

Excellent  
Care  
Everywhere



# Chief People Officer

Candidate information pack

May 2026

# Welcome from the Chief Executive

**Thank you for taking the time to explore the opportunity to join University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust as our Chief People Officer.**

This is a pivotal moment for our organisation. As one of the largest and most complex NHS trusts in the country, serving more than 1.8 million people and employing almost 20,000 colleagues, we know that the quality of our patient care depends fundamentally on the strength, capability and engagement of our workforce.

We are proud of the progress we have made since coming together as One UHSussex in 2021. Recent staff survey results show encouraging improvement, and across the Trust there is real momentum behind our ambition to create a modern, inclusive and high-performing organisation. We have set a clear strategic direction through our Excellent Care Everywhere strategy, evolved our operating model, and begun to face honestly into some of the issues that have historically held us back.

We are realistic about the scale of the challenge ahead. Like many large healthcare organisations, we are operating in an increasingly demanding environment. Workforce pressures, financial constraints and changing patient needs require us to think differently about how we attract, develop, support and deploy our people. We know there is more to do to strengthen the capability and capacity of our People function and build a clear, future-focused workforce strategy that enables long-term sustainability and transformation.

Importantly, we also recognise that our next phase is about turning strategy into lived experience for our staff and patients. That means creating a culture where colleagues feel listened to, supported, developed and treated fairly; where speaking up, inclusion and accountability are part of everyday practice; and where people experience consistent leadership and values across all our sites and services.

This role is therefore a significant transformation opportunity for an experienced and credible leader who can combine strategic thinking with operational grip and visible leadership. We are looking for someone who understands that workforce, culture, productivity, quality and patient experience are fundamentally connected, and who sees the People agenda as central to the success of the organisation.

The successful candidate will bring strong professional HR leadership across the full breadth of the people agenda; an experienced, resilient and forward-thinking leader who can operate confidently within a large, complex and high-profile environment. They will be someone who is comfortable with ambiguity, able to create clarity for others, and willing to provide constructive challenge and honest counsel at executive level. We are looking for a leader who combines compassion with pace, courage and accountability.

Above all, we want someone who shares our values – compassionate, inclusive and respectful – and who is motivated by the opportunity to make a lasting difference for our people, our patients and our communities.

I hope this candidate pack gives you a strong sense of both the opportunity and the ambition behind this appointment. If you are excited by the challenge of workforce transformation at scale, and ready to help shape the future of One UHSussex, we would be delighted to hear from you.

If you would like to learn more, please contact **Rhiannon Smith** or **Sam Cresswell** at Hunter Healthcare [scresswell@hunter-healthcare.com](mailto:scresswell@hunter-healthcare.com) or by phone on 07562 650935.

With best wishes,

**Dr Andy Heeps**  
Chief Executive,  
University Hospitals Sussex  
NHS Foundation Trust



 [Click here to watch a short video](#)

