

# HR Partner for the



## ABOUT US

Centric HR Limited was founded by Sandra Berns, a versatile Human Resources and organisational development practitioner with a track record of more than 30 years' experience in senior management.

We have both operational and strategic HR expertise across both public and private sectors and a proud reputation for providing people solutions for executive teams, encompassing complex, sensitive and often contentious employment casework as well as challenging workforce projects.

At Centric HR we do not just roll out standard information or put constraints and hurdles in front of you. We understand the everyday pressures within healthcare environments and are proactive and pragmatic in finding solutions that meet your needs.

You can concentrate on your services and business-as-usual priorities, whilst we deliver on those additional projects, tricky cases and urgent work that require additional focus and attention.

We have helped a number of our clients plan, execute and benefit from workforce transformation programmes, delivering improved productivity and efficiencies and in some cases enabling you to do more with less. This can significantly alleviate cost improvement pressures in a world where we know resources are becoming more and more scarce.



Renowned for our specialist experience within the NHS, we are a natural extension to NHS in-house teams. We speak your language and understand NHS policies and workforce issues. This makes us a powerful addition to your tool kit when you need specialist resources to support your in-house teams who have limited time and capacity.

Not only that, we have worked in the NHS, we know what it's like. We care about the quality of work we deliver, the individuals we deal with, and most of all – You. Whatever the size of your organisation, using Centric HR to assist with your people provides you access to our highly qualified team. We work with you and ensure your best practice is adopted, compliance is adhered to, and projects are delivered and potentially mitigate employee relations risks.



# Meet Our Amazing HR Team



**Sandra Berns, Managing Director & Senior HR Consultant FCIPD.** A confident and versatile Human Resources and Organisational Development Practitioner, with 30 years' experience. Both Operational and Strategic HR expertise across the Public and Private sectors, working at a senior level in the NHS for 20 years. Sandra has worked at director and board level in varied corporate environments and has assisted senior teams in meeting challenging workforce objectives. Sandra's specialist skills within the NHS are Workforce Transformation and Change, Efficiencies and cost improvement, Complex ER Cases and OD initiatives.



**Helen Watkins, Head of HR Operations FCIPD.** With 28 years' experience managing people, with 12 years working in generalist roles in HR and has extensive knowledge of both not for profit and private sectors. An exceptional HR practitioner, Helen is commercially aware, with specific experience in transformational change, operational HR, tribunals, pensions and auto enrolment. Helen's project management skills include experience of merging HR information systems and implementing HR software. Helen has worked on many ER cases and cultural reviews within the NHS.



**Fiona Flaherty, Senior HR Business Partner MCIPD.** Working in HR in the public sector for 16 years across a range of senior HR generalist roles. Fiona has led on significant workforce transformation programmes in local government delivering workforce efficiencies and supported complex HR operational issues successfully through to Employment Tribunal stage. As Head of HR in the NHS, Fiona has lead teams, enabling them to respond to challenging circumstances throughout the pandemic and is an expert in managing and mitigating risks in regard to ER and cultural issues and grievances.



**Jo Whitehouse, HR Business Partner MCIPD.** With 20 years' experience in the public sector, in generalist HR roles and operational line management; including significant people management experience leading teams of up to 50 staff, responsible for delivering fast paced customer services to vulnerable members of the community. Jo has a special interest in Job Evaluation & organisation re-structuring. Most recently Jo led a change programme delivering improved services whilst achieving efficiencies.



**Amy Richardson, HR Advisor, MCIPD.** A passion to follow and develop her career in HR and has hit the ground running here at Centric with her first assignment supporting workforce planning and transformation project within the NHS. An excellent HR Adviser who is resilient and tenacious. A graduate of Psychology and now CIPD, her all-round knowledge is A1. Amy is a dependable project manager who always delivers quality work, on time.



**James Barton, Office Co-ordinator.** Recently graduated with his master's degree and is now eager to pursue his passion for administration. James is thrilled to be a part of the Centric HR family as he supports investigations and statement turnaround, notetaking, system implementation and project management and general administration.



