Overview

In 2017 West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust was in the bottom quarter for results for the NHS Staff Survey with a response rate of 41 per cent. In light of this, the trust set about addressing the lack of engagement by developing a campaign called the Big 5. Focussing on five key areas from staff survey results and a series of activities, the initiative has helped move the trust from the bottom third to the top 20 per cent of organisations in NHS Staff Survey ratings.

Key outcomes

- The trust moved from the bottom third to the top 20 per cent in NHS Staff Survey ratings.
- It scored in the top 20 per cent for over half of the questions as compared to other acute trusts surveyed by their provider.
- Staff turnover reduced from 17.1 per cent in June 2017 to 14.9 per cent in Jan 2019.
- A notable reduction in band 5 nurse turnover from 28.9 per cent in May 2017 to 17 per cent in June 2019 and currently 15.5 per cent.
- In August 2019, the trust celebrated 0 per cent vacancies for Band 5 nurses on adult inpatient wards.

The challenge

West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust faced resistance from staff in completing the annual NHS Staff Survey, and there was a general belief that feedback would not lead to any positive change. This was due in part to the feeling that feedback from 2016 had not led to any significant improvement.

There was also a lack of confidence in the divisional action plans being set with staff feeling they were overcomplicated and didn’t align to the outcomes of the survey but more to day to day management issues.
A change in approach and more impactful way of addressing survey feedback was needed.

**What the organisation did**

In order to improve staff motivation, satisfaction and organisational engagement, the trust concentrated on a number of influential factors. Senior leaders wanted colleagues to know they were listening, addressing concerns and demonstrating that actions taken related directly to staff feedback.

Five key corporate actions that would impact the whole organisation and address key feedback and findings were identified. Known as the Big 5 campaign, each theme was based around insights from the staff survey and promoted for a month at a time.

Getting the right stakeholder engagement from the start was integral to the success of the project. Key to this was establishing a close working relationship with the communications department, who would play a significant role in bringing the Big 5 campaign to life by creating a strong, recognisable brand and tone of voice to successfully promote each campaign.

On top of this, divisions were also asked to come up with their own Big 5 themes relating to local results and areas requiring improvement. Progress looking at both the trust as a whole and local Big 5 efforts was reported via performance meetings, the joint consultative and patient committee, and staff experience committee.

Each month the trust focussed on different themes and activities, supported by executive directors and promoted under the Big 5 brand. On top of this, communications activities were created to promote the monthly themes supported by campaign slogans and hashtags across social media.

The Stars of Herts was a particularly successful initiative that is now being rolled out each year. Staff were encouraged to nominate people who had gone above and beyond in their roles. Stars of Herts provided an opportunity to recognise and reward a much greater number of employees compared to their normal awards programme by featuring one staff member a day for the month of July.

Individuals from across the trust were celebrated in social media posts with feedback highlighting that it provided a much-needed morale boost across the organisation.

**Results and benefits**

There were a number of clear notable outcomes following the trust’s implementation of the Big 5 project, including improved morale, engagement and retention of staff.

Moving from the bottom third to the top 20 per cent in NHS Staff Survey ratings. The trust was also successful at scoring in the top 20 per cent for over half of the questions as compared to other acute trusts surveyed by their provider.
There was also a significant reduction in staff turnover from 17.1 per cent in June 2017 to 14.9 per cent in Jan 2019. Most notably there was a large reduction in band 5 nurse turnover from 28.9 per cent in May 2017 to 17 per cent in June 2019 to the current rate of 15.5 per cent.

General nursing turnover has reduced from 17.3 per cent in June 2018 to 13.3 per cent in July 2019 impacting vacancy rates which moved from 12.5 per cent in July 2018 to 10.2 per cent in July 2019. In August 2019 the trust celebrated 0 per cent vacancies for Band 5 nurses on adult inpatient wards.

To build on this success, next steps for the trust include running the Big 5 campaign once again throughout the financial year 19-20.

Directors will continue to support the initiative and a focus will be placed on three to four clear actions for each theme to refine processes and improve impact. Actions will incorporate the patient experience and staff experience and campaign themes will include: *keep talking, protecting you, race for equality, we value you, and looking after you.*

**Takeaway tips**

1. Get buy in and support from the board early on.
2. Support your campaigns with a strong and consistent brand that enable you to communicate messages effectively across the organisation.
3. Engage the support of your communications team early on to help bring your campaigns to life.
4. Be clear at the outset what you want to achieve. Focus your efforts on a small number of areas that will have a positive impact on your results.

**Further information**

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