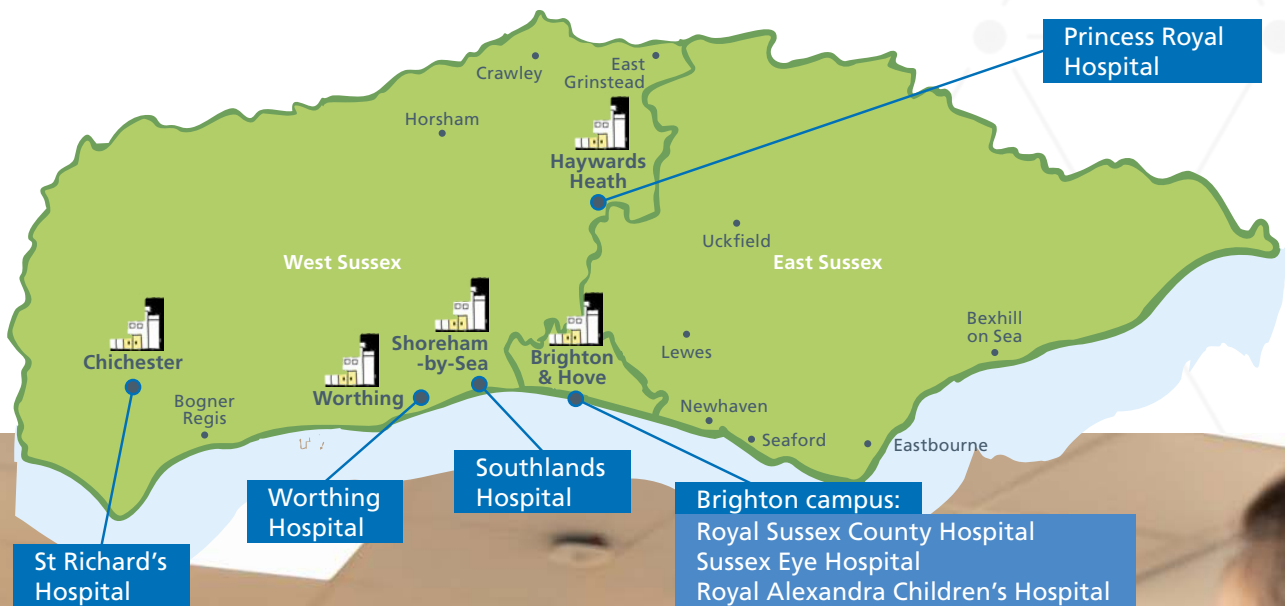
# About the Trust

**University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust (UH Sussex) is one of the largest acute provider organisations in the NHS.**

We care for more than 1.8 million people across Sussex and beyond and employ almost 20,000 colleagues working across our hospitals, community services and support teams.

Alongside outpatient, diagnostic and community services across the county, our hospitals include:

- Royal Sussex County Hospital, Brighton – a major teaching and trauma centre providing specialist and tertiary care;
- Princess Royal Hospital, Haywards Heath;
- Worthing Hospital; and
- St Richard’s Hospital, Chichester



# The Trust at a glance



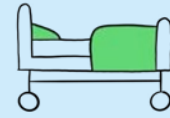
**1.7m**  
people served by  
District, general or  
tertiary hospital



**17.8k+**  
people work  
for UHSussex



**650+**  
community  
volunteers



**1,800**  
general & acute  
hospital beds  
(approx)



**50+**  
operating  
theatres



**8,500**  
babies born  
each year



**6,400**  
Cancer treatments  
each year



**124**  
research studies with  
7,500 participants  
(2023/24)

## Every day:

**1,300+**  
people visit our emergency  
departments

**3,500+**  
attend outpatient  
appointments

**400**  
daycase and inpatient  
procedures completed  
(approx)

## Our population:

**8,000**  
fewer people aged  
25-64 by 2030

**55,000**  
85 years and older in  
Sussex, one of the 20 oldest  
populations in England

**3rd**  
lowest general  
fertility rate nationally  
(Brighton and Hove)

## Staff:

**29%**  
staff have worked for us  
(including legacy trusts)  
for 10 years or more

**68%**  
of staff live within 3 miles  
of one of our hospitals

**144**  
different nationalities  
represented across  
our teams

# Our context

**We are a young organisation, established in 2021 through the merger of two hospital trusts. We have already achieved much, but there is more to do to realise our ambition of One UH Sussex – a single, coherent organisation where every colleague feels connected and every patient experiences the same high standard of care.**

