

## LEADING A HEALTHY WORKFORCE: ENGAGING BOARD AND CLINICAL LEADERS TO TAKE POSITIVE ACTION ON STAFF WELLBEING

The Forward View made a commitment 'to ensure the NHS as an employer sets a national example in the support it offers its own staff to stay healthy'.

Developing a healthy organisation does not depend on running a set list of initiatives. Prioritising staff health and wellbeing needs to be embedded in the culture of the organisation and a central consideration to all decisions. We cannot deliver any patient care unless we have staff who are well and in work and therefore actions need to begin here. The staff of an organisation is its most valuable asset. The case for action is clear.

One of the essential elements for workplace wellbeing is leadership. Creating and leading a positive high-quality care culture can only happen with strong leadership from the board.

### WHAT DOES GOOD LOOK LIKE?

To achieve a healthy workforce, we need to be clear on what success looks like. Board leads and other leaders can start to make tangible differences immediately by focusing on these key elements;

- ☐ A clear vision and leadership from the top.
- ☐ Making the wellbeing of staff central to the organisation's work.
- ☐ Training for all managers on effective leadership and management behaviours, with a focus on staff health and wellbeing.
- ☐ The importance of staff wellbeing is embedded into the organisational culture and known by staff.
- ☐ Organisational data is used effectively to inform engagement activity around staff wellbeing, target interventions, evaluate the impact of interventions and amend wellbeing programmes.
- ☐ A range of staff wellbeing interventions are provided specifically including both physical and emotional wellbeing and including quick access to treatment and support.
- ☐ Information and interventions are accessible, communicated and used to enable staff to take personal responsibility to improve and enhance their own wellbeing.

This document is designed to enable board and clinical leaders to challenge their current thinking and actions on how they are supporting the wellbeing of staff within their organisation. It provides shared thinking, to help them to consider what good looks like, the difference between wellbeing in policy and wellbeing in practice and then what they can do to positively influence this going forward.

Trusts can use this information, which has been provided by key board and clinical leads about what key principles can be applied that do make a difference across the NHS.

## A clear vision and leadership from the top

### What you will see across your organisation:

- ☐ Employees will know what the vision for workplace wellbeing is. The vision is clear, authentic and meaningful.
- ☐ The workforce knows who the board and clinical leads are.
- ☐ The board and clinical leads demonstrate their commitment and leadership to the workplace wellbeing vision by actively leading the agenda
- ☐ Staff openly approach the leads to talk to them and share their experiences, knowing they will be listened to, and this will feed into broader discussions which focus on maintaining and promoting the wellbeing of staff.

### Board leaders will:

- ☐ Demonstrate their commitment to the vision by the actions they take; they 'walk the talk'.
- ☐ Talk about the vision and engage with staff about how their roles influence and contribute to that vision, as well as asking staff what their needs are.
- ☐ Ask the collective board members and managers how the vision is being met, how this is being demonstrated and what more can be done to progress. This will be reflected in your organisation's culture, ie: 'how we do things around here'.
- ☐ Share staff stories on wellbeing with the board, demonstrating the culture and impact on staff.

## The wellbeing of staff is central to the organisation's work

### What you will see:

- ❑ Staff wellbeing is discussed in equal priority to finance at board and business critical meetings.
- ❑ Decisions are made which consider the impact on the wellbeing of staff as standard practice.

### Board leaders will:

- ❑ Ensure wellbeing is on the agenda at all key meetings, including board meetings.
- ❑ Actively lead conversations that focus on the impact of decisions and actions on the wellbeing of staff.
- ❑ Prioritise the needs of staff and ensure they are central to discussions, challenging decisions and taking actions where needed.

## Training is provided for all managers on effective leadership and management behaviours, with a focus on staff health and wellbeing

### What you will see:

- ❑ Managers understand their role in maintaining and supporting staff wellbeing and the impact that they have in this role.
- ❑ Managers are confident to speak to staff about wellbeing and encourage them to demonstrate wellbeing behaviours, such as taking breaks. Not having a break should be the exception, not the norm.
- ❑ Employees will be moving regularly in sedentary roles, talking about how they feel and voice any support needed throughout the day.

