



ASSIGNMENT

Strategic Management (SBMA7103D)



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Executive Summary

Financial and political turmoil has dragged the future usefulness and productivity of the NHS ever closer to ruin. Government and healthcare bodies have produced reports that show a growing trend of staffing shortages within the healthcare sector focusing on various causes of this dilemma. The lack of inward attraction of European Union workers of recent, namely based on the vote to leave the EU (Brexit) has created a social and political environment that has gained a level of toxicity which in turn has caused a situation that has culminated in fewer NHS frontline roles being filled.

In order to combat the problems that are being faced by the St Helens & Knowsley NHS trust a strategy needs to be produced, established and implemented. The use of strategic management to achieve a sustained competitive advantage provides a structured method in carrying out this process of realisation. The tools used to understand the diverse environment the NHS functions within are PEST, TOWS and SWOT. The use of this tooling has given me the ability to breakdown and have a clear view of what elements exist that shape the way the NHS is currently functioning.

Analysis is gathered by the use of the tools and models discussed with the findings then further analysed using strategic techniques and models such as Porters Generic Strategies, SOAR and the Ansoff Matrix. Clear identifiable strategies were gained from this further analysis which has produced recommendations for financing and HR management in order to mend the issues currently faced in the NHS.

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1 – Introduction

This assignment will focus on the strategic goals for employment as viewed within the NHS, specifically the St Helens & Knowsley NHS trust (STHK). There are many strategic objectives throughout the numerous NHS trusts and CCG's (Clinical Commissioning Groups) but my focus will be on talent retention and recruitment and how these can be maintained and improved so as to create a competitive advantage through any viable NHS unit.

2 – The Need for Strategic Management within the NHS

Healthcare organisations must constantly make changes to sustain optimum peak function (Christiansen 2002). Cost is a major road block in the public sector throughout all strands, the healthcare sector is one of the most directly understood and reported area of cost spending and allocation of funds from the public purse. The limitation of funding has brought about issues for strategic planning in order to build, maintain and progress a continued competitive advantage for any trust or CCG. In order to achieve this a process of strategic management needs to be established as applied to the NHS in order to understand what is needed so a plan can be created to achieve these goals.

2.1 – What is Strategic Management?

Strategic management is the process of formulating and then implementing a process of change aimed at improving the overall business environment of an organisation based on their major goals as established through the initial phases of discovery. The general concept of strategy and strategic management has developed over the years (Bigler 2009) so it should not be seen as a singular static concept. Its main aim is focused on the policy an organisation adopts so as to create then further enhance its performance so as to meet the desired objectives (Ansoff 1979). A strategy has to be established to achieve the goals identified so a process of

management can then follow to structure the said process. Chandler (1962) defines strategy as the “determination of the basic, long-term goals and objectives of an enterprise and the adoption of courses of action and the allocation of resources necessary for those goals”. In the Harvard Business Review Michael E. Porter (1996) identified three principles of establishing a strategy;

- Create a "unique and valuable [market] position"
- Deciding "what not to do" so as to establish trade-offs
- Creating a process of "fit" aligning internal activities in a logical sequence so as to support the strategy

The implementation of strategic management is important at all areas of the process as the key areas of understanding what is needed and why this is needed is established before any means of implementation is carried out. Developing and understanding, through a repetitive process, the key business goals and objectives and why these are important is key in order for a successful state of change and development to be achieved. This process is known as strategic planning, where all areas of the strategy are logically aligned so as to provide a clear process. The principal aim of strategic planning is to balance an organisation and bring it into synch with the external environment, creating a consistent balance over time (Erdley, Jones & Sackett, 2005). A high return on investments and an improved overall performance can be achieved by organisations who have strategic management capabilities (Ansoff 1987).

3 – Retention and Recruitment Issues

The problems facing the NHS are widely publicised and of recent times have grown in the wake of politic and economic instability. With the rising costs of services, supplies and energy as well as keeping up with technological advancement being so prominent requiring continued investments so as to meet the increased number of the general public a strategy must be established to handle this. It has been reported that if no long term strategic changes are made to the NHS by 2020 there will be a funding gap of £30 billion (Ramesh, 2013).