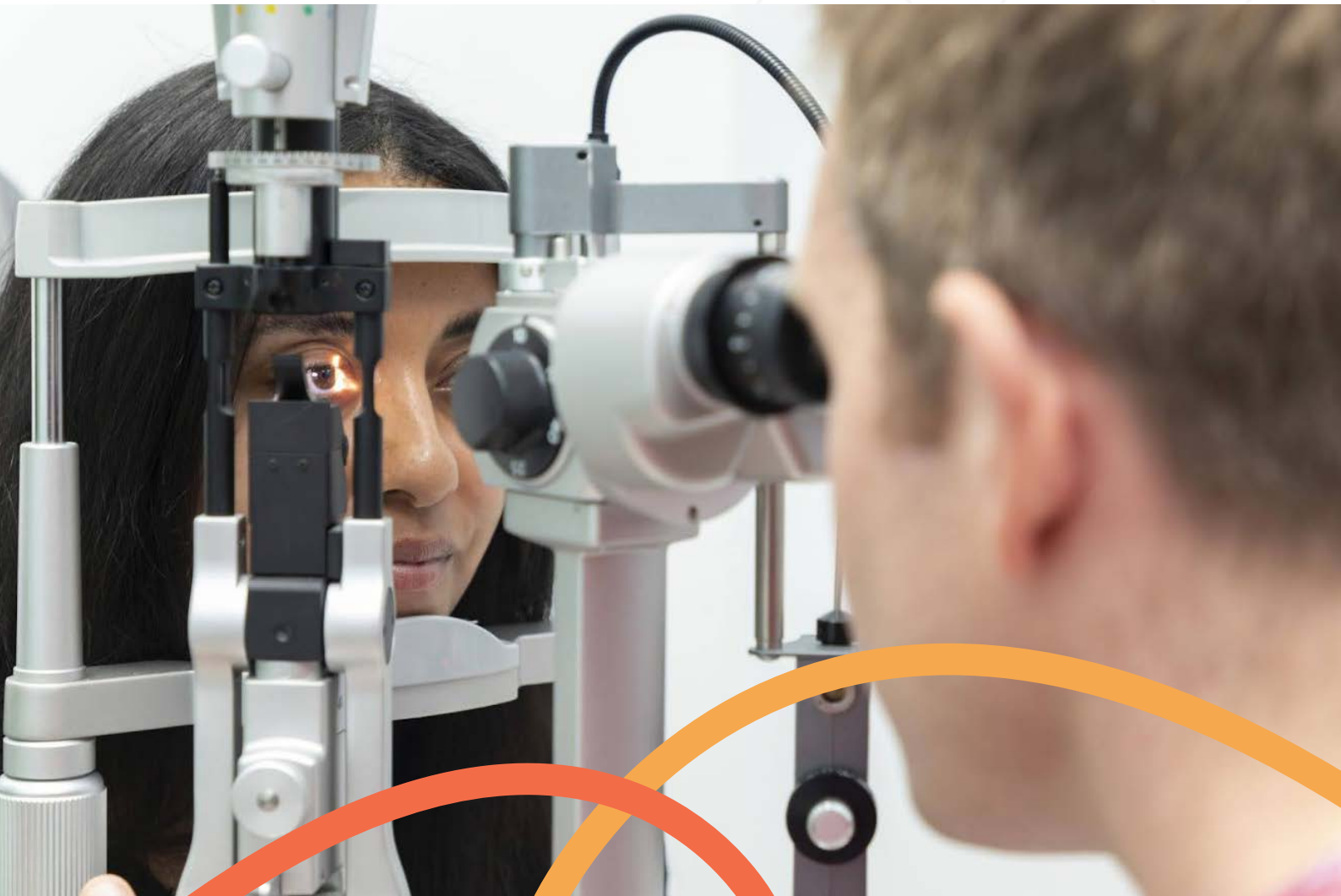
Like the rest of the NHS, we face real challenges: increasing demand, workforce pressures, financial constraint and ageing infrastructure. We are addressing these with honesty and focus, building stability while supporting our people to deliver improvement and innovation.

We are proud of our many strengths:

- Skilled and compassionate colleagues who care deeply about their patients;
- Strong clinical leadership and specialist expertise;
- Research and education partnerships with local universities; and
- Communities who value and support their local NHS.

## Our Partnerships and System Role

UH Sussex is a key partner within the Surrey & Sussex Integrated Care System, working with NHS, local authority, academic and voluntary sector partners to improve health outcomes and reduce inequalities. We are also an anchor institution, supporting local employment, education and sustainability across Sussex.