**Paula Stokes, HR Administrator.** A wealth of experience in administration, she has a real passion for helping people and thrives on giving excellent customer service. Paula supports with investigations and statement turnaround, sickness management, project planning and communication and general administration.

**Specialist Associates FCIPD.** In addition to our core team, Centric HR work with 10 specialist associates with a minimum of 15 years of senior experience, who can assist your organisation with specific projects. Associates are tried and tested and have worked with Centric HR on a wide range of projects. Most have senior operational and strategic NHS experience.

# CULTURAL REVIEWS

We work with you to carry out cultural reviews which provide an independent, objective, robust and fair assessment of the facts, dealt with in a sensitive manner for all concerned.

Having NHS Workforce policies in place is important, however these alone may not be enough to embed good practice across an organisation and would fail to satisfy a judge at a tribunal that your Trust is taking it seriously. Many managers have not had the practical experience, exposure or the right training in this area, and often find it challenging to manage the wide range of diversity within the NHS workforce or their own teams.

A cultural review offers you the opportunity to check whether the policy and procedure is embedded into the organisation and find the root cause of the issue. We help Trusts find solutions, provide learning and of course mitigate against tribunal claims where individuals have raised specific issues within grievances of discrimination, bullying and harassment, victimisation etc.

We use your existing data and triangulate new data to pin-point issues and provide recommendations and actions to resolve issues.



This may include:

- Facilitated engagement workshops with staff and/or managers.
- Local action planning workshops where staff and managers own their actions around improving their culture.
- Mediation where there is conflict between employees or groups of staff.
- Additional investigations where required due to grievances or public concerns at work.
- Listening for Action workshops where anonymous information can be obtained from staff in a safe environment.
- Disciplinary investigations and further support if required.



# COMPLEX CASEWORK

In the current world of work and employee relations matters, there has been a huge rise in the number of complex cases. The reality means managing a number of work-related, cultural and discriminatory issues, which can also result in multiple allegations of misconduct and gross misconduct.

We know these cases burn up resources; when you're busy and the team are at capacity, you may not be able to give cases the time they need. Multi-pronged cases often involve other policies and procedures and can incite counter grievances and allegations. These types of cases expose you to increased risk and reputational damage and potentially rocketing costs if matters escalate to a tribunal.

If your Trust and its HR teams are under resourced and need assistance with complex HR casework, then our team can provide you with impartial and experienced consultants in protected time. We can arrange and interview large numbers of employees efficiently and turnaround accurate statements within 48 hours.

As subject matter experts and through 100+ years of experience in dealing with complex casework, we ensure we have received the most up to date training in dealing with disciplinary issues. This includes the ever-changing protected characteristics and discriminatory implications, together with the impact this has on the local culture and working environment. We often unpick information and identify other issues such as patterns of micro-aggressions, which could expose you to further risk. Our training assists us with emerging cases where bullying and harassment allegations involve transgender and non-binary employees – and we know this can be intimidating for managers who have not had such exposure.

Our investigation reports provide you with the information you need to make informed decisions. Cases can be presented to panels or boards. We always provide a confidential, observation, learning and recommendations report, to the Trust.



# WORKFORCE TRANSFORMATION

We know the future success of the NHS will depend on how well we use our existing resources, together with working creatively to integrate new roles and work smarter. Failing to plan is not an option when our workforce is stretched, tired and lacking key skills.

Workforce transformation is a phrase we often use, but many do not appreciate that this is all encompassing – workforce, systems, new roles, optimisation of roles, new ways of working, IT infrastructure etc.