The Office for National Statistics (Clegg, 2017) produced a report in 2016 showing that health and social work accounted for 15% (118,000) of vacancies in the UKs whole economy. The difficulty of funding NHS services and also applying competitive rates of pay in order to have the best available staffing is becoming an increasing concern which is now being discussed at the higher levels of government. The House of Lords' Select Committee (2017) commissioned an enquiry into health and social care focusing on the long-Term Sustainability of the NHS. It concluded that the biggest internal threat to the sustainability of the NHS was the absence of a comprehensive, national strategy for the health and care workforce over the next 10-15 years.

A relatively recent NHS survey (National Health Service, 2016) also detailed staff morale and stress as an added concern. The survey found that roughly two in five staff had reported that due to work related stress they had called in sick within the past 12 months (37%). This finding shows a troubling trend that may have serious implications for future staff retention and may be a major factor in the reason for current staff shortages. An added factor to the difficulty in staffing is the direct impact the Brexit vote has had on the sentiment and security of foreign EU workers within the NHS and the wider health and social care sector.

The EU policy of the freedom of movement of citizens from member states to other member states and the mutual recognition of professional qualifications within the EU. The mutual recognition of professional qualifications has meant that many health and social care professionals currently working in the UK have come from other member states in the EU. The number of workers in the NHS from the EU has been growing over time suggesting that there is now a reliance on EU migrant workers.

The uncertainty of Brexit and the UK's pending relationship with the EU has meant that the numbers of staffing quotas may not be at a level that would be suitable to service the needs of the NHS. The referendum result already seems to be having an impact as shown in a report published by the Nursing and Midwifery Council (2017) which shows the number of midwives and nurses from EU countries leaving the Nursing and Midwifery Council's register between October 2016 and September 2017 increased by 67% compared to the 12 months before, while the number joining it fell by 89%. We know that the NHS is currently struggling to recruit and retain permanent staff, with particular gaps in nursing, midwifery and health visitors (National Audit Office, 2016) backing up the findings of the Nursing and Midwifery Council report.

3.1 – PEST Analysis

PEST is an acronym for **P**olitical, **E**conomic, **S**ocial and **T**echnological; it is used to evaluate external factors as part of a framework of macro-environmental factors used within the environmental scanning component of strategic management. I have used this as an initial method of understanding the varying external environmental factors that may play a significant part in developing a balanced understanding of what the NHS is dealing with. Abhishek Gupta (2013) describes this process as "the idea that strategy requires a fit between capabilities and the external environment and so it is necessary for an enterprise to react to changes." The following diagram shows a list of attributes I have identified in the four areas stated in the PEST model.

<u>Political</u> • Exit from the European Union • Reduction in Government spending • Unstable minority government • Equality laws means a balance between male and female workers • Established regulatory bodies and processes • Established trading and travel policies	<u>Economic</u> • Increased funding requirements • The need to maintain financial performance • Slow financial recovery • Globalisation of markets (competition for workers) • Continued recruitment from countries outside of the EU • Restricted access to capital and borrowing
<u>Social</u> • Increased general population • Ageing population • Increasing patient expectations • Increased expectations of public services and patient choice • Changes to quality regulations • A more health literate public • Advanced transport network	<u>Technological</u> • Advanced medicine requires advanced technology • Need for IT development • Healthcare tied directly to technology • Increased reliance on technology workers • Advent of integrated mobile technology • Economy is heavily dependent on technology • Regulatory controls on e-communications

Diagram 3.1 – PEST Analysis Model

3.2 – SWOT Analysis

I am using the SWOT tool to identify the attributes that can help build a strategy for competitive advantage as well as the negative attributes so as to plan around them. As a primary description SWOT analysis was defined by Learned et al (1969) which has developed into a tool that addresses complex strategic situations by reducing the quantity of information to aide in improving decision making. Koch (2000) credited the further development and innovation of SWOT to the contributions of Wheelan & Hunger (1998), Dealtry (1992) and Weihrich (1982). Finding the attributes needed here will allow me to develop a basic understanding of where the trust is and how it can get to where it needs to be. Valentin (2001) said that the SWOT analysis is the standard way of searching for ways to realise desired alignments. The following diagram shows a list of attributes for the NHS trust in the PEST model;

