

[AUGUST 2017]

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## IMPERIAL COLLEGE HEALTHCARE NHS TRUST

### A JOURNEY TO IMPROVED STAFF ENGAGEMENT - IN OUR SHOES

#### ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE

- Operating over five sites in North West London including St Mary's in Paddington, Western Eye Hospital in Marylebone, Hammersmith Hospital in White City, Queen Charlotte's and Chelsea Hospital in White City and Charing Cross Hospital in Hammersmith
- One of the largest trusts in the country with 11,000 members of staff
- Serves a population of around one million with a one billion pound budget
- Provides a range of services including A&E and urgent care, major London centre for trauma, cardiovascular, renal and women's and children's

#### SUMMARY

Staff engagement results from the 2015 annual staff survey came as a surprise to the trust, as they had dropped to a below average score of 3.71. A much lower figure than in previous years, and lower than the national average. This resulted in the trust being within the lowest 20 per cent in England.

They set out to develop plans to re-connect with staff, re-ignite passion for their work and understand the link between positive staff engagement and excellent organisational performance.

The trust identified that strategies such as quarterly engagement surveys, actions plans and questionnaires were not working. They needed to demonstrate to staff how they were acting and responding to data rather than just collecting it.

The trust understood that the new approach would support continuous improvement over the longer term by exploring a range of new initiatives and activities to motivate employees and provide a focus on staff engagement.

#### WHAT THEY'RE DOING

Staff engagement ownership became a priority and area of focus for senior leaders. They were given a shared engagement objective focusing on listening, inspiring and responding to the needs of staff over a longer term. In addition the people and organisation development directorate created a new people strategy, Better Health For Life Through Our People. This provided a clear vision and trust wide approach to staff engagement.

## Creating the Our Voice, Our Trust survey

The trust identified that existing methods of collecting feedback from staff failed to deliver the results they wanted and employees cited survey fatigue for the drop-in response rates.

A fresh energy was required to help with this process and engagement. The trust commissioned April Strategy to review their approaches and support the redesign of their internal engagement survey. Following consultations and discussions an annual survey was created to replace the quarterly pulse surveys.

Development of the survey involved a multi professional group of doctors, nurses, allied health professionals, HR colleagues and managers in corporate services. The survey questions were structured around five strategy drivers that had been identified through research into engagement at work, these are:

- direction and purpose
- contribution and control
- recognition and value
- connection and support
- safety and wellbeing.

The survey also introduced a new style of questions including; asking staff to identify the positive and negative emotions they experienced at work, and what would help to have more good days than bad at work.

The Our Voice survey launched between August and September 2016 to all staff. Dr Tracy Batten, then chief executive fully endorsed and provided a personal message to staff detailing the benefits of completing the survey.

The survey was promoted through:

- a headline banner on the staff intranet
- posters displayed around the trust, which included QR barcodes on so staff could scan and be directed to the survey questions
- leaflet drops at key meetings
- regular updates at the monthly CEO meetings
- screensavers which rotated weekly and featured links to internal communications magazines and newsletters
- a weekly scorecard, shared with divisional leads and HRBPs on response rates.

The survey achieved a 38 per cent response rate, which is approximately 3224 responses. This was the highest response rate the trust received for an engagement survey, which proved very positive.

They also showed an engagement score of 77 per cent, this represents the percentage of staff who would advocate working for the trust, are motivated to give their best and satisfied with their employment offer.

Key messages from the survey included:

- employees wanting more adequate staffing levels
- a request for more visibility and access to senior leaders
- a change in culture wanted in how staff are valued, appreciated and praised.

Positive feedback on the format and delivery of the survey was received, with staff finding the process a much more enjoyable experience overall. Principally they commented on the flow and style of the questions which they felt were much more accessible.

After completion of the survey, all the results were published on an electronic dashboard, provided by survey company Qualtrics. Managers could log in and review the results for the division and directorate and where possible to cost centre and ward level. Providing this level of local access created a real energy amongst team leaders who were keen to learn more about the experience of staff and their feelings about work.

After reviewing results, all directorates designed and implemented action plans in response to their findings. Examples of positive actions from managers included:

- security teams implementing a range of new safety measures and training
- improvements to the work environment including refurbishing staff rest areas
- a redesign of the personal development process relating to performance management
- development of new local on-boarding programmes within directorates
- action taken by the executive team to rotate their meetings and complete a walkabout on wards before their meetings.