# Our vision and values

## Our vision

**Our vision is *Excellent Care Everywhere*.**

We are here to deliver excellent care for our patients, for our people, for our communities, for our future, and together as One UH Sussex.

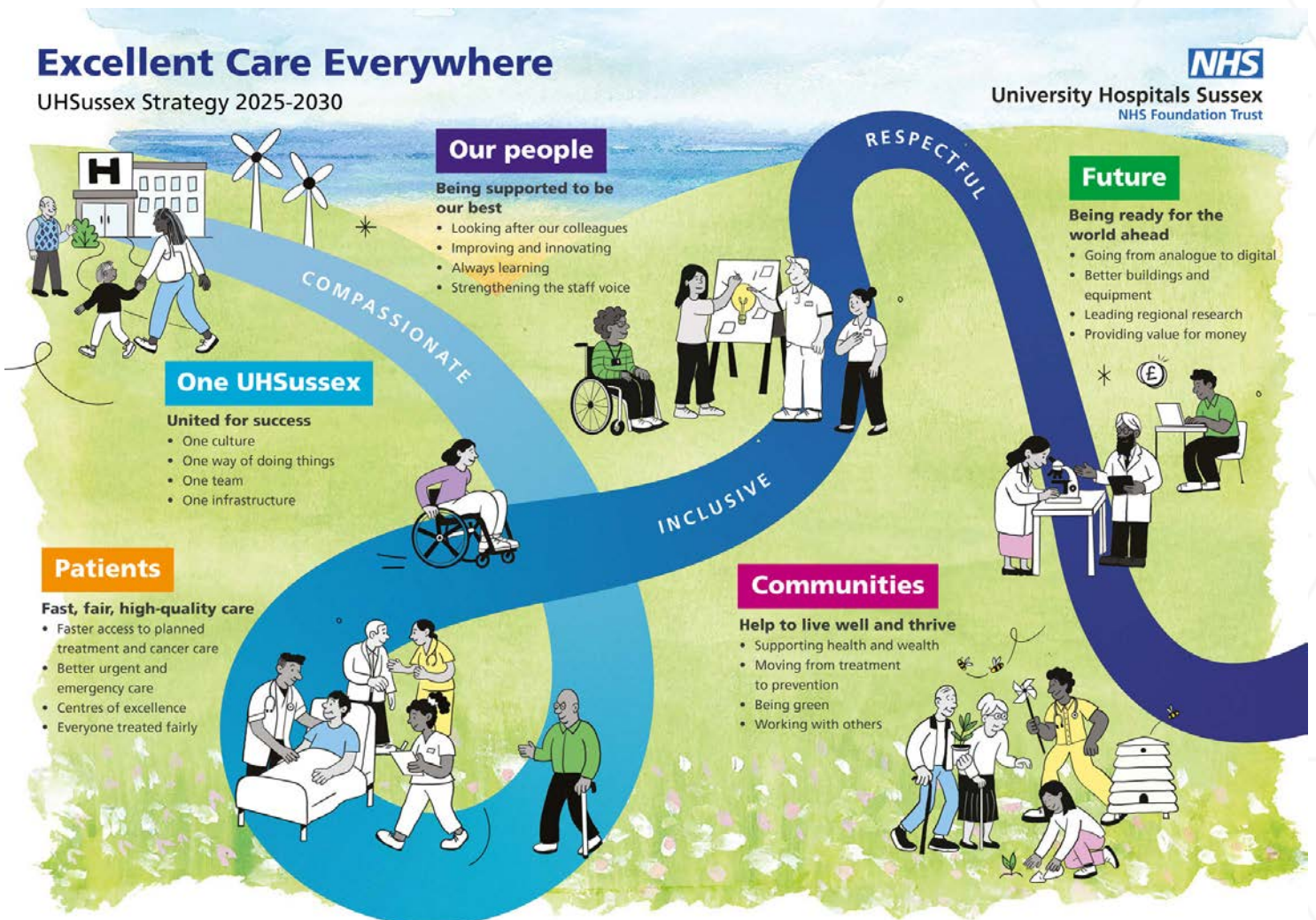
Our **2025–2030 Strategy** sets out how we will strengthen quality and safety, support and empower our people, tackle inequalities, and modernise how we work so every patient receives the best possible care, wherever they are treated.

