).

Recruitment and induction: Two new administrative volunteers have been appointed to support office functions; one has been inducted into both reception and administrative duties, and one will reduce her time given to three days per week from 1 November. Recruitment processes have been streamlined through improved application and labelling systems, with mandatory Gift Aid training on track for completion by the end of September.

Culture and recognition: A volunteer “Thank You” event has been scheduled, anticipating 150–200 attendees. Investment in Volunteers (IiV) reaccreditation is nearing completion, with engagement meetings under way. St Raphael’s has submitted several nominations for local Volunteer Awards.

Operational matters: A volunteer has raised an issue of mutual respect between staff and volunteers; any concerns will be raised formally with the relevant line managers.

Systems assurance: Data extracted from Raiser’s Edge now provides a more accurate picture of volunteer deployment compared to pre-pandemic reporting.

The Committee welcomed the positive trajectory of volunteer engagement and recorded its thanks to GT and the Volunteer Services team.

GT left the meeting at 10:20 a.m.

3. Review of minutes from 8th July 2025 & actions arising

The minutes were approved as an accurate record. The actions list was up to date.

4. Update on HR Activity

Natalie Page presented the detailed HR update and accompanying dashboard, noting a challenging but productive quarter. Key points were as follows:

4.1 Workforce management and leadership capability: Line manager development remains a priority. A structured programme of coaching and support is being developed to build confidence and consistency in handling employee relations, absence management, and performance discussions. Mediation between Clinical Admin Leads has resulted in clearer role delineation and joint objectives; NP has temporarily assumed direct line-management oversight to stabilise the team.

4.2 Payroll resilience and audit findings: The unexpected departure of the Payroll Officer in July exposed a single-point-of-failure risk. Interim arrangements have been implemented by NP and her HR colleague, including secure access to BrightPay and restoration of pension connectivity. An internal audit by HB identified missing statutory documentation (right-to-work and other records). A programme of retrospective file completion is in progress.

It was acknowledged that previous informal practices had blurred responsibilities between payroll and line management; these have now been clarified so that payroll processes only administer approved and summarised timesheet data. NP is conducting a comparative review of payroll models across twelve hospices, finding a rough 50/50 split between in-house and outsourced provision. She will prepare a business case outlining future options for St Raphael’s, balancing resilience, cost, and control.

4.3 Recruitment, retention, and systems: The Applicant Tracking System (ATS - Jobtrain) is in final configuration and due to launch imminently. It will streamline recruitment correspondence, applicant tracking, and reporting. Recruitment activity remains high, with twelve posts filled in the last quarter. Recruitment has been removed from the departmental Risk Register as operational control has improved. Job benchmarking has been completed for retail roles, addressing pay disparities, and establishing clear job profiles. The Pay Policy, including Long Service Awards, will be presented to RemCo in November/December 2025. A review of contractor and bank-staff documentation is under way to ensure compliance ahead of anticipated legislative changes under the Employment Rights Bill.

4.4 Culture, wellbeing, and employee relations: Employee relations cases have increased in complexity, reflecting wider organisational change. The Committee was assured that all matters are being managed under appropriate procedures, with investigations used as learning tools rather than punitive measures. A stress-risk assessment process is being embedded to ensure consistent support for staff with health-related absences. HR continues to promote fairness and empowerment across teams, emphasising accountability of line managers as first point of contact. The Committee supported this approach.

4.5 Training and future priorities: Free training has been secured for NaturalHR and line manager development, with scheduling to be confirmed. Priorities for the next quarter include completion of the payroll deep-dive, implementation of the Pay Policy, and progress towards a streamlined HR policy suite. NP highlighted the potential need for additional HR consultancy support to enable strategic delivery.

The Committee commended NP and the HR team for maintaining service continuity and professionalism through an intensive period of operational pressure.

5. Departmental Risk Register

The Committee reviewed the updated HR Risk Register. Historic risks concerning payroll insufficiency and ICU nursing resilience have been closed. New or revised risks now focus on:

- Management skillsets and leadership capability
- HR and payroll systems integrity
- Staff capacity and wellbeing
- Absenteeism
- Recruitment and retention.

The Committee was satisfied that the register appropriately reflects current operational risks and mitigations.

6. Annual Leave Allowance 2025/26

The Committee endorsed continuation of the current framework and noted no further action required at this time.

7. Speaking Up Policy Update

No concerns or disclosures have been raised under the Speaking Up Policy since the previous meeting. The Committee took assurance from this position but reaffirmed the importance of ongoing communication with staff regarding the Policy's availability.

8. Any Other Business and Dates of future meetings

There was no other business. The Chair proposed that future meetings start at 10.30am. Proposed future dates, subject to approval at the upcoming Board, were as follows: Tuesday 13th January 2026; Tuesday 28th April 2026; Tuesday 8th July 2026; Tuesday 6th October 2026.

The meeting ended at 12:00 p.m.

Approved…………………………………..

Date………………………………………..