<u>Strength</u> • Largest employer in the UK meaning a larger talent pool to cater for • No real competitor to the NHS • Established since 1948 and continues to grow and expand upon it's services • Established economy • One of the 8 richest countries in the world	<u>Weakness</u> • Complicated\stringent management processes • Insufficient knowledge of the implications of leaving the EU • Time and cost it takes to train specialist staff needed • Frozen pay increase • Increased population size • Size of borrowing
<u>Opportunities</u> • Develop new relationships with external solution companies • Modernise processes using advanced modern technological methods • Learning from governmental and health care reports • Learning from frontline staff and Unions • Increase of private investment	<u>Threat</u> • Reputational damage from bad press • Increased use of private sector suppliers • Financial challenges • Economic climate • Political climate • Continuing unfunded demand in activity • Staff turnover is high • Difficulty starting new services

Diagram 3.2 – SWOT Analysis

3.3 – TOWS Matrix

Using the information gathered I can now focus in on what strategy method is needed, the TOWS analysis tool (Weihrich, 1982) generates, compares and selects strategies. TOWS is very similar to SWOT but is used later on in the planning process in order to find a method to progress, in comparison to SWOT which is used at the beginning. This is accomplished by applying the SWOT findings to produce interconnected relationships of potential strategies with the objective being to provide varied strands of analysis resulting in varied choices.

INTERNAL FACTORS			
EXTERNAL FACTORS		Strengths (S)	Weaknesses (W)
	Opportunities (O)	Strengths/ Opportunities (SO)	Weaknesses/ Opportunities (WO)
	Threats (T)	Strengths/ Threats (ST)	Weaknesses/ Threats (WT)

Diagram 3.3 – TOWS Analysis Model

TOWS is only as accurate, and therefore useful, as the data that is fed into it and therefore it should be used in conjunction with other models and frameworks to produce strategic outputs.

Within TOWS the four strategies are;

1. **Strength/Opportunity (SO);** Strengths would exploit opportunities
2. **Weakness/Opportunity (WO);** Find options that overcome weaknesses and then use these to take advantage of opportunities
3. **Strength/Threat (ST);** Overcome potential threats by exploiting strengths
4. **Weakness/Threat (WT);** The least favoured option where weakness is minimised to avoid possible threats.

Feeding in the findings from the SWOT analysis into the TOWS matrix I have found the following;

1. *Strength/Opportunity (SO);*

The fact that the NHS holds a market without any real competitors and that it is the UK's biggest employer gives it a unique position. With the added stress of competitors removed it can focus on developing performance by learning from governmental reports. Full unchallenged access to the health sector gives great scope to developing new relationships with complimentary external companies therefore improving the possibility of private funding in certain parts of the sector. Increase funding gives way to greater financial position therefore allowing the creation of a competitive employment package for workers.

2. *Weakness/Opportunity (WO);*

A Complicated and/or stringent management processes can be seen as a weakness but if we follow the path of developing new relationships with external organisations through HR processes and procurement we can then create new avenues to develop new processes from the ground up. Applying technology to further develop these processes through database management and improved systems performance has the counter effect of developing in house skills and encouraging external expertise into these areas.

3. *Strength/Threat (ST);*

A high staff turnover in the NHS, including at STHK, is generally due to morale both personal and due to the current political uncertainty. Because the NHS is government funded it would be in their best interest to use that platform and provide some stable words so as to provide clarity as to how the country will interact with the rest of the EU

after article 50 is complete. The global market will react to the pound more favourably as the UK has a somewhat strong economy and is still one of the richest in the world.

4. *Weakness/Threat (WT);*

A somewhat unrealistic and less favourable strategic outlook would be to limit spending on staff through annual pay increases on top of the pay freezes so far and limit spending on further career training development. This in turn would help reduce costs through this stringent avenue of austerity and allow these funds to be redirected where needed but staff would still have to carry on their work tasks as expected.

4 – Analysis of Current Processes

The current recruitment and retention strategy in STHK is not transparent and therefore the process is not fully trusted. Available trust jobs, in theory, should screen internal candidates first but if none are found there is no method of communicating this with the applicants. All initial decision making is handled by HR before the screened CV's are passed to the hiring managers for their scrutiny. This has been identified as a major flaw in the process as using job templates for specific job descriptions has removed many viable candidates at the early stages of the application process.

The overly complex job description is written by HR before being validated by senior management and then it's passed to the hiring manager. This old method of validating a proposed job advertisement has meant that the least knowledge people are the first ones to compile and agree on the requirements for a role while the most knowledge about the technical requirements is basically side-lined from the process.

