RESPECTING EACH OTHER
EAST KENT HOSPITALS UNIVERSITY NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE

- Five sites
- 7,500 staff
- Turnover rate - December 2015: 14.7 per cent  December 2016:  12.8 per cent
- Serves a population of 759,000

THE SUMMARY

East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust (EKHUFT) has turned around an issue of workplace bullying through a staff campaign called Respecting Each Other. In 2014, the trust was placed into special measures following a CQC inspection which reported a culture of bullying within the organisation. The trust launched their campaign in 2015, and in 2016 the CQC recommended it come out of special measures following continuous improvement across the board, including the culture of the organisation, which ‘continues on a trajectory of improvement’. In just one year, the number of staff that reported experiencing bullying or harassment through the national staff survey reduced by six per cent.
THE CAMPAIGN

The trust ran staff focus groups in February 2015, where a common theme from staff was the need to respect each other. The Respecting Each Other campaign was born from this shared value, driven by a small steering group of HR, managers and union colleagues.

The group identified the need to:

- clearly set out staff rights and responsibilities in building a new culture in which to work.
- give staff permission to raise issues of bullying or harassment.
- demonstrate to staff that the trust was listening and would take action.

To achieve this, the group:

- developed a Staff Charter, which outlined rights and responsibilities for all staff and gave advice around giving feedback to colleagues.
- launched the Charter in Respecting Each Other week, where roadshows were held across the trusts five hospital sites to allow staff to make a physical handprint pledge to sign up to the Charter.
- created a video to highlight some of the problems that staff were raising in the organisation, reassure staff of the trust board’s commitment to change, and ask ‘what’s it like to be on the receiving end of me?’ The video featured many staff raising their hands as the sign of the Respecting Each Other pledge. The video was shown in team meetings, formed part of staff inductions and was shown before training courses.
- developed a new managers’ guide and a short staff handbook to outline the steps to take if staff had any concerns around working relationships. This starts with asking staff to look at their own behaviours. These leaflets, copies of the Staff Charter, Respecting Each Other badges and sweets were handed out at the roadshows.
- recruited 45 workplace contacts to take part in an intensive one-day training course, covering listening skills, bullying, and how to coach and signpost staff. The workplace contacts are proactive in visiting wards and departments to offer support.
launched a dedicated, confidential bullying and harassment telephone counselling service for all staff. This service is provided by an external provider and 46 staff have used it to date. More staff use the workplace contacts instead of the telephone line which shows the value of face to face contact. The telephone line is still available for staff to use should they need it and the trust pays for this on an ad-hoc basis.

- developed an email etiquette guide, and a meeting code of conduct, following feedback from the launch roadshows. Posters asking 'what does it feel like to be on the receiving end of me?' were placed in meeting rooms.

**Supporting managers**

Policy and concerns workshops were created for managers to attend which gave an opportunity for managers to discuss any issues with the human resources team. Fifty one managers attended these one-hour workshops. Attendees have found the sessions beneficial and the short duration of the workshop contributed to its success, as staff have more chance of breaking away from a busy schedule.

In addition to this, respect workshops were run for all colleagues to attend and invitations were sent to staff in areas highlighted on the staff survey as hotspot concerns. Around 200 colleagues have attended these sessions which are also one hour long. These workshops are now included on the learning and development portal and are open for all colleagues to book themselves on to. This year workshops will evolve into resilience and mindfulness sessions.

A two-day ACAS mediation training course was offered to 25 staff (band 7/8a upwards) to enable them to become Workplace Mediators. Meditation is an informal approach to help employees work together to find a solution to a disagreement. In running this training, EKUHFT hopes that issues will be resolved informally before they need to become a formal grievance. Around 20 staff have used the mediation service.

**THE CHALLENGES**

Managers raised that they needed extra support when launching the campaign. A guide was created for managers with information about the campaign to enable them to be confident in dealing with any conversations or questions.
Very practically, some parts of the trust had issues with technology and couldn’t view the campaign video. To address this, meeting rooms were booked for teams so they could watch it.

OUTCOMES

Before the campaign, the staff survey showed 45 per cent of staff would recommend the trust as a place to work. After the campaign, 58 per cent of staff answered they would recommend it. To date, the campaign video has been viewed by over 4,000 staff and in 2016, it was updated with examples of how things have improved.

The number of staff that reported bullying and harassment in the national NHS staff survey reduced by 6 per cent in 2016 from 42 per cent in 2015. Whilst this is still high, it shows the impact of the Respecting Each Other programme and encourages the team to keep improving.

In 2016, the board of the trust took the decision to add ‘respect’ to the trusts’ values statement, reflecting the importance of the campaign and embedding respect in every area of the trusts’ operations.

TOP TIPS

- Keep the focus on the campaign and the momentum going
- Make it part of something bigger so the message is not forgotten
- Embed it into your culture so staff see that respect is here to stay
- Have dedicated comms support to help drive your message forward

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information please contact Jane Waters janewaters2@nhs.net or Claire Berry claireberry4@nhs.net or email healthandwellbeing@nhsemployers.org