Managers often hold the key to knowing what is inefficient or what is not working properly but do not have the autonomy to make changes. The practical application and skills are frequently lacking in the NHS. We coach, mentor and train line managers and provide them with basic tools and techniques to find the best solutions for their services and teams, to enable the long process of transformation to happen. The team at Centric HR can help you set up projects, deliver workforce transformation or just coach and mentor managers who need to plan their workforce efficiently for the future. Here are some ways in how we can assist your organisation:

- **Optimisation** of your existing workforce resources are often overlooked and is an easy win when struggling with staff and skill shortages. We have worked closely with Trusts to identify shortfalls or underused resources within workforce, systems and processes, through engaging with managers to work creatively and more efficiently. We have delivered increased cover at the right time and provided recurrent cost improvement savings that can be invested into new roles, systems and infrastructure.
- **Stakeholder Management** is important when integrating services or introducing new roles. Multi-disciplinary teams must harness the responsibility together and accept that new roles are required to overcome skills gaps. Traditional political objections of staff groups over the introduction of new roles are often a misconception of what the new roles and how they may erode their role. The key to success is stakeholder engagement, removal of duplication and clear project management to ensure implementation and transition.
- **Workforce Planning** will secure the future of the NHS and we can help teams and managers understand how to do this effectively through training, coaching and mentoring. We have a track record of defining bottom-up workforce plans based on activity and workforce best practice ratios, which can assist with the introduction of new roles, skills and new ways of working – including the introduction of new technology and care pathways.
- **Workforce Change**, normally referred to as organisational change, is usually a small project that is part of a wider workforce transformation programme. Restructures within the NHS are used as a tool to transition changes in services, roles and systems etc. The team at Centric can undertake any part of that process, whether identifying the change and writing the rationale for a change paper to the Board, through to consulting with staff and implementing the change with Managers, which might include managing redeployment or redundancies.





# CONSULTANCY PROJECTS

We have a team of HR practitioners with niche/specialist skills in particular areas such as workforce transformation, organisational change, TUPE, line manager training, organisational development and facilitation, cultural reviews, implementing new systems and processes, project management and service improvements to support your in-house teams.

Our practitioners can be used on an ad-hoc basis, parachuted in to help your Trust deal with specific projects, offering you experience as and when you need it.

We have a team of associate HR practitioners with niche/specialist skills to support your in-house teams. Such as:

- **Workforce transformation**
- **Workforce planning and analysis**
- **Organisational restructures, redeployment and redundancy**
- **TUPE transfers**
- **Line manager training**
- **Organisational development**
- **Staff engagement and facilitation**
- **Cultural reviews**
- **System and processes implementation**
- **Policy harmonisation**
- **Project management e.g, service improvement**
- **Health, well-being and recognition**
- **Services and supplier reviews**
- **People strategies**

Our associates are tried and tested practitioners who can be used on an ad-hoc basis, **parachuted in to help your Trust** deal with specific projects, offering you expertise as and when you need it at affordable prices.



# CASE STUDIES

CASE  
STUDY

1

## CULTURAL REVIEW

A trust had one specific area where employee relations were at an all-time low. HR had supported managers to deal with several grievances, mediations and disciplinary issues around managing conduct. The area had a bad reputation and skilled and talented people were leaving with no roles to go to. Centric was asked to investigate another grievance. Immediately alarm bells rang on understanding that 22 people were to be interviewed. Initial information suggested a cultural review should also be undertaken. As part of the review data was gathered on departmental performance, patient and employee surveys and workforce data and another 24 people were interviewed.

## THE RESULT

Through employee engagement and management buy-in validated by the data gathered, there was a clear correlation that the department was failing from a management perspective. Clinical leadership was not coping with employee management, and this led to conflict and damaged relationships. As a result, work-related stress, sickness and turnover were high, performance was failing, and staff were tired and upset. The report showed objective findings, with overwhelming evidence and pointed to the department being wholly under resourced. Non-threatening conversations were had with senior managers. Further facilitation took place with managers and staff and mutually agreed actions and new behaviours started to take effect. One manager was highlighted as problematic and managed accordingly, resulting in training and development for them and across the teams. Workforce planning and workforce investment was made. 2 years on, grievances have ceased, staff are happier, turnover and sickness reduced, and conduct issues have disappeared.

CASE  
STUDY

2

## COMPLEX CASEWORK

Our NHS client had a senior manager grievance that they had not managed in accordance with the policy. They resigned, claiming constructive dismissal on account of colleagues being racist towards them and stated this constituted bullying and harassment. The Trust had said there was an attitude issue with the member of staff. Centric investigated and interviewed 28 employees. Evidence was poor on both sides with no written documentation, as this happened throughout the pandemic year 2021.