Another issue identified as part of the employee process is the matter of retaining current and new staff for a reasonable period. Staff retention is a forgotten art and all employees in the trust are left to carry on with their work after employment with a single annual review, at team management level, to evaluate performance and progression. The lack of structure in the process has seen a failed employment process stay active. Employees measure how valued they are in their job by how challenging the job is, the working environment, opportunities for training as well as the flexibility and reputation of the organisation (Oehley, 2007). This area of employee involvement can be regarded as talent management, but the focus should not only be on high-flyers but incorporate all the hardworking and efficient workers (Armstrong, 2006).

The cost involved in finding and hiring new skilled employees is difficult (Boyens, 2007) the added pressure of fiscal difficulties at the governmental level meant a strategic method that was inward focused would be best at present so as to create an understanding of what is actually needed. The ability to identify employees who require further development as well as identifying the level of training needed and where this training is to take place is a key attribute when recruiting talent (Harburg, 2003).

Identifying the key people in the internal recruitment process has been flagged as the most fundamental part of developing our recruitment strategy. The people identified are the senior technical or front-line staff and line managers. Studies have shown that line managers play a crucial role in developing talent (Lockwood, 2006) so involving them at the initial stage of the recruitment process will add value from the outset.

5 – Developing a New Strategy for Progress

Having identified the significant characteristics of the environmental variables effecting the key processes of employee recruitment and retention I will now focus on developing a strategy to cater for the adoption of these issues for improvement. An initial step is to look at the customisation of organisational culture that sits around the recruitment process. This is where Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) becomes relevant and remains as the source method of implementing the changes required to achieve the competitive advantage sought. Ulrich (1997) explains that HR functions gain greater influence within an organisation when strategic management is adopted as the focal point of change.

5.1 - Porter's Generic Strategies

Utilising the findings from TOWS I have been able to further define a business strategy that would be a good fit for STHK. Porters Generic Strategies provides four competing generic business strategies that can help in establishing a competitive advantage. Porters Generic Strategy has played a pivotal role in developing corporate competitive strategy for over 30 years (Pretorius, 2008).

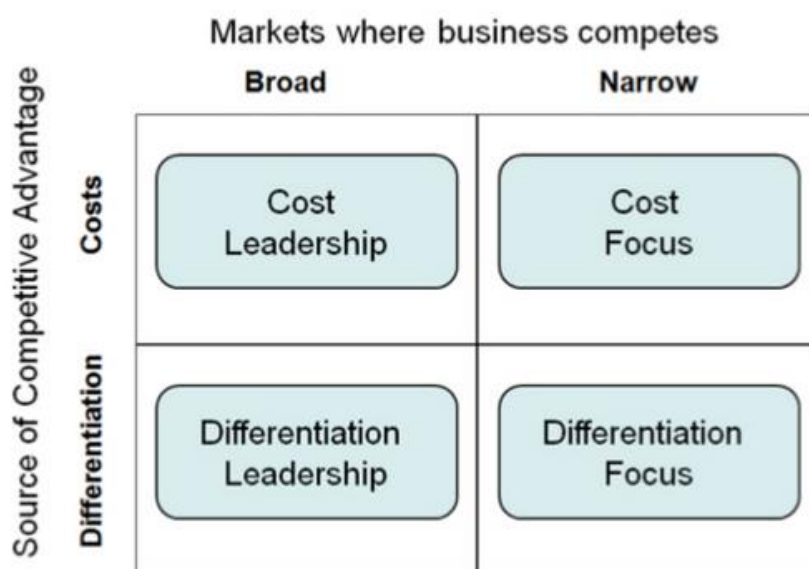


Diagram 5.1 – Porter's Generic Strategies

The results from the TOWS analysis have identified finance and management processes as being big factors in establishing an effective strategy. Focusing on recruitment and retention in a market that has virtually no direct competitors leaves us in a position where business competition is narrow, and the source of our competitive advantage is cost giving us a Cost Focus strategy. Porters matrix provides us with the ability to choose the way we compete by using the type of competitive advantage linked to the target market as the key determinants (Akan et al, 2006).