### In Our Shoes listening initiative

To support the new annual survey and to help managers consider how they can help their staff to experience better days at work, the dialogic organisational development intervention In Our Shoes was rolled out. These are listening workshops allowing staff and managers to work together to discuss openly and honestly what it's like to work in their team. The sessions were driven by individual department managers but supported by In Our Shoes facilitators.

The three questions discussed:

- What would make this an ideal place to work?
- What does a good day at work look like?
- What does a bad day at work look like?

When participants finished sharing their stories the themes and ideas were captured to enable teams to think about how they can do more of the things that enable good days at work. A key aspect of In Our Shoes is using the It's Up To Me, Not Down To Them method, which encourages individual responsibility of all employees to help their colleagues to have a good day at work.

Currently, just under 1000 staff have participated the In Our Shoes workshop. Departments that have taken part in the workshops include:

- HIV and sexual health
- Cardiac
- Outpatients
- Imaging
- Renal
- Urgent care
- Corporate directorates including finance and estates.

## NATIONAL STAFF SURVEY 2016

In October 2016 staff completed the NHS Staff Survey. After being in the bottom 20 per cent of trusts in 2015, the 2016 results demonstrated the trust's engagement activities were having a positive impact as the trust climbed up two levels to an average rating of 3.8 for staff engagement which was the largest year-on-year increase of all acute trusts in London.

In addition there was a nine per cent increase in response rates compared with the 2015 survey, highlighting a renewed enthusiasm for engagement survey initiatives.

Positive results from the NHS Staff Survey included:

- staff feeling more supported in their roles with clear objectives
- high quality training, learning and development interventions
- staff reporting good communication between senior managers and staff.

Areas for development included:

- discrimination, bullying and harassment, and equal opportunities for career progression.

The turnaround is believed to be as a result of the new staff engagement approaches, but also acknowledgement that further work is needed to build on this success and continue their journey to sustained improvement.

## YOU SAID, WE DID

Following the release of the NHS Staff Survey results the trust developed a five minute 'You Said, We Did' video to document the positive actions taken by different departments following the staff survey.

MRI, maternity, HIV and IT departments along with others were filmed talking about the changes they have made as a result of Our Voice and the NHS Staff Survey results. This is a progressive move for the trust recognising their need to communicate outcomes of engagement projects in a coordinated way that sends out a strong message to staff that they put listening into action.

The video was shared as part of the launch of the Our Voice 2017 survey to demonstrate to staff how participating in surveys leads to positive action being undertaken.

## 2017 OUR VOICE SURVEY

In May and June 2017 the trust surveyed again using Our Voice, Our Trust. The results are currently being shared throughout the organisation, but early indication shows an increase in engagement from 77 to 80 per cent and the highest staff friends and family test scores since the test was introduced in 2013.

## 'ENGAGE' WORKSHOP AND TOOLKIT

In July 2017 the trust launched its new Engage workshop and toolkit. The two hour workshop supports managers to think about innovative ways to drive engagement in their teams using both theory and practice. In addition the trust has curated a toolkit of ideas and activities to improve engagement based on good practice already being used within the organisation ranging from lunch and learn sessions, team huddles, team mission statements, feedback models and improvement initiatives.


## Top tips from the trust

- ✓ Despite quick wins it's important to acknowledge that this is a journey to continuous improvement that requires ongoing focus.
- ✓ Provide supportive mechanisms to help promote positive changes from simple techniques like action plan templates and listening to you posters through to quality advice and guidance from the people and organisational development team.
- ✓ Rather than simply collating information, it is important to communicate the positive outcomes and actions from staff engagement processes to highlight the importance of putting listening into action through You Said, We Did campaign.
- ✓ Promote that staff engagement is everyone's responsibility. It's much more than providing survey results and leaving managers to get on with it. It's vital to work with managers and staff in a collaborative way to improve staff experience at a time when the retention of our workforce has never been a higher priority.

## Further information

For more information please contact Nathaniel Johnston, engagement and talent lead at Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust, [nathaniel.johnston1@nhs.net](mailto:nathaniel.johnston1@nhs.net)

## Contact us

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