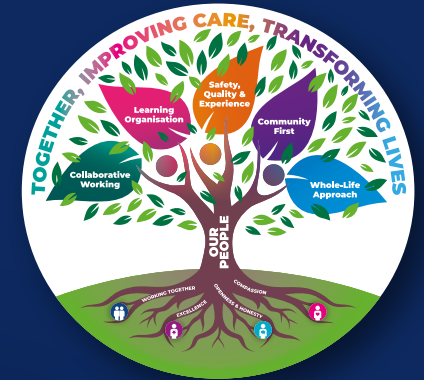




Southern Health
and Social Care Trust

TOGETHER, IMPROVING CARE, TRANSFORMING LIVES



OUR PEOPLE FRAMEWORK

2026-2030

Caring for our people so
they can care for others

Transforming
Our Workplace

Transforming
Our Care

Supporting Wellbeing,
Belonging and Growing





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FOREWORD

FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE, ENDORSED
BY THE DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE AND CULTURE

Our people are our greatest strength.

Every day, colleagues across our Trust deliver high-quality, compassionate care in increasingly challenging circumstances. Demand continues to grow, resources are constrained, and the pace of change remains intense. We know the years ahead will not be easy.

That is precisely why our People Framework 2026–2030 matters.

This framework sets out our commitment to how we will support, value and work with our people over the next five years. It reflects what you have told us through engagement and surveys, alongside regional learning from *Being Human Framework*, *Being Open* and the *McBride–Hill* report.

Together, these reinforce a clear message: **how people experience work matters** — for wellbeing, for safety, and for the sustainability of our services.

As we continue to transform how we deliver care — including through digital change, new systems and different ways of working — we are clear that progress cannot come at the cost of our humanity.

This framework is explicit about **what we will protect, even when under pressure.**

We will protect:

- **Relationships and teams**, recognising that strong, trusting connections are the foundation of wellbeing, belonging and safe care
- **Psychological safety and openness**, so people feel able to speak up, ask questions and raise concerns
- **Dignity, kindness and respect** in how we treat one another
- **Space for teams to connect, talk and support each other**, including everyday moments of connection, humour and shared experience
- **Time to learn, improve and adapt together**, even in busy services

Protecting what matters does not remove the challenges we face, nor does it make change easy. It does, however, set clear expectations about **how we will lead, how we will work together, and how we will support one another through change.**

Our People Framework is built around three interconnected priorities — **Wellbeing, Belonging and Growing**. These priorities remain the right ones. Over the first part of this five-year period, our focus will be on stabilisation and strengthening trust, creating the conditions for sustained improvement over time.

Leadership in the Southern Trust is not defined by role or hierarchy. Through collective leadership, we all share responsibility for living our values, supporting one another, and creating a place where people feel valued, safe and able to do their best work.

This is a shared commitment. If at any point we risk losing sight of what matters most, we expect — and welcome — people to say so.

Together, we will continue to care for our people so they can care for others.



Vivienne Toal
Director of People
and Culture



Steve Spoerry
Chief Executive

INTRODUCTION

Caring for our people so they can care for others

Our People Framework sets out the long-term direction for how we will value, support and work with our people between 2026 and 2030. It describes the culture, priorities and outcomes we are seeking for staff experience and how these support the delivery of safe, high-quality, compassionate care.

The framework builds on the strong foundations of our **People Framework 2022–2025**, what our people have told us through ongoing engagement and staff surveys, and learning from regional reviews and frameworks including Being Human, Being Open and the McBride–Hill report. Together, these reinforce the importance of psychological safety, openness, learning and compassionate leadership in sustaining both workforce wellbeing and patient safety.

This People Framework aligns with our **Vision and Strategy 2030** and provides the longterm direction for how we support our people and shape our organisational culture.

Annual Strategic Plans will set out yearbyyear priorities and programmes that contribute to this ambition, recognising that meaningful cultural change takes time and sustained focus.

The framework is supported by delivery and enabling frameworks, most notably our **Workplace Health and Wellbeing Framework 2025–2030**, alongside safety, quality, learning and leadership frameworks. Together, these create a coordinated approach to valuing and supporting our people, while enabling teams and services to adapt and improve through change.

