Employee Engagement Strategy

April 2019 – March 2021
Introduction


2. Employee engagement is the lynch pin in developing strong, positive attitudes among staff towards their work and their organisation. Effective engagement ensures that staff will give their best when times are at their toughest. Given the changes within the NHS, improving staff engagement is needed now, more than ever.

3. Research literature suggests that high levels of staff engagement, leads to higher quality of care, improved patient satisfaction and lower patient mortality.

4. The 2018 National Staff Survey saw a 35% completion rate within the Trust. This needs to be much higher and staff engagement needs to be viewed as ‘core business’ going forward.

5. Improving employee engagement is not the product of one initiative. A strategy is needed to achieve significant improvements over time. This strategy has been written to drive engagement forwards for the next two years and support the embedding of a number of new initiatives within the Trust.

6. The strategy is clearly ‘provider centric’, but is fully aware that the plans identified within it, are capable of being aligned to support the Fylde Coast integration agenda.

7. It is vital that our Divisional leaders and their staff are involved and indeed, lead, some key elements of the Strategy going forward. To that end, ongoing ‘Divisional engagement events’ are being put in place.

8. The ‘best’ or ‘high performing’ organisations across the world, inside and outside healthcare, realised a long time ago, that staff are not only our greatest asset, but our only asset. To that end, our staff will be our focus: a relentless focus.

9. There have been many traditional approaches to improving employee engagement and it is clear that we now need a new approach in order to create a significant shift in the Trust.

10. This Trust, with its caring, competent and compassionate staff, together with our Volunteers and key partners are uniquely placed to deliver this strategy.
Background

11. The challenges facing the NHS (and Social Care) are well documented. The recent publication of the *Long Term Plan* revisits some of those challenges, which would include; increasing user demand, higher expectations of the services we provide, financial constraints, slow response to the digital challenge, the need to increasingly ‘align’ with our GP, Primary Care and Local Authority colleagues, the role of ‘prevention’, ‘self-care’ and of course, *workforce challenges*.

12. Workforce challenges in all its guises would include; staff shortages, aging workforce profile, inability to recruit to ‘hard to fill’ roles, retention problems, staff attendance (sickness and absence), high turnover, bullying and harassment, discrimination and high bank and agency usage.

13. Staff shortages within the NHS and Social Care are a key concern, nationally, regionally and locally. The Office for National Statistics reported in February 2017, that 117,000 job vacancies were advertised for the 3 months to January 2017 – 15% of all job vacancies in the UK. Nursing shortages remain a concern with the RCN reporting over 24,000 vacancies, with 11% of nursing posts unfilled. The RCM also highlight a shortage of 3,500 midwives nationally. In terms of Medicine (Drs), a large majority of NHS Trusts remain concerned, reporting vacancies at all levels. It is not uncommon in the North West, for a large acute Trust to report 60-70 medical vacancies, many at Consultant level.

14. Recruitment (and Retention) therefore remains a challenge going forward. The key to retention of staff is having an engaged workforce.

15. When the workforce is disengaged, the following can happen: reduction in National Staff Survey completion and worsening of the results; low morale, poor staff involvement, work related stress, bullying and harassment, perceived discrimination and inconsistent leadership. To that end, we will focus on our recent National Staff Satisfaction Survey, put in place ‘Big Conversations’ and set up an ‘Employee Sponsor Group’.

16. In the 2018 NHS Staff Survey, 64% of staff who completed the survey said that staffing levels were insufficient for them to do their job properly. Nearly 2 in 5 staff who completed the survey said they felt unwell in the last 12 months due to work related stress and 1 in 5 said they have been bullied and harassed by either a patient, colleague or manager.

17. We recognise that a new approach to engagement is needed however, the factors that we need to address stay the same:

- **Compassionate and Inclusive Leadership**: Supporting our leaders and managers to build trust with employees by being open, transparent and visible. Helping our leaders and managers role model compassionate and inclusive behaviours.
- **Personal Growth and Career Development**: Providing our employees with opportunities for them to progress and fulfill their potential.
- **Reward and recognition**: Having a range of initiatives in place to recognise and thank our employees for doing a great job. Also being able to provide financial reward where possible.

- **Building Good Relationships**: Ensuring that individuals and teams are able to work well together. Making sure that everyone can get involved in team activities so nobody feels excluded.

- **Health and Wellbeing**: Ensuring that all employees have access to wellbeing opportunities so that they are able to remain resilient. Whilst managing stress, pressure at work and life balance.