5.2 – High Performance Work Systems (HPWS)

As the proposed strategy should be cost focus creating an internal process with our current staff in an already established organisation would be the most cost-effective way of doing this. It is important to identify that employee recruitment and retention are two separate areas of concern that are related but not directly connected per se. As we have agreed to adopt SHRM as our target conduit, building a new HRM structure will not only give us the results we are looking for but also produce an integrated platform that will incorporate other organisational tasks therefor producing an improved service creating a competitive advantage as an added bonus. A proven way of creating and maintaining a fully integrated HRM structure is to utilise a High Performance Work System (HPWS).

A HPWS is are a collection of distinct but related Human Resource practices geared towards enhancing employee productivity and effectiveness. In order for a HPWS to be successful the related parts need to be compatible. This means the HR processes for recruitment must be aligned with the other elements of the HPWS therefore allowing us to develop a more time and cost-effective system that is a solution for both recruitment and retention. Patel et al (2013)

described HPWS as a process used to “describe a system of horizontally and vertically aligned employment practices designed to affect both the ability and the motivation of employees”.

5.3 – David Ulrich’s Model of HR Roles

Developing the understanding of a revised HR operations utilising a HPWS is a granular task that needs care, attention and understanding. To provide a greater understanding about this step within our strategy creating process I have opted to use the David Ulrich (1997) Model of HR Roles.



Diagram 5.2 – David Ulrich’s Model of HR Roles

The core focus at this time is the top section that looks at the future and/or strategic focus as this is the stage we are at currently and therefore need to adopt. The Strategic Partner function is the area that will manage the changes needed to create the right internal processes. The Change Agent is the function that communicates these changes and provides understanding and advice internal to the organisation. By creating a structure to carry out the tasks needed

we have started to build a strategic process which will develop by utilising the processes roles down the left hand side of the HR model. Once the processes have been clarified they will be brought into operating by establishing the practical operations on a day to day basis. All of these processes in turn will put into practice the actions required to create a fully functional HPWS within the HR function providing the platforms needed to boost the effectiveness of the recruitment process and employee retention in turn.

6 – Recommendations

This section will consist of my recommendations on how the objectives cited can be achieved;

6.1 – Human Resource Alignment

As stated throughout this document a plan to develop the HR practices we currently have through all areas is key in creating an environment that effectively manages the employment process and subsequently the retention practices also. An organisational HRM design around Ulrich's renowned HR Model would provide us with a clear platform to work from. Introducing a HPWS to this HRM change will provide a cohesive framework of HR practices that would fully integrate these two problem areas. In addition I would suggest the use of the Change Kaleidoscope to manage this change as it is quite effective when used in an already established environment. This analysis model would help in identifying the operations areas that require change to implement the HR strategic goals we have identified.

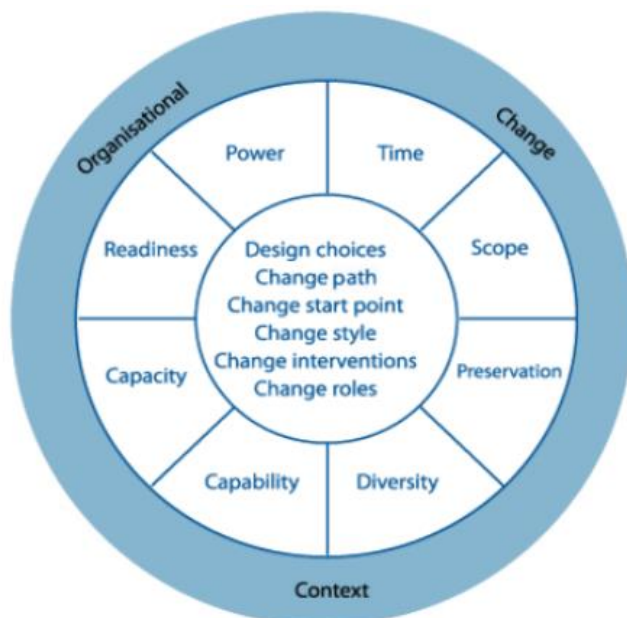


Diagram 6.1 – The Change Kaleidoscope

6.2 – Incentivised Retention

Robinson et al (2004) explain that an organisation has the main responsibility of developing a two-way relationship between employer and employee. As there has been a cap on NHS pay rises over the recent years it has been good news that this has now been lifted. With that in mind providing additional incentives to drive productivity and morale would be beneficial in the long term. It is important to note that HR practices on their own are not adequate to provide engagement but must be supported by adequate compensation policies (Gerhart & Rynes, 2003). My recommendation to counter this is to provide one of two options of incentivised retention techniques (Vaiman & Vance, 2008);

