Organisational profile

- East Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust (EMAS) provides emergency and urgent care, patient transport, call handling and clinical assessment services for 4.8 million people covering approximately 6425 square miles across Derbyshire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire and Rutland, and Northamptonshire.

- It employs around 3300 staff and has over 70 facilities including ambulance stations, emergency operation centres, education and training facilities, support team offices and fleet workshops.

- Its largest staff group is made up of emergency 999 crews who operate a fleet of over 550 vehicles, including emergency ambulances, fast response cars, specialized vehicles and patient transport.

- Every day the trust receives over 2500 calls from members of the public ringing 999.
Summary

A consistent theme through staff surveys indicated the Trust needed to focus on improving staff engagement, including opportunities for staff involvement and participation, and health and wellbeing support.

The trust has seen a steady increase in its staff engagement score through the NHS Staff Survey over recent years.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>3.46</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>3.39</td>
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<td>2014</td>
<td>3.28</td>
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The vision of the trust is to deliver outstanding sustainable emergency and urgent care across the communities of the East Midlands.

Its values, developed in partnership with staff, underpin everything it does. These values are:

- Respect
- Integrity
- Contribution
- Teamwork
- Competence.

These values help the trust to provide patients with access to high quality clinical care and services to ensure the best experience and clinical outcomes. EMAS believes that it is staff who make the trust what it is.

EMAS recognises the importance of staff engagement and the key role this plays in delivering essential standards of quality and safety, developing a positive organisational culture and working environment. It has a range of mechanisms in place to help share information, to involve staff and to enable engagement and feedback, these include:

- a staff opinion survey and friends and family tests which influence development and improvement
- weekly e-news bulletins from the chief executive with key messages and a facility for staff to provide views
- members of the board walking the floor to engage, listen and encourage staff learning, and observing shifts to understand the challenges faced by front line staff
- staff events such as retirement, long service and recognition awards
- staff stories are presented to the workforce committee, which provides an opportunity to share experiences and support learning
- an integrated communications and engagement plan to engage staff in strategic priorities and conversations in response to themes through staff opinion surveys.
- divisional newsletters from general managers
- face-to-face meetings held by divisional senior leadership teams
- meetings with trade unions every fortnight and a monthly partnership forum to ensure engagement with trade union representatives on behalf of their members
- BAME, LGBT, disability, and carers networks.

Levels of staff engagement are measured regularly through the national NHS Staff Survey. Ad-hoc temperature checks are also taken through the friends and family test.

The EMAS staff engagement score has experienced a year-on-year improvement, measured through the NHS Staff Survey. While a positive indicator, EMAS recognises that feedback about opportunities for involvement, participation, engagement and staff health and wellbeing, suggests there is room for improvement.
What the trust is doing

Staff support programme
A comprehensive staff support programme was developed in 2015/16 and led by chaplain Reverend Kevin Charles. A trained paramedic himself, Kevin spent many years operating as a front-line clinician and has a good understanding of the challenges faced by staff and the value of colleague support. Trade unions and staff representation helped to shape the programme, with the chief executive being the senior responsible officer for the programme, demonstrating strong and visible leadership.

Two new initiatives in the form of a peer to peer (P2P) service and pastoral care workers (PCW) were launched to provide support to staff who were struggling with their mental wellbeing. A P2P member is not a counsellor, but is trained in support techniques, signposting colleagues to other support services. A PCW has been trained in the same way as a P2P, but with the additional responsibility of supporting the chaplain with spiritual support.

The P2P and PCW programmes were founded upon the principle that colleagues are best placed to provide a listening ear and provide support to each other through a shared experience of the job. In addition, the trauma risk management (TRiM) support service for staff was introduced. Staff identified as being at risk of post-traumatic stress disorder received an invitation to meet and establish how they are coping. The service is repeated a month later to monitor changes and ensure that staff are given the right support at the right time.

Serving your community recruitment campaign
EMAS aims to have a diverse workforce that appropriately reflects its communities. To help attract more applicants to frontline roles, a new recruitment campaign was launched. It was aligned to the equality and diversity strategy and workforce plan and developed using feedback from staff. An important part of the recruitment strategy focused on encouraging applicants from minority ethnic groups, currently under-represented among operational staff.