- **Giving Something Back**: Providing employees with the opportunity and paid time off to volunteer in the local community.

**Describing the ‘What’ in relation to what do we need to do?**

18. Employee engagement is about employees feeling that they belong to Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust: that they believe in what the Trust is trying to achieve, and that they feel valued for what they contribute. It also means that this contribution is important and purposeful.

19. Employee engagement can be broken down into intellectual, emotional and behavioural responses that are linked to an employee’s sense of identity, advocacy, involvement, motivation, pride and passion for BTH.

20. The Trust current staff engagement score, from the 2018 National Staff Survey results, is 7.0 which is a slight decrease from the 2017 which was 7.1. This score is calculated from 9 questions in the survey which are grouped under the headings of *Staff Involvement, Staff Advocacy* and *Staff Motivation*. This quantitative measurement forms one of the key metrics for the measurement of employee engagement in this Trust.

21. Great leaders have emotional intelligence and this learning will be built into our training programmes. We are also going to increase our leader’s engagement intelligence. This will enable managers to understand their staff, and their motivators and work on these to improve morale and results.

**Describing the ‘How’ in relation to how do we do it?**

22. In Appendix 1, the **Plan on a Page** (PoP) attempts to do two things; one, act as an ‘aid memoire’ for staff to help explain our plans in simple terms and two, links and ties together, our vision, values, ambitions, key drivers and crucially our key deliverables. Logically, the PoP does not aim to cover all plans and activities.

23. The PoP articulates;

- **Our Vision**, namely, *to be widely known for providing personalised, safe care, in every setting.* This is a working title and may need to be revisited.

- **Our Values** – People Centred, Excellence, Positive and Compassion

- **Our Ambitions** – Quality is our organising principle, Improve patient experience, improve staff satisfaction, reduce patient mortality, Improve our sustainability (£) and a ‘Great place to work’.
24. The PoP focuses on our **Key drivers** and recognises the evidence base, in relation to the 'characteristics of highly engaged organisations', namely:

- Compassionate and Transparent Leaders
- Opportunities for career progression and personal growth
- Having initiatives in place which recognise and reward employees for doing a great job
- Good relationships, with individuals and teams being able to work well together
- Creating a healthy working environment
- Providing employees with the opportunity to give something back to the community

25. The POP identifies our **Key Deliverables** which is aligned to the **Key Drivers**.

**The Key Drivers and our deliverables**

26. **Key Driver 1 – Compassionate and Transparent Leadership**
   - Embedding Compassionate Leadership principles into all Trust leadership development programmes
   - Introduction of a Just Culture in relation to the disciplinary policy and procedure
   - Resolution approach to staff conflict
   - Big Conversation initiative
   - Back to the floor programme

27. **Key Driver 2 – Personal Growth and Career Development**
   - Clear pathways for development at all stages of career
   - Talent management and succession planning
   - Robust appraisal process with a focus on performance and aspiration conversations
   - Leadership and management development programmes
   - Continuous Professional Development opportunities
   - Introduction of Trust wide rotation development programmes

28. **Key Driver 3 – Reward and Recognition**
   - Celebrate success annual event
   - Going the Extra Mile award initiative
   - Long service achievement award event
   - Staff achievements event
   - Apprentice recognition event
   - Market the Total Reward Statement and Staff Benefits offer across the whole workforce

29. **Key Driver 4 – Building good relationships**
• Mediation Service
• Coaching Service
• Implement an Employee Engagement team
• 100 System Leaders Programme
• Building a Better Boss Programme
• Senior Collaborative Leadership Programme
• New Consultant Induction Programme
• Great Place to Work programme

30. **Key Driver 5 – Health and Wellbeing**

• Health and Wellbeing Strategy
• Menopause course for staff and managers
• Support for managers with staff who have long term conditions
• Resilience programme

31. **Key Driver 6 – Giving Something Back**

• Identify volunteering opportunities within local community
• Potential paid time off to enable employees to undertake voluntary work

**Monitoring progress**

32. A number of key performance indicators (KPIs) flow from the Employee Engagement Strategy, for example, Appraisal uptake, National Staff Survey themes and numbers of Apprenticeships. These will be monitored via the appropriate board subcommittee, monthly/quarterly, using SPC ‘run charts’.

33. A Workforce ‘Scorecard’ will be developed using other KPIs from related workforce strategies.

**Recommendation**

34. The Board is asked to agree and support the Employee Engagement Strategy.