INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO RECOGNITION IN THE NHS

We have spoken to several trusts, including those that make up the ambulance service, to find out about what innovative approaches to recognition are currently being championed across the NHS.

Take a look at the examples below to give you some ideas about how you could recognise the achievements of your staff.

East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS)

In acknowledgement of the situations in which their staff must operate in and the courage shown by members of the workforce under extreme circumstances, frontline staff at EMAS are eligible and supported by the organisation to be awarded the George Cross. The George Cross is the second highest award of the UK honours system and is typically presented during a dinner ceremony on St George’s day.

EMAS also run an awards scheme specific to the trust, where both frontline and office staff who have delivered work of the highest standard, in line with the values of the organisation, receive a commendation from the chief executive; this is presented to staff in the form of a certificate at an awards event.

South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS)

When designing their recognition schemes, the HR team at SCAS included a variety of approaches to communicating with staff. They produce weekly newsletters, a quarterly video message from the chief executive and an annual Christmas video message from the board. The trust also uses ‘thank you’ postcards and every member of staff who receives formal praise from a patient or member of the public receives a personal letter of thanks from the chief executive.

Based on staff feedback that there was a lack of visibility of senior management across the workforce, SCAS have implemented regular walk around sessions by the senior management team. This provides a further mechanism for informal recognition and commendation.
North East Ambulance Service (NEAS)

NEAS has a recognition and reward strategy that is underpinned by the organisation’s values. Training is provided to managers on the importance of recognition and reward and they are in the process of setting up a trust-wide working group to engage with staff about how they would like to be recognised for their work. NEAS are also trialling a peer recognition scheme involving ‘thank you’ postcards and emails.

Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust

Staff across the trust can reward their colleagues for a job well done by giving them a special voucher, a ‘terrific ticket’, which they can exchange for a free coffee in one of the trust’s catering outlets. While the end goal is a free coffee, the trust has found that many recipients don’t cash in their tickets, instead choosing to pin them on their noticeboards and share their success on social media.

Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust

This trust has a successful ‘thanks a bunch’ recognition scheme whereby the winners are presented with a bunch of flowers and certificate from one of the directors, and runners up receive a personalised letter from the chief executive. Monthly nominations are judged by a panel which includes colleagues from staff side and the senior leadership team. The programme has been judged to have worked well, as it demonstrates the genuine interest of the senior team and increases their visibility amongst the wider workforce.

Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

A novel approach to recognition was taken at this trust when they recorded a special video message of thanks to staff from a pop star that was played at annual staff awards ceremony.

Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust

In partnership with local media and transport service, the trust has designed an awards ceremony with the winner having their name on one of the city’s trams. Patients and staff are invited to nominate a nurse or midwife who has made a difference to them and the scheme is one way which helps to redress the balance of positive verses negative media attention surrounding the nursing workforce.