The foreword sets out our shared commitment to how we will lead, work and support one another over the next five years and underpins how our People Priorities of **Wellbeing, Belonging and Growing** should be experienced across the Trust.

OUR PEOPLE PRIORITIES (2026–2030)

Guided by the commitments set out in the foreword, our People Framework focuses on three interconnected priorities.

Together, they describe what matters most to our people and how we will support wellbeing, strengthen belonging and enable growth over the next four years.

Wellbeing

Belonging

Growing

What changes in this framework is the **depth of focus**, informed by staff experience and system learning.



WELLBEING

Looking after our people in a sustainable and human way

What this means

Wellbeing means creating safe, compassionate and sustainable working environments where physical, psychological and emotional health is protected and supported.

It is shaped primarily by how work is designed and experienced, including workload, pace, leadership behaviours, relationships and support. While we encourage people to care for their own wellbeing, this is not about individual resilience alone.

We recognise that **wellbeing is sustained through relationships**. Feeling connected to others, supported by teams and able to share experiences are protective factors in demanding environments. Creating space for teams to connect and support one another is a core part of a healthy workplace.

WELLBEING

“

There is a clear case that poor staff health and wellbeing has a significant impact on the performance of NHS organisations.

Prof Mike West

Our focus 2026–2030

We will focus on:

- ✓ Creating safe and compassionate working environments that protect physical, psychological and emotional wellbeing
- ✓ Addressing workload, pace, staffing and recovery time as wellbeing issues
- ✓ Supporting mental wellbeing, including moral distress and trauma, not just physical health
- ✓ Developing compassionate leadership at all levels
- ✓ Ensuring staff safety from violence, aggression and harm in all its forms

BELONGING

Creating a Trust where people feel valued, respected and heard

What this means

Belonging means people feel valued, respected and safe to be themselves at work. It includes feeling able to speak up, raise concerns and challenge openly and respectfully.

Belonging is experienced through everyday interactions, leadership behaviours and organisational culture. Psychological safety, inclusion and trust are central to how people experience belonging, both **within teams and across the organisation**.

Our focus 2026–2030

We will focus on:

- ✓ Recognition and appreciation that feels consistent, authentic and meaningful
- ✓ Protecting and valuing positive team cultures, including time for connection, informal conversation, sharing experiences and moments of joy at work
- ✓ Psychological safety, so everyone feels safe to speak up, ask questions and raise concerns
- ✓ Inclusion, dignity and respect in every workplace
- ✓ Tackling incivility, bullying and unacceptable behaviours decisively and fairly
- ✓ Strengthening listening and feedback loops so people can see and feel the impact of their voice



In a high-performance healthcare environment, fear is the ultimate constraint on patient safety...

Dr Amy Edmondson

TEAMS AND WORKING TOGETHER

Teams are the primary setting in which our people experience work. Over the next four years, **supporting connected, effective teams** will be critical to sustaining wellbeing, embedding collective leadership and enabling learning and improvement.

We will prioritise:



Team-based
working and
improvement



Time for teams
to reflect, learn
and connect



Building strong
relationships
across directorates
and professions



Supporting teams
to adapt together
through change

GROWING

*Enabling people to learn,
improve and make a difference*

What this means

Growing means enabling our people to learn, develop and make a difference throughout their careers. It includes having the confidence, permission and support to improve care, influence how work is done and contribute to change.

We support growth through **open, just and learning cultures** that value curiosity, reflection and improvement. Growing also means supporting people to adapt and thrive in a digitally enabled organisation, ensuring new systems and technologies strengthen services and reduce burden rather than adding pressure.

Our focus 2026–2030

We will focus on:

- ✓ Developing leadership capability at all levels, enabling people to lead improvement, support others and work collaboratively across boundaries
- ✓ Creating just, open and learning cultures, where mistakes and incidents lead to learning, not blame
- ✓ Supporting curiosity, reflection and constructive challenge
- ✓ Strengthening development pathways at all stages of a career
- ✓ Building improvement capability so people can make changes locally
- ✓ Learning from patient safety incidents, near misses and excellence, and sharing learning meaningfully
- ✓ Supporting our people through digital transformation, including optimisation of encompass and implementation of equip
- ✓ Building digital confidence and capability across roles and teams
- ✓ Ensuring technology improves workflows, information access and user experience
- ✓ Exploring the safe, ethical and responsible use of emerging technologies, including AI, to support efficiency, learning and care

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*Learning teams
are those that are
open about failure and
curious about how work
really gets done.*

Dekker

COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP, TEAMS AND SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Collective leadership underpins how we deliver wellbeing, belonging and growing. Leadership is not defined by role or hierarchy, but through everyday actions, relationships and shared responsibility for improving care and supporting one another. Teams are the primary setting where collective leadership is lived and experienced.

