**Narrative (622 words)**

**A Summer of Connecting. Refreshing The Leeds Way.**

**Our aim**

To bring together the collective knowledge, experience and commitment of our people to review and refresh The Leeds Way, so that in a new and challenging environment it continues to be immediately relevant and useful to us all. In doing so, we intend to recommit to a shared sense of purpose and direction.

**Background**

It is nine years since we collaborated as a whole organisation to create The Leeds Way. At that time, we faced fundamental challenges in some key areas. The evidence was clear that the more engaged people are in their work, the more they can achieve, resulting in better outcomes for patients and the organisation. So, we launched a pioneering 10-month engagement initiative to co-create a new shared agreement of the Trust’s purpose, vision, goals, values and behaviours.

By involving as many people in the process as we possibly could, the process itself created, and also generated, commitment to our vision to be the best for specialist and integrated care.

Trust-wide engagement enabled The Leeds Way values to emerge through consensus: an agreement to be patient centred, fair, collaborative, accountable, and empowered in all that we do.

The Leeds Way defined and set the expectations for how people ought to work together, it embedded our values and vision, supporting people to provide the best possible care and outcomes for patients and each other. It was an incredible achievement, much admired throughout the NHS and a real example of best practice in staff engagement.

**Current challenges**

The COVID pandemic means the NHS has experienced an unprecedented challenge, the scale and significance of which has never been seen before. You all responded amazingly and showed tremendous compassion and courage, caring for our patients and each other through this difficult time.

The context is entirely different as we are coming out of the pandemic as a ‘good’ rated organisation with a strong track record of achievement. We have some of the best people doing great work but as a whole service, the NHS is facing a very difficult time.

In Leeds we face challenges that include, delivering a level of elective activity that achieves recovery from the effects of the pandemic; managing a significant challenge with too many patients who have ‘no reason to reside’, a difficult financial situation, and a tired and depleted workforce.

It is this new operating context which defines the challenges ahead that we now need to address.

**Connecting to the wisdom of the crowd**

Based on what we know, the best way to meet our challenges is to engage people in creating an environment and a culture in which they can use their own experience and knowledge, combining these qualities with the responsiveness and resourcefulness deployed by our teams throughout the pandemic. We can also use this as a new opportunity to engage with those people who have joined the Trust since the development of The Leeds Way and enable them to help to shape our culture.

We have already proved that the right way to do this is to engage with colleagues and listen to their views and ideas for how together we can make things happen. This will help us to commit to a shared sense of belonging, in a Trust that is a consistently inspiring and supportive place to work, with a re-energised sense of shared purpose and direction.

The Leeds Way has been fundamental to what we have achieved in recent years, becoming one of the leading Trusts for acute provider care, research and innovation. It has been a vital handrail in guiding our work. It’s now time to reconnect our people and reinvigorate the process that brought us to this point, taking a collaborative approach to refreshing The Leeds Way.