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Investors in People assessment records – BHSCT Finance and pension administration

I am requesting clarification and supporting documentation concerning the Investors in People (IIP) accreditation held by Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT), particularly the 2016 Bronze and 2019 Silver assessments.

BHSCT's published material states that it achieved IIP recognition in 2010, retained accreditation in 2013, achieved Bronze in 2016 and Silver in 2019. The 2019 assessment was described as an organisation-wide assessment involving staff surveys, staff meetings and assessment across Trust directorates.

I am seeking to establish precisely what was assessed and what evidence supported the accreditation.

In particular, please provide or identify:

1. The Terms of Reference and scope for the 2016 Bronze and 2019 Silver IIP assessments.

Response - The Trust does not hold a standalone Terms of Reference document for either assessment.

2. The full assessment reports and recommendations arising from those assessments.

Response - We are unable to release the information you have requested as it is exempt from disclosure under Section 41 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (information provided in confidence), which pertains to the confidentiality of information provided by a third party.

The Investors in People Assessment is a confidential process, disclosure of the responses provided on this basis would be in breach of the duty of confidentiality that is owed to the individuals who responded. As such, we are withholding this data in accordance with Section 41 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

3. The directorates, departments and functions included within the assessment evidence.

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Response - The assessments were conducted on an organisation-wide basis and included all Trust directorates including:

- Adult Social and Primary Care
- Children's Community Services
- Nursing and User Experience
- Specialist Hospitals and Women's Health
- Surgery and Specialist Services
- Unscheduled Care
- Chief Executive
- Corporate Communications
- Finance
- Human Resources
- Medical and
- Performance, Planning and Information Directorates

4. Confirmation of whether the Finance Directorate was within the assessed scope.

Response - The Finance Directorate formed part of the organisation-wide Investors in People assessment process and was included within the directorate structure used for survey analysis, evidence gathering and assessment activities.

5. Confirmation of whether pension administration, pension records, payroll or related financial administration fell within the scope of either assessment.

Response - The Investors in People assessments were organisational assessments focused on leadership, people management, staff engagement, organisational culture, communication, learning and development, performance management and continuous improvement. The Finance Directorate was included within the scope of the assessments; however, payroll and pension administration services for Health and Social Care organisations in Northern Ireland are delivered on a regional basis by the Business Services Organisation (BSO). BSO Payroll Shared Services provides a regional payroll service across HSC organisations, while the HSC Pension Service, operated by BSO, administers the HSC Pension Scheme and provides pension services to current, deferred and retired scheme members.

Therefore, whilst the Investors in People assessments considered people management, leadership and organisational culture across BHSC, the assessment reports do not include any specific examination, audit or validation of pension administration, pension records, pension calculations, pension audit trails, payroll processing or pension record accuracy. These functions are administered through regional BSO services rather than being operationally managed by the Trust.

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6. The methodology used to determine which services, departments, managers and staff were included in the assessment.

Response - The assessment was conducted on an organisation-wide basis using the Trust's directorate structure. Services and departments were included through directorate-level survey analysis, presentations, documentary submissions, and assessment activity. Each Directorate provided evidence relating to its remit, staffing, priorities, and performance.

Managers participated through executive briefings, directorate presentations, evidence sessions and interviews, with assessment activity examining leadership, management practice and staff engagement across the organisation.

All staff were invited to participate in the online assessment survey. Staff selected for interviews were chosen through a sampling exercise designed to reflect the diversity of the Trust's workforce, professions, services, and organisational structure.