1. Extrinsic; generally monetary rewards (e.g pay increases, bonuses)
2. Intrinsic; non-monetary rewards such as additional holidays and paid training

6.3 – Increased Job Satisfaction

Such incentives give renewed validation of a person's hard work and drives them to do better to keep that recognition going. Agolla & Ongori (2009) conducted a study that found that a major influence in an employee's turnover intentions could be directly linked to career plateau. A case study by Hackman & Lawler (1971) cited that the main reasons for workers calling in sick or leaving was a lack of job satisfaction. Lee-Kelley et al (2009) back up these findings through a suggestion that a major predictor for turnover intentions is a lack of job satisfaction. This can be increased by improving employee engagement through tasks such as quarterly reviews, team awards and individual awards over regular periods.

Processes should be put in place to train team managers on how to engage with staff members to make sure everyone feels inclusive and a necessary part of the team. The feeling of the team can be measured using the Maslow model of hierarchical needs. By adopting this scale

performance can be measured on how well the employee engagement is doing and how, if any, changes can be made to the process in order to make it more affective.

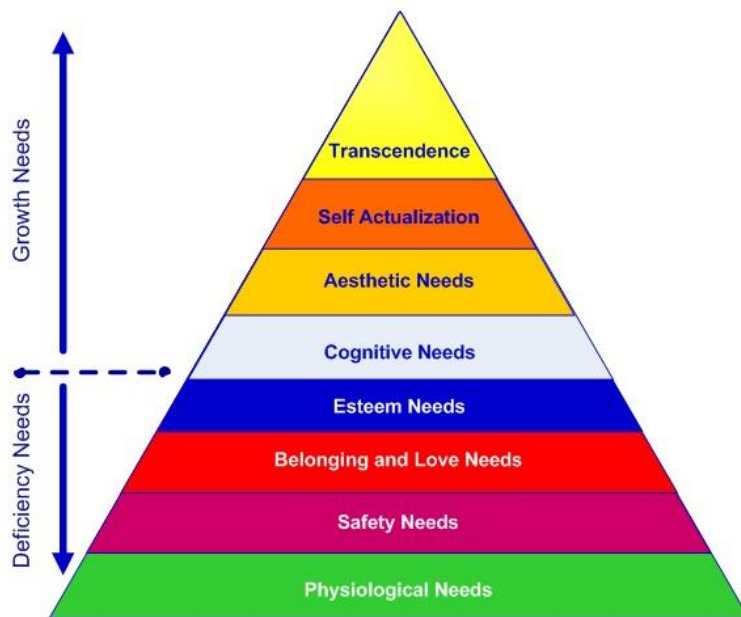


Diagram 6.2 – Maslow Hierarchical

The model focuses on the emotional requirements of an individual in order of sustained personal improvement. The diagram is usually shown as a pyramid with the neediest of emotions at the base of the pyramid (Steere, 1998). I would suggest interval questionnaires quarterly right after personal development reviews so any changes can be tracked over time measuring the data collected to general behaviour and work output.

7 – Conclusion

It's clear that changes are required in order to keep the NHS sustainable in an ever increasing UK population. We can see that recruitment for frontline staff has become a major problem coupled with the current political uncertainty of Brexit has caused the economy to stagnate. The consistent NHS pay freeze ordered as part of the governments austerity measures has diminished employee morale right across the board. This has seen some NHS trusts fail miserably due to poor team performances and a lack of management accountability. These kinds of poor headlines and weakened morale have seen the numbers of employees leaving the NHS increase and recruitment numbers drop in frontline staff.

The lack of financing has meant competition for skilled labour with the private and global sector, both, has pushed the NHS further behind. Due to financial restrictions, adopting a cost-effective strategy that utilised an already existing set of processes has enabled a route to develop a strategic method to counter the problems identified. The STHK NHS trust is no different than any other NHS trust so adopting an internal approach has meant the solution to the recruitment and retention problems is antonymous. This autonomy means that an individual approach can be taken and this, for me, lies well within the capabilities of Human Resources as I have discussed in this paper.

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