## THE RESULT

Centric HR were able to assist defending the case by demonstrating that an objective investigation had taken place. Every angle of racism and bullying and harassment was explored, including subtleties around micro-aggressions which could amount to a strong case if repeatedly experienced by the employee. The report concluded that the evidence showed the employee's behaviour had shown more signs of bullying and harassment than their colleagues and there was no case to answer. There was mitigation on the side of the Trust due to the pressures at the time together with the employee being a senior manager with accountabilities – they too had not followed procedure. There were recommendations for process change and training as part of the Trusts learning, which it actioned immediately. The Trust was pleased with the outcome and felt we had really understood the case. The detailed investigation provided the preparation materials for the Tribunal defence and was value for money in comparison to employment solicitors. The concentrated time to undertake this investigation took 185 hours!



# CASE STUDIES

CASE  
STUDY

3

## WORKFORCE TRANSFORMATION

### Shortage of staff

The NHS Trust were suffering with a national shortage of staff which meant there was a huge reliance on bank and agency staff at a huge cost. There were also a number of skills gaps identified, other members of staff were under utilised and there remained a poor career pathway for staff making it difficult to attract and retain staff.

We were set a task of completing a workforce transformation strategy and implementation plan to resolve the issue whilst:

- **Offering no compromise on quality or safety.**
- **To enhance cover, skill-mix enrichments to improve the patient experience/care.**
- **Optimise resources and work towards greater efficiencies.**
- **Engage nursing staff and managers throughout the process.**
- **Ensure clinical effectiveness and ensure staff were working to top of licence.**
- **Build robust workforce plans for the future.**
- **Understand risk and ensure mitigated wherever possible.**

## THE RESULT

### Workforce efficiencies

We delivered a successful workforce efficiencies plan that incorporated:

- **Optimised resources that did not compromise on quality or safety.**
- **Moved to a 2-shift system contributing significantly to CIP.**
- **Explored and planned for skill shortfalls within certain areas.**
- **Mitigated risk within retirement demographic over next 5 years.**
- **Ensured clinical workforce work to top of licence or band.**
- **Introduced support roles to assist high demand areas/improve patient experience.**
- **Proactively developed a 5-year plan for new roles such as TNAs and ACP roles.**
- **Provided a true flexible working model that met the needs of the organisation.**
- **Our plan addressed all of the issues and provided the Trust with significant cost savings of £1.7million in the first year, whilst the potential savings over 5 years is on track to deliver savings of £8.3 million.**

# OUR SPECIALIST NHS PARTNERS

Who can enhance our workforce transformation and HR services

## WINNINGTON FINANCIAL PLANNING LIMITED

Winnington Financial Planning Limited specifically works with NHS clients and your employees to achieve their financial goals ensuring financial planning is simple, informative and worry free.

Winnington can work together with you to provide a range of services including:

### Protection Planning

Protecting employees and their loved ones should the worst happen.

### Retirement Planning

Making sure individual employees pensions are working as hard as they can be to give the retirement they deserve.

### Savings & Investment Planning

Helping employees achieve financial goals through efficient planning.

### Estate Planning

Passing employee's legacy to the right people.

### Mortgage Planning

Making the stressful time of moving to a new house more simple and stress free.

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## WINNINGTON FINANCIAL PLANNING LTD

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**Please note:** Homes may be repossessed if repayments on mortgages default. The value of investment with St. James's Place can go down as well as up.

Winnington Financial Planning Ltd is an Appointed Representative of and represents only St. James's Wealth Management PLC (which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority) for the purpose of advising solely on the Group's wealth management products and services, more details of which are set out on the Group's website:

[www.sjp.co.uk/products](http://www.sjp.co.uk/products)

**Tel:** 01706 829922

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**Web:** [www.winningtonfp.co.uk](http://www.winningtonfp.co.uk)



## MISSION DIVERSE



Mission Diverse is a leading equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) provider of training and consulting services aimed at helping organisations address diversity and inclusion issues. We offer bespoke training and consulting solutions to NHS clients based on your specific EDI needs and goals, which includes virtual and in-person workshops, seminars, one-on-one coaching, and consulting.