The operational methodology was as follows;

Step 1 	A proposal was submitted in August 2018 and approved in September 2018. The Lead Practitioner is supported by a team of three assessors. Each assessor has been allocated to specific directorates.
Step 2 	Planning meetings were hosted to discuss the logistics and timings for launching the online assessment tool and arrangements for the site visit. This included the sampling exercise for staff engagement; facilitated internally due to the volume of information. A Data Access Agreement was completed and returned on 8th October 2018.
Step 4 	The online assessment survey was deployed between 5th November and 30th November 2018; custom grouped to reflect the Trust's directorate structure (corporate directorates are considered as one group). This was issued to all staff via combined deployment methods of email and open access links. A 7.0% participation rate was required for the Trust overall to ensure a statistically valid sample; an overall response rate of 20% was achieved (4150 people).
	A Context Briefing will be hosted on 20th February 2019, to provide the assessment team with an understanding of the Trust's operating environment, challenges, strategies, plans and future ambitions.
Step 5 	A series of presentations will be arranged for each directorate to update the assessment team on priorities, strategies, actions and achievements. A standardised structure has been proposed for these sessions; which will take place week-commencing 25th February 2019.
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	The on-site assessment will be conducted (46 days) to engage with approximately 2.0% of staffing across the Trust (440 people). Individuals have been chosen to reflect the diversity of the Trust's staffing complement and operating structure. The site visit will be co-ordinated to reflect the directorate structure, with assessors aligned to specific areas.
Step 7 	Summary reports will be prepared for each directorate to present the data, evidence collected, performance levels and recommendations for improvement. One combined report will be presented for the corporate directorates grouping.
Step 8 	A comprehensive report will be produced to provide a documented record of how the Trust has performed against the indicators within the framework; and will set out a series of recommendations to support action planning over a 3-year timeframe. The Trust's level of accreditation will be confirmed (Standard, Silver, Gold or Platinum).
Step 9 	Following receipt of reports, a series of follow-up meetings will be arranged to talk through the assessment results, action plan and next steps in each directorate.
Step 10 	At Trust-level, review visits will be conducted at 12 and 24-months following accreditation.

7. The evidence supplied by BHSCT to IIP concerning accountability, management, communication, record keeping, organisational learning and continuous improvement.

Response - The information held by the Trust relating to evidence submitted to Investors in People is contained within the enclosed 2016 and 2019 Storyboards and supporting assessment documentation. These records include evidence relating to leadership and accountability arrangements, management processes, staff communications, organisational learning, performance management and continuous improvement activities.

Please see 37947 Attachment 1 – IIP Storyboard – Investing in our People 2016 and 37947 Attachment 2 – IIP Storyboard - Re accreditation 2019.

8. The recommendations made by IIP and the evidence of BHSCT's implementation of those recommendations.

Response - The recommendations arising from the 2016 Bronze and 2019 Silver Investors in People assessments are contained within the enclosed assessment reports as provided under question 2. Evidence of the Trust's organisational development activity in response to assessment findings can be found within the enclosed Investors in People Storyboards as provided under question 7. In addition, the Trust's progression from Bronze accreditation in 2016 to Silver accreditation in 2019 demonstrates organisational improvement against the Investors in People framework.

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While the Trust no longer participates in the Investors in People accreditation programme, information regarding more recent organisational improvement, quality assurance and continuous improvement activity can be found within the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Annual Quality Report 2024-2025, available at:

https://belfasttrust.hscni.net/wpfd_file/annual-quality-report-2024-2025/

9. The cost to BHSCCT/public funds of the 2010, 2013, 2016 and 2019 IIP assessments.

Response - The transaction information below represents all direct payments made to Investors in People, as extracted from the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust's financial general ledger system.

The transactions recorded are as follows:

- 2017: £1,476
- 2019: £89,760
- 2021: £3,840

Total payments: £95,076

Following searches of the records currently held by the organisation, we are unable to identify any records relating to Investors in People assessment costs for 2010 or 2013. We cannot determine from the records available whether no payments were made in those years or whether any records that may previously have existed are no longer held.

10. The identity of the organisation/assessors undertaking each assessment and the contractual basis on which they were appointed.

Response - The assessors were employees of Investors in People (CIC). Investors in People is the assessment body. Investors in People was appointed through a direct award arrangement, as the accreditation is proprietary and can only be awarded through Investors in People and their licensed accreditation arrangements.

11. Any subsequent review, reassessment or follow-up documentation concerning the 2019 Silver accreditation.

Response - Following the award of Silver accreditation in 2019 and due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Trust has not pursued re-accreditation.