

Just and Learning Culture

Introduction

Bullying and harassment is a significant concern in the NHS with many implications for staff wellbeing, engagement, patient care and much more. The Long Term Plan recognises that this is not acceptable, and has committed to creating a culture where staff feel supported, valued and respected for what they do. The People Plan 2020/21 recognises one of the key drivers in achieving this lies in creating a culture of civility and respect, fostering a positive working environment and making the NHS the “best place to work”.

Context

‘Just and restorative culture’ concentrates on the culture and leadership elements of organisations and how they can support organisations to grow compassion in the workplace, modelled by leaders. It also emphasises working with partners such as local union representatives, Freedom to Speak Up Guardians, employee engagement leads and health and wellbeing leads.

The NHS has traditionally emphasised policies, procedures and training as the cornerstone of tackling bullying. Research is clear that enabling individuals to better raise their concerns can be effective to reduce the overall levels of bullying. Barriers to transparency including fear, blame and shame must be prevented. As an approach, Just and Learning Culture can be proactive and preventative. In the case of an adverse event, focus is on “what was responsible, not who is responsible”. The People Plan promotes and encourages all employers to adopt a Just and Learning Culture approach which is centred on the desire to create an environment where staff feel supported and empowered to have a voice to raise concerns without fear or shame and to learn when things do not go as expected, rather than feeling blamed.

Supporting resources

1. **Supporting our staff: a toolkit to promote cultures of civility and respect** - The People Plan 2020/21 commits to making this toolkit available to all trusts to support their work in promoting cultures of civility and respect by March 2021. It is an interactive and practical toolkit with a Civility and Respect Framework for trusts to be able to use. One of the four themes of this framework relate to Just and Restorative Culture. It is important in the context of all the feedback staff are being asked to give, they feel empowered to have the freedom to speak up, change the culture and build that positive working environment.

The full toolkit and a condensed version, along with a cost of bullying calculator and guidance for commissioning external consultants to review bullying and harassment in NHS organisations are available via the Social Partnership Forum [website](#).

2. **Just and Learning modules** - Mersey Care developed four online learning modules which is free for all of NHS to use. These modules are aimed to support local learning at practitioner, HR & Policy, Board & Leadership levels.

Module 1 – Introduction to ‘Just and Learning Culture’

Module 2 – HR and Policy in a ‘Just and Learning Culture’

NHS England and NHS Improvement



Module 3 – Board and Leadership in a ‘Just and Learning Culture’
Module 4- Respect and Civility Awareness

Link- <https://www.merseycare.nhs.uk/about-us/just-and-learning-culture-what-it-means-for-mersey-care>

3. **Restorative Just Culture** – It is a 4-day accredited programme by Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust and Northumbria University on the principle and practises of Restorative Just Culture, which is also part of the learning encouraged in the [NHS People Plan](#). This programme is for any professionals and practitioners who are involved in the management and welfare of employees and patients when an employee relations matter has arisen (including bullying / harassment/ grievances/ disciplinary etc) and/or an adverse event/incident has occurred. Such as local union reps, FTSUG, wellbeing leads, HR & OD leads, employee engagement leads etc.
Link - [Programme link -restorative-just-culture](#)

NHSEI’s Civility and Respect Programme

This national programme aims to support NHS organisations to develop a culture of civility and respect, by working with local trusts, regional bodies and national organisations. We seek to share evidence-based practice examples of interventions that have achieved success and improvement. Our programme actions are rooted in supporting the NHS HR & OD community in their journey of developing this culture by building a network of support, shared learning and evidence-based best practice.

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