## Our Values

Our values are more than just words – they guide how we work together and care for patients. We are:

- **Compassionate** – we communicate and act kindly;
- **Inclusive** – we work together and value every voice;
- **Respectful** – we behave professionally and with integrity.

These values shape the culture we are building – one based on kindness, openness, and shared purpose.



# Our future

**Our Excellent Care Everywhere strategy sets a clear direction for the next five years. We will:**

- Deliver excellent and equitable care for all our patients;
- Create a great place to work, where colleagues are supported and empowered;
- Invest in modern, sustainable services and digital innovation; and
- Work in partnership to improve health and wellbeing across our communities.

For the right leader, this is an opportunity to make a lasting difference – to unite our people, strengthen our culture, and deliver excellent care everywhere.



## Excellent Care Everywhere



# Staff survey: insights

**The 2025 NHS Staff Survey results show clear progress in workforce experience across the Trust, particularly against a national backdrop of broadly flat or declining performance.**

Overall, 83% of substantive staff question scores improved compared with 2024, with no statistically significant deterioration. All nine NHS People Promise themes improved, and almost half of all survey measures now perform above the NHS average.

There are encouraging signs in areas such as teamworking, wellbeing, flexible working, learning and development, morale, line management support, reduced intention to leave, and stress-related measures.

The Trust also achieved its highest ever number of staff survey responses, strengthening the evidence base for action.

However, there is more to do. The results highlight ongoing priorities around speaking up, behavioural standards, safety, and reducing variation in staff experience across different groups and professional contexts.

Overall, the survey demonstrates positive momentum and evidence that improvement work is having an impact, while also providing a clear focus for the next phase of action.

## Leadership qualities staff want to see:



## Key challenges and priorities:



# Job description

<b>Job Title</b>	Chief People Officer
<b>Band</b>	VSM
<b>Hours</b>	37.5+
<b>Location / Hospital Site</b>	Worthing Hospital is Trust HQ but executive directors are attended to work at all sites as required
<b>Responsible to</b>	Chief Executive
<b>Accountable to</b>	Chief Executive & Board
<b>DBS Level</b>	Enhanced

## Role summary

The Chief People Officer will be a voting member of the Trust Board, accountable to the Chief Executive for ensuring delivery of high-quality patient care through robust HR policy and practice that enables our workforce to be engaged and effective. The successful candidate will be expected to bring visible professional leadership to the People Directorate, ensuring that the Trust has strong, consistent and reliable HR foundations, alongside a forward-looking workforce strategy that supports service transformation, productivity, inclusion, staff wellbeing and long-term organisational sustainability.

- A member of the Trust Board and Executive Team, contributing to the delivery of corporate strategy providing a professional HR voice on the Board
- Contribute collaborative, emotionally intelligent leadership within the Executive Team, fostering trust, constructive challenge, and high-quality decisionmaking
- Accountable for the delivery of the people elements of the Trust strategy 'excellent care everywhere'
- Further develops, implements and communicates the strategic workforce vision and framework in support of the Trust strategy
- Leads the development and delivery of workforce strategies, policies and processes which deliver organisational vision and goals through the integrated strategy deployment process, including individual, team and service performance improvement; staff engagement and involvement; and proactive cultural development
- Ensure the Trust has robust, timely and legally sound employee relations processes, with clear standards of case management, professional advice, escalation and assurance.
- Lead the development of a high-performing People Directorate that is trusted by managers, staff, trade unions and the Board, with a clear focus on responsiveness, consistency, professional standards and business partnering.
- Provide strategic leadership on workforce productivity, including rostering, temporary staffing, absence management, establishment control, workforce planning and the development of new roles and ways of working.
- Ensure that workforce data, systems and reporting provide clear insight to the Board, Executive Team and divisions, supporting better decisions on workforce risk, productivity, culture, equality and staff experience.
- Work closely with the Chief Operating Officer, Chief Medical Officer, Chief Nurse, Chief Strategy Officer and divisional leadership teams to ensure workforce plans are aligned to operational delivery, clinical strategy, financial sustainability and service transformation
- Contributes to the development and embedding of the Trust's purpose, strategy, values and leadership behaviours through high-quality people practice, workforce strategy and staff wellbeing.
- Provides leadership, vision and direction to HR and workforce teams, managing the delivery of high-quality services

