



## NATIONAL AMBULANCE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP FORUM (NASPF)

### COLLABORATIVE STATEMENT SUPPORTING CULTURAL CHANGE IN THE AMBULANCE SECTOR

#### Background

The National Ambulance Cultural Review (published in February 2024), identified six key recommendations to improve the culture in Ambulance Trusts:

1. Balance operational performance with people performance at all levels.
2. Focus on leadership and management culture and develop the ambulance workforce.
3. Improve the operational environment, line management and undergraduate training.
4. Translate the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Improvement Plan into a bespoke plan for the sector.
5. Target bullying and harassment, including sexual harassment and enable freedom to speak up.
6. Prioritise, support and develop Human Resource and Organisational Development (HR&OD) functions.

Recommendation 6: *"Prioritise, support and develop HR and OD functions"* has a specific action for NHS England which states: *"to partner with trade unions on a collaborative statement to support cultural change and empower HR and OD functions."*

#### Our Collective Commitment

Our collective commitment is therefore to work together in partnership to positively affect cultural change in the ambulance sector (in line with the principles set out in the National Ambulance Cultural Review; and the National Guardian's Office Listening to Workers: A Speak Up Review of Ambulance Trusts in England); to create a healthy, inclusive and psychologically safe working environment for our people, underpinned by supportive and compassionate leadership.

## **Principles of working together in partnership**

Successful partnerships rely upon developing good working relationships which build trust and mutual respect in each other's role, and embraces the sharing of responsibility, whilst respecting differences. These principles are underpinned by the NHS Constitution.

To work collaboratively to support cultural change for the benefit of our people in the ambulance sector, we commit to 'live' the following principles in our partnership work on cultural change as an NASPF:

a. Trust and Respect

Demonstrate trust and respect for and with each other.

Maintain positive and constructive dialogue.

Commit to work with and learn from each other.

Foster a collaborative culture through non-biased opinion, and objectivity.

We will empower HR colleagues within Ambulance Trusts to work collaboratively with Trade Union colleagues to take proportionate steps to address matters of discrimination; bullying and harassment; sexual safety; equality, diversity and inclusion.

b. Respect and Honesty

Be open, honest and transparent in communications and facilitate a two-way process of engagement.

c. Equality and Diversity

Respect differences and take measured and proportionate approaches to matters requiring tact and sensitivity.

Demonstrate strong supportive leadership of equality, diversity and inclusion.

Promote dignity at work, tackle inappropriate behaviour, meet legal obligations and provide the very best staff experience and patient care.

## **What we mean by cultural change in the Ambulance Sector**

The People Promise describes the experience NHS staff should be able to expect through their employment:

- We are compassionate and inclusive
- We are recognised and rewarded
- We each have a voice that counts
- We are safe and healthy
- We are always learning
- We work flexibly
- We are a team

The People Promise is equally relevant in the ambulance sector and we want all our staff to have a positive experience in our workplaces.

### **Role of the NASPF and Trade Union representatives**

As an NASPF we commit to role model the behaviours (through our national, regional, and Trust level engagement) that underpin the People Promise and that will help to develop the culture within our sector and within our individual organisations; this includes:

- Being kind, caring and supportive
- Being civil and respectful and considerate of individual needs
- Listening, seeking to understand, being curious to support continuous learning
- Operating with integrity and fairness
- Working collaboratively

As individual members of the NASPF we commit to:

- Develop our knowledge, skills and understanding particularly in the context of reducing misogyny and creating sexual safety and psychologically safe environments.
- Reflect on and challenge our own personal attitudes, behaviours, beliefs, bias and prejudice.
- Recognise the need to and commit to constructively challenging behaviours that are counter to the cultural aspirations we hold for the sector at national, regional and Trust level.
- Being proactive in our awareness of related culture reviews and the ever-evolving external landscape.
- Recognise that culture change may require fundamental shifts in traditional approaches and working methods and work together to deliver change which is of benefit to the whole workforce.

### **Our NASPF Workplan**

Having clear aims and objectives that are understood by all parties supports the ability to work together successfully. Understanding the ambulance sector context, each other's roles, expectations and remits, enables us to work together proactively to ensure healthy debate and positive ways of working to support cultural change in the ambulance sector.

We already have a workplan that sets out our focus for partnership working through the NASPF on the following themes, which will ensure we can devote our time and effort in the right way:

- Retirement and Pensions: Exploring retirement options available and sharing best practice approaches regarding flexible working and pensions

- Reducing Violence and Aggression: Principles and procedures to support the safe and consistent use of Body Worn Cameras.
- Sexual Safety: Supporting implementation of the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives (AACE) Sexual Safety Consensus, and the NHS Sexual Safety Charter
- Staff Experience and Culture: Work together to support implementation of the recommendations from the National Ambulance Culture Review including development of a collaborative statement on culture change
- Modernising Working Practices: Work jointly on innovative approaches to flexible working.
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: Work in partnership to support delivery of the National Ambulance EDI Action Plan.

This work plan already goes some way towards supporting cultural change in the Ambulance sector. However, in addition, collectively as an NASPF we also commit to:

- Supporting and influencing the development of constructive and positive partnership working at Ambulance Trust level in to realise the commitments we are making in this collaborative statement. This includes collaborative working to address complex and emotive case management – to ensure proportionate outcomes, continued improvement and cultural development.
- Empower our People/HR teams in Ambulance Trusts to proportionately address complex employee relations matters in a fair and consistent manner.
- Work together to modernise working practices recognising individual and diverse needs.
- Support the development of People Teams and Trade Union representatives in areas related to culture and complex case management.
- All Ambulance Trusts and Trade Unions commit to working to ensure effective, correct, and consistent application of the NHS Sexual Safety Charter across all Trusts.

**Statement agreed at the NASPF on 23 January 2025**

Signed by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sharan Bandesha', with a stylized, cursive script.


**Sharan Bandesha, Staff Side Joint Chair (NASPF)**

Signed by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Reading', with a stylized, cursive script.

**Peter Reading, Chief Executive Lead, AACE Joint Chair (NASPF)**

Signed by:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kerry Gulliver', with a stylized, cursive script.

**Kerry Gulliver, Chair of the National Ambulance HR Directors Group**