### Board leaders will:

- ❑ Speak with confidence about the impact of positive management behaviours on the wellbeing of staff.
- ❑ Know what training is available within the organisation that includes staff wellbeing e.g. dedicated training and appraisal training.
- ❑ Be confident that training is accessible, effective and promoted to all managers.
- ❑ Challenge the board on how all leaders are supporting managers and whether this matches with key data measuring such as the staff survey, tackling bullying data, exit interview information.
- ❑ Bring to the board's attention the managers that are leading by example. They will know what the managers have done and how, and how this can be shared across the organisation.

## **The importance of staff wellbeing is embedded into the organisational culture and known by staff**

### **What you will see:**

- ☐ Staff talk to their managers about their wellbeing and managers are available and listen to staff.
- ☐ Employees understand the importance of maintaining their own wellbeing and know they have the authority to make this a priority.
- ☐ Managers trust staff to prioritise their wellbeing in a responsible, patient and service focussed way.
- ☐ Staff wellbeing is considered as the norm throughout daily activities.

## **The organisational context (changes/incidents etc) is known and consideration given and actions taken to support the wellbeing of staff as a matter of course**

### **Board leaders will:**

- ☐ Listen to staff and managers about wellbeing issues and provide them with a voice if needed.
- ☐ Review and challenge local data which measures and indicates staff wellbeing such as the staff survey, local surveys, sickness figures and grievances.
- ☐ Look for and share examples of where wellbeing is working and being practiced daily, such as checking how each other is, ensuring breaks are taken, starting and finishing on time.
- ☐ Check what support is in place at challenging times to support staff wellbeing and challenge this where needed.

## **Organisational data is used to inform engagement activity around staff wellbeing, target interventions, evaluate the impact of interventions and amend wellbeing programmes**

### **What you will see:**

- Wellbeing leads use organisational information to inform their engagement activity and identify trends to understand more about staff.
- Engagement activity is planned against data trends and insight, to maximise staff involvement and attendance.
- A targeted approach is taken where data intelligence demonstrates the need for action.
- Wellbeing activities and actions designed with the in line with the organisational data and are supported by a clear communication plan for staff, demonstrating continuous engagement through a 'you said, we did' approach.

### **Board leaders will:**

- Review organisational data regularly and lead discussions around the findings at board meetings, what it is saying, how it is being used and the impact it is having.
- Work with the wellbeing lead to understand the data and actions, and explore areas where further support, such as time/resources/information, is required and discuss this with the board.
- Focus on the impact interventions are having on staff and provide challenge and support where appropriate.

## **A range of staff wellbeing interventions are provided, specifically including both physical and emotional wellbeing and quick access to treatment and support**

### **What you will see:**

- Interventions available are varied and in line with staff local data and what will have a significant positive effect on the wellbeing of staff.
- Staff know what is available, how to access it and use the provisions available.
- Interventions are robustly evaluated and actions are taken to change approaches where this is not demonstrated.

### **Board leaders will:**

- Support and take part in interventions, leading by example.
- Focus on the impact interventions are having on staff and provide support or challenge where appropriate.
- Actively talk to staff about what is available and encourage them to engage with the wellbeing lead about their views and needs.

## Information and interventions are accessible, communicated and used to enable staff to take personal responsibility to improve and enhance their own wellbeing

### What you will see:

- Staff take personal responsibility for their own wellbeing and feedback to the wellbeing team/board lead where they have suggestions for improvements or further support.

### Board leaders will:

- See that staff are engaged and participating in wellbeing conversations and initiatives.
- Focus on encouraging and enhancing staff personal responsibility, looking at where this is working well, how issues are being raised and the actions staff are taking. This information should be captured and the behaviour shared.
- Lead by example by taking a break when needed, not e-mailing out of hours, talk with confidence about what they do to look after themselves and their own wellbeing, such as walking and work-life balance.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO NOW?

In order to support the work around this agenda, the following questions may be useful for board and clinical leads to ask:

- How does our organisation demonstrate to staff that their wellbeing is our priority?
- How much time do we as a board spend talking about staff wellbeing? Does this demonstrate our commitment and should we be doing more?
- Do we have a clear vision and narrative which we all share about staff wellbeing?
- How do we know our wellbeing interventions are effective?
- What else can we do to engage with staff on wellbeing?
- What can we do to encourage personal responsibility?
- What are we doing well and what can we do to share this?

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