- The Trust's organisational culture work currently sits within the Chief Strategy Officer's portfolio, and the successful candidate will be expected to work closely and constructively with the Chief Strategy Officer to ensure clear alignment between people, culture, strategy and organisational development. However, this role is first and foremost the Trust's senior professional HR leadership role. The Chief People Officer will be expected to provide strong grip and strategic leadership on the fundamentals of a high-quality people function, including employee relations, workforce planning, HR policy and practice, recruitment and retention, workforce productivity, staff wellbeing, workforce systems, and strategic workforce transformation.
- The postholder will need to ensure that the People Directorate provides credible, responsive and business-focused support to the organisation, while also contributing to the wider cultural and strategic development of the Trust

## Key working relationships

**Internal:** Chief Officers, Managing Directors, Medical Directors, Divisional Directors of Operations, Divisional Directors of Nursing, Staff Representatives, Consultants, Patients, Allied Health Care Professionals and Board members

**External:** NHSE, ICB and locality leaders, Local NHS and other service providers, Local Authorities, Internal and External Audit, other external agencies

## Main duties and responsibilities

### Corporate management

- As an Executive Director of the Trust Board, playing a major part in the corporate management and strategic planning of the Trust
- Participating in the promotion of efficient and effective public relations between the Trust and all users of its service and those in the wider health economy
- Contribute to the establishment of the Trust-wide standards to maintain, monitor and improve the quality of total care and the efficient use of resources through championing and developing our Trust strategy
- Contribute to the development, communication and promotion of corporate core purpose, vision, mission and values
- Develop effective working relationships with key external stakeholders including other NHS organisations, ICB, NHS England, local higher education providers and other local healthcare providers
- Contribute to the development of a culture of continuous improvement within the Trust in order to meeting stretching financial and performance targets.
- Ensure that all legal and statutory obligations are met
- Represent the Trust locally and nationally as and when required



## Functional Responsibilities

- Lead, inspire, develop and direct the People Directorate, managing, developing and building a highly effective team who deliver high quality support services
- Provide the Board/Chief Executive Officer with expert HR advice to inform strategy development.
- Act as lead director to the People and Culture Committee of the Board, including liaison with the non-executive committee chair.
- Lead and further develop the Trust's Staff Consultation Arrangements for the organisation
- Manage the delivery of the Trust strategy by aligning the objectives and activities of the People Directorate
- Manage the people directorate budget
- Develop and maintain a highly motivated team ensuring the organisation meets its service and financial obligations
- Develop an ongoing workforce plan for the Trust and to support the Trust's financial sustainability ensuring the effectiveness and potential transformation of the workforce resource
- Lead the development and implementation of the Trust's overall People Strategy. This will include the delivery of the Trust's People plan and ongoing development of the Trust's approach to implementing national HR initiatives.
- Support the development and implementation of the Trust's Integrated Education and development Strategy
- Continue to develop a modern, high quality Human Resources service across the Trust which meets the business needs of the organisation, that operates in line with our values, enables the Trust to recruit and retain high quality staff, including budgetary and line management responsibility for all of the departments within the People Directorate.
- Lead large change management projects linked to that Trust's strategy for productivity and financial sustainability.
- Ensure the HR systems and processes support the Trust's Governance programme and support safe ways of working.
- Working closely with the Chief Strategy Officer, support the development and implementation of organisational development strategy for the Trust