As part of the campaign, three existing operational staff acted as ambassadors, demonstrating that they are real people, from and serving the community. The communications and engagement team led the development of campaign materials, including identifying and encouraging staff representatives and colleagues to become ambassadors.

The ambassadors worked alongside representatives from recruitment, the equality manager, an external media partner and the communications and engagement team to create new campaign materials. These materials included:

- a website featuring a variety of testimonials from the newly appointed ambassadors
- videos featuring ambassadors, which reflect the varied nature of roles, the workplace culture and features likely to attract applicants from diverse communities
- posters, leaflets and roller banners
- online advertising through EMAS website and social media channels
- engagement days targeting under-represented groups
- communications and engagement strategy.

Staff feedback influenced the development of a new communications and engagement strategy. Key objectives of the strategy include:

- improving links between key teams to reduce silo working
- incorporating the staff engagement and communications and engagement strategies
- putting performance into perspective (all areas, not just national performance standards) and building organisational character
- listening and educating.
As a result of staff feedback a new approach to staff communications and engagement was implemented.

Staff communication and engagement key objectives.

1. To improve opportunities for management to engage with frontline staff and have meaningful dialogue in a way that’s convenient for staff, not just the organisation.
2. To further reduce silo working and the amount of information shared at the same time, allowing a focus on priority areas.
3. To encourage more involvement in the co-design of plans, coming up with solutions to challenges together.
4. To have a consistent approach across the region so all staff hear the same message and have the same opportunity to be involved with #TeamEMAS!

A new approach was trialled in October 2017 which involved members of the executive team, managers, communications team, HR, the OD team and local ambulance operations managers, engaging with staff locally through a mobile conversation café. Set in an informal environment, individuals were able to enjoy a cup of tea and a chat. It also allowed managers the opportunity to promote the staff survey and even offer flu vaccinations. The café was a great opportunity for local staff engagement and feedback, and the trust will be running it again.

Outcomes and next steps

EMAS has seen a steady increase in its staff engagement score through the NHS Staff Survey over recent years:
- 2016 - 3.46
- 2015 - 3.39
- 2014 - 3.28.

Staff support programme outcomes
- The best practice model has been shared with other NHS organisations in the ambulance sector, as well as the wider NHS and other emergency services.
- Currently 192 staff are trained as P2P or PCWs, with more staff submitting expressions of interest.
- During 2016/17 over 3000 contacts were received to the P2P and PCW schemes.
- The scheme continues to grow with the chaplain and volunteers providing ongoing support to colleagues.

Staff have reacted well to the interventions made by the trust. Comments have included:
- “P2P and PCW are going from strength to strength and helping quite a lot of people. It’s a valuable resource to continue building on.”
- “The P2P is an amazing tool, it really utilises the people to people skills that makes the team!”
- “I would urge anyone who feels the same or similar to pick up the phone and contact a friend, a P2P or a PCW and talk about it. There is no shame at all in saying that you need help, or that you need to be emotional or even just to have a rant. From someone who has used the service, it works.”

Serving Your Community Campaign outcomes
It’s still early days, but initial evaluation shows the campaign is making a positive impact and more colleagues are becoming engaged and volunteering their support.
- There has been around a 30 per cent increase in job applications received since the launch of the campaign, helping achieve its funded frontline establishment target.
- Staff turnover rate has reduced by 2 per cent in a year.
- Staff have continued to engage in the campaign volunteering to support community events, recruitment fairs, and act as ambassadors.
- Being awarded best practice in equality and diversity through the National Ambulance Leadership Forum in 2017 for the ‘Serving Your Community’ campaign.
Top tips

- Listen to your staff, involve staff and trade unions when designing and setting up initiatives.
- Go out and meet staff, provide an opportunity to talk about things face to face.
- Simple things like listening, a few minutes to talk and enjoy a cuppa will help make staff feel more valued, and that they are being heard.

Contact

For more information on how to become involved in our work:
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NHS Employers