The Mission Diverse team are highly knowledgeable and experienced expert who provide support and guidance to organisations

who are looking to improve their diversity and inclusion efforts.

Having trained thousands of individuals across the UK, Europe, the USA, and Asia, we embrace the beauty of global diversity and what that brings to any organisation.

Mission Diverse are here to support, consult and train employees, managers, leaders, and c-suite executives, by developing awareness, understanding and positive action in relation to diversity and inclusion matters.

### We offer a range of training which include:

- Microaggressions Training
- Race Awareness Training
- LGBTQ+ Training
- Diversity & Inclusion Training
- Intersectionality Training
- Unconscious Bias Training

### We also offer monthly and ad-hoc consulting services which include:

- Diversity and Inclusion Consulting
- EDI Health Checks
- EDI Policy & Procedure Reviews
- Diverse Community & Recruitment Strategy Planning
- EDI Audits

Get in touch with Mission Diverse today for a free, no-obligation Diversity and Inclusion support call!

**Tel:** [www.missiondiverse.org](http://www.missiondiverse.org)

**Email:** 0121 663 6110

**Web:** [support@missiondiverse.org](mailto:support@missiondiverse.org)

## WORKING TRANSITIONS



### OUTPLACEMENT, COACHING AND LEARNING SERVICES

The truth is everyone needs a Coach now and again. At Working Transitions, we offer coaching and tailored services for every moment of workplace transition from joining to retirement and everything in between.

Since our foundation in 1993 we have worked extensively across the public, private and third sector, with particular expertise in partnering

with the NHS. We have a strong track record of delivering high quality services, successful outcomes and receive consistently excellent feedback from those who receive our support. We listen to your priorities and tailor our services to help you deliver successful next steps for your employees, and stronger recruitment, engagement, performance, and retention for your business.

Our range of services include:

#### Career Transition Services

- Outplacement
- Executive Outplacement
- Redeployment

- Onboarding
- Career Decisions
- Later Life Careers and Retirement Planning
- Career Transition Workshops: CV Writing, Interview Technique, Social Media & Networking, Job Searching, Application Form Success, Business Start-Up, Self-Employment and many more!
- Online Career Hub

#### Coaching and Learning Services

- Developing Future Leaders
- Leadership Coaching
- Transformational Coaching and Changing Behaviours
- Working Families and Parental Leave
- Peak Performing Teams
- Workplace and Personal Development Courses: Leadership Development, Building Personal Resilience, Dealing With Change, Leading Through Change, Managing Challenging & Sensitive Conversations, Personal Branding and many more!

**Tel:** 01604 744 101

**Email:** [info@workingtransitions.com](mailto:info@workingtransitions.com)

**Web:** [www.workingtransitions.com](http://www.workingtransitions.com)

# TESTIMONIALS

“We love working with Centric HR as we have the confidence and assurance of expert advice due to the long standing NHS background of the Directors there – which is fantastic for our Federation of GP Practices, Primary Care Networks and smaller GP practices. Time after time Centric supports us with challenging situations, always providing pragmatic solutions for our clinical settings and personnel. Highly recommended by our GP Partners and Operational Managers.”

**Jo Williams, Operations Manager, CQC Registered Manager – Cannock Chase Clinical Alliance**

“Centric HR were engaged to provide professional programme management for workforce transformation at the George Eliot NHS Trust. The Centric team clearly relished the transformational challenge this project presented, their energy, creativity and focus on delivery provided a much needed injection of pace. They provided advice and support to our clinical leadership right across the organisation giving them the confidence to embrace change and get things done. The programme was successful and exceeded target delivery in both time and savings.”

**Michael Parr, Operational Director of Finance – George Eliot NHS Trust**

“I have worked with Centric HR for a number of years. Very professional and knowledgeable, who are always prepared to go the extra mile. Whenever I have worked with them, the input has always been very valuable and well considered. They are always discrete and have considerable integrity.”

**Alan Lakin – Regional Head of Audit in West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust**



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