## Workforce Strategy

- Lead, develop, implement and review an innovative workforce strategy that supports service reconfiguration and strategic developments
- Review, develop and implement best practice workforce planning and organisational development processes to underpin the long term success of the Trust, minimising financial risk, maximising the use of resources and supporting potential transformation e.g. new roles and ways of working
- Report to the Trust Board on all workforce issues, risks and developments

## Supplementary Conditions

- This post requires travel throughout the Trust to its sites and will also require some regional and national travel
- All staff are expected to take a proactive approach to own personal development in order to ensure that skills set is aligned to the demands of the role as it evolves and develops to meet the organisation's changing needs
- The terms and conditions applying to this post will be determined by the Trust Board and informed by the national terms and conditions set out for Very Senior Managers in the NHS
- All Directors are expected to comply with the national Code of Conduct for NHS Managers. As the Chief People Officer the post holder will be responsible for adhering to his/her professional code of conduct. As an Executive Director of the Board, the Director will also be expected to comply with the Nolan Principles and continue to satisfy the Fit and Proper Person Regulations for NHS board members and senior staff
- To be aware of own responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) and follow these in full at all times in order to ensure that the agreed procedures are carried out to maintain a safe environment for patients, visitors and staff
- To undertake the level of Personal Safety Training appropriate to the role and work area, and to keep this training up to date
- To at all times comply with statutory legislation, directives and with Trust standing orders, policies, procedures and regulations
- Participate in the Trust's Executive on-call rota
- Actively promote the Trust's commitment to equality and diversity by actively championing Inclusion and personally treating all patients, visitors and colleagues with dignity and respect and ensuring their specific health and wellbeing needs are met

- All Hospital staff, both clinical and non-clinical, have an overriding duty of care to patients and are expected to comply fully with best practice standard Including Trust policies for personal and patient safety and for prevention of healthcare-associated infection (HCAI); this includes a requirement for rigorous and consistent compliance with Trust policies for hand hygiene, use of personal protective equipment and safe disposal of sharps
- Abide by the Data Protection Act 1998, by ensuring that all computerised information related to patients and other members of staff to which he/she has access in the course of employment, is regarded as strictly confidential. This rule applies to written information. This extends to keeping all patient information confidential unless disclosure is expressly authorised by the Trust. Misuse of or a failure to properly safeguard any confidential data will be regarded as a disciplinary offence
- In the event of a major incident or civil unrest all Trust employees will be expected to report for duty on notification. All employees are also expected to play an active part in training and preparation for a major incident or civil unrest.
- Comply with the Trust's no-smoking policy
- The job description is subject to change in accordance with organisational and service developments. These guidelines are provided to assist in the performance of the contract but are not a condition of the contract

As a member of the UHSussex board (voting and non-voting), the post holder will be expected to demonstrate professional behaviours that support and are fully aligned to the NHS leadership competency framework for board members.

The framework has the following domains:

- Driving high-quality and sustainable outcomes
- Setting strategy and delivering long-term transformation
- Promoting equality and inclusion, and reducing health and workforce inequalities
- Providing robust governance and assurance
- Creating a compassionate, just and positive culture
- Building a trusted relationship with partners and communities

These domains will be incorporated into the recruitment process for board roles and form part of the annual appraisal process. Further information regarding the board leadership competency framework is available via NHS England » NHS leadership competency framework for board members.

### Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults

UHSussex is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults and to protecting them from the risks of harm. The Trust recognises its responsibility to ensure that safe working conditions and systems are in place for staff working with children, adults, and families in their care. Staff are required to comply with Trust policies on Safeguarding and to undertake the appropriate level of mandatory in-service training in this area.

### Equality, diversity and inclusion

Inclusion and respect are core values at UHSussex, and we are committed to diversity and equality. This means treating colleagues and patients with professionalism, ensuring everyone feels welcome and included, valuing different backgrounds and experiences, and challenging inequalities.