Leadership has to be demonstrated at every level. We all have a responsibility to live our values and behave in line with them.

Our values are at the heart of our people priorities and guide our thinking and actions to help create a positive workplace culture.



We commit to:

- Compassionate, inclusive and visible leadership
- Fair, just and timely responses when things go wrong
- Balanced accountability that considers systems, environment and behaviours
- Dealing decisively with behaviours inconsistent with our values
- Supporting leaders and managers to care for their own wellbeing and that of their teams
- Creating time, space and permission for teams to connect, reflect and work together, recognising that strong relationships are essential to resilience, learning and safe care

OUR VALUES

WORKING TOGETHER

What does this mean?

We work together for the best outcome for people we care for and support. We work across Health and Social Care and with other external organisations and agencies, recognising that leadership is the responsibility of all.

What does this look like In practice?

Behaviours

- I work with others and value everyone's contribution
- I treat people with respect and dignity
- I work as part of a team looking for opportunities to support and help people in both my own and other teams
- I actively engage people on Issues that affect them
- I look for feedback and examples of good practice, aiming to improve where possible.



EXCELLENCE

What does this mean?

We commit to being the best we can be in our work, aiming to improve and develop services to achieve positive changes. We deliver safe, high quality, compassionate care and support.

What does this look like In practice?

Behaviours

- I put the people I care for and support at the centre of all I do to make a difference
- I take responsibility for my decisions and actions
- I commit to best practice and sharing learning, while continually learning and developing
- I try to improve by asking 'could we do this better?'

COMPASSION

What does this mean?

We are sensitive, caring, respectful and understanding towards those we care for and support and our colleagues. We listen carefully to others to better understand and take action to help them and ourselves.

What does this look like In practice?

Behaviours

- I am sensitive to the different needs and feelings of others and treat people with kindness
- I learn from others by listening carefully to them
- I look after my own health and wellbeing so that I can care for and support others.

OPENNESS & HONESTY

What does this mean?

We are open and honest with each other and act with Integrity and candour.

What does this look like In practice?

Behaviours

- I am open and honest in order to develop trusting relationships
- I ask someone for help when needed
- I speak up if I have concerns
- I challenge inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour and practice.

MEASURES AND INDICATORS

What will feel different?

Over the lifetime of this framework, our people should experience:



Greater openness
about challenges
and pressures



Fairer, kinder
responses when things
don't go as planned



More visible
listening and
feedback



More opportunities
to learn, contribute
and improve locally

These experience-based shifts are as important to us as traditional performance measures.

BASELINE AND MEASUREMENT

The People Framework 2026–2030 **uses 2024/25 as its baseline year.** This reflects the lived experience of our workforce and the realities of the operating environment at the start of this five-year period.

Progress will be understood through a balanced and proportionate approach to measurement, aligned to our three People Priorities of **Wellbeing, Belonging and Growing**. This will include:

- **Staff experience data**, gathered through periodic staff surveys, targeted ‘temperature checks’ focused on specific People Priorities and qualitative feedback from engagement and listening activity
- **Workforce metrics**, including sickness absence, turnover, retention, safety and wellbeing data
- **Learning and improvement indicators**, including learning from patient safety incidents, improvement activity and leadership development
- **Qualitative insight**, drawn from team engagement, staff networks, walkarounds and workforce forums

We are deliberate about when and how we ask for feedback. Listening will be meaningful, timely and linked to action, recognising that trust is built not through frequent surveys, but through visible response and follow-through.

Measurement will be used to support learning, reflection and improvement, not simply to track performance. Detailed metrics, dashboards and targets will be reviewed through appropriate governance to support delivery of this framework.