Having all our staff feel safe, supported, included and valued will lead to *Excellent Care Everywhere* for our patients.

All staff have a duty to report any behaviours which contravene this to their managers.

# Person Specification

## PROFESSIONAL REGISTRATION

- FCIPD or equivalent professional experience

## EXPERIENCE/QUALIFICATIONS

- Appropriate level of educational achievement e.g. Masters level
- CIPD qualified with appropriate level of credibility and seniority
- Sustained record of continuing professional development

## SKILLS

- Evidence of having undertaken own development to improve understanding of equalities issues
- Demonstrates high level of competence in the development and application of personal leadership
- A leadership role model who actively portrays and promotes organisational values and desired leadership behaviours
- Highly developed interpersonal skills with the ability to build relationships at all levels
- Achieves commitment and support through the use of integrity and influence
- Translates strategic direction into deliverable, measurable outcomes
- Communicates with authority both internally and externally
- Constructively challenges activities which may not contribute to the delivery of the corporate strategy whilst balancing the importance of being a corporate player
- Possess excellent chair and facilitation skills
- Proven ability to deliver presentations and training sessions to audiences within and outside the Trust
- Analytical skills, ability to grasp a complex problem quickly and provide non-traditional solutions to problems
- Demonstrate high levels of motivation
- Negotiates effectively with internal and external contacts
- Project management training and skills
- Ability to think analytically and synthesise information
- IT literate

## SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

- Evidence of leading and improving a large HR function in a complex, unionised environment.
- Strong technical HR credibility, including employee relations, employment law, organisational change, workforce policy and board-level workforce assurance.
- Experience of using workforce data to improve grip, consistency, productivity and organisational decision-making.
- Ability to balance compassion and fairness with pace, accountability and professional judgement.
- Experience of working with executive colleagues to align workforce strategy with financial, operational and clinical priorities.
- Demonstrable experience operating in senior management or Board level strategic HR roles in large complex environment
- In depth employee relations experience, working with trade unions during major organisational change and restructuring programmes
- Organisational strategy development and implementation within complex organisation
- Development and roll out of major organisational change programmes
- Working in a continuous improvement culture, supporting staff engagement, driving value for money service delivery and service development
- Delivering through individual and team contribution, leading, developing and influencing others
- Financial acumen, able to manage budgets and deliver against stretching organisational targets
- Managing and developing corporate training and development functions
- Strong interest in learning and personal development, with some experience in a relevant function
- Evidence of managing complex organisational wide change projects
- Track record of achievement in HR Management
- Up to date knowledge of HR Systems, national HR agenda, legislation and best practice
- Understanding of dynamics and complexities of the NHS environment including system development/working
- Understanding of the NHS Inclusion agenda and the impact on people
- Understanding of labour markets and, in particular, staff groups within health and social care

# How to apply

The closing date for applications is **23:59 on 2 June 2026**.

Applications should include:

- A **covering letter** explaining why the appointment interests you, how you meet the appointment criteria and what you specifically would bring to the post (**no more than two pages**).
- A **Curriculum Vitae (CV)** with education and professional qualifications and full employment history. Please include daytime and evening telephone contact numbers and email addresses. The CV should include names and contact details of three referees. References will not be taken without your permission (**no more than three pages**).
- You will need the following reference code: **UHSX\_CPO\_0526**

All applications will be acknowledged.

For an informal conversation about the post, please contact **Rhiannon Smith** and **Sam Cresswell** at Hunter Healthcare [scresswell@hunter-healthcare.com](mailto:scresswell@hunter-healthcare.com) or by phone on 07562 650935.

[CLICK HERE TO APPLY ONLINE](#) →

## KEY DATES:

<b>Application Deadline</b>	23:59 on 2 June 2026
<b>Shortlisting</b>	17 June 2026
<b>Stakeholder sessions (Teams)</b>	w/c 22 June 2026
<b>Final interviews</b>	3 July 2026





# University Hospitals Sussex

NHS Foundation Trust



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