Employee Wellbeing Strategy

2012 - 2015

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Over the last decade the importance of employee health and well-being and the relationship to economic prosperity, organisational performance and customer satisfaction has been recognised both within and outside the NHS.

In 2008 the Government set a firm agenda for improving the health of individuals and the economic health and wellbeing of the country. Underpinning this was the view that organisations have a shared responsibility for the health of Britain’s working age population and a role in cutting the unnecessary costs associated with working-age ill-health. Dame Carol Black’s report, Working for a Healthier Tomorrow (Black 2008), emphasised the link between good line management and good health, wellbeing and improved performance.

Following the Black Report, the Department of Health commissioned further work to identify the major drivers contributing to staff engagement and motivation to provide high quality patient care. This work informed the Next Stage Review; High Quality Care for All (DH 2008) and the development of the NHS Constitution and staff pledges. The role of managers and the importance of a positive working environment is acknowledged within this.

The Department also commissioned research into NHS health and wellbeing. This work, conducted by Steve Boorman in 2009, found clear links between staff health and wellbeing and the three dimensions of service quality, namely patient safety; patient experience and the effectiveness of patient care. His report, made the case for taking action on health and well-being across the NHS workforce – he estimated 10.3 million days are lost to sickness per year, at a cost of £1.7 billion.

A benefit evaluation of the health and wellbeing of NHS staff was conducted by Aston University in 2009 and found that health and wellbeing variables are significantly related to patient satisfaction ratings. A trust that is in the top 10% for health & wellbeing of staff is likely to be in the top 20% of Trusts in terms of patient satisfaction. Health and wellbeing variables are also significantly associated with MRSA infection rates, staff absenteeism rates, work related injury and job satisfaction and turnover intentions. The evaluation found that the difference between an average trust and a good trust in terms of staff health and wellbeing equates to an estimated cost of absenteeism to be in the region of £350,590 per average sized Trust.

Aston University also found that management practices are significantly associated with the health and wellbeing variables and that the quality of job design, perceptions of work pressure, support for work-life balance and the prevalence of well structured appraisals and team working are strongly related to health and wellbeing.

More recently and more locally, separate programmes of work by The Walton Centre, St Helens and Knowsley, University Hospital of Morecombe Bay and Salford Royal Foundation Trust have each reported (through eWIN good practice case studies) how investing in health and well-being programmes has positively impacted on sickness rates (eg from 7% to 4% at the Walton Centre), improved staff satisfaction (e.g. Salford Royal is now in the top 20% nationally), quality standards, performance and agency costs (e.g. St. Helens and Knowsley).

1 Boorman NHS Health and Wellbeing Review - Final Report, 23 November 2009
2 Aston Business School Birmingham – Health and wellbeing of NHS staff – A benefit evaluation Modell, June 2009
The evidence to support investing in employee health and well-being is compelling. This strategy sets out the East Cheshire NHS Trust approach and commitment to this agenda. It underpins our workforce pledge, to be a model employer and the employer of choice locally.

John Wilbraham  
Chief Executive

Rachael Charlton  
Director of HR & Organisational Development

George Dunn  
Staff side Chair
1.1 East Cheshire Trust’s vision – to deliver the best care in the right place and to respond quickly to commissioners and competitors to achieve a sustainable position in the health care market, requires a workforce that is safe, effective and affordable.

1.2 East Cheshire NHS Trust recognises the link between staff health and wellbeing and patient safety, patient experience and the effectiveness of patient care, and is fully committed to the health and wellbeing of its employees.

1.3 Line managers, senior managers and leaders all have a responsibility for the wellbeing of their employees whilst at work and must recognise the impact of good people management on service delivery and organisational performance. This strategy recognises this and as one of the key targets will concentrate on the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) management standards.

1.4 East Cheshire Trust’s workforce strategy articulates the vision to deliver a workforce that is ‘safe, effective and affordable’ and is ‘committed to investing in the support mechanisms and opportunities for staff to maintain and improve their health and wellbeing. This strategy supports that vision. The Trust believes that employees have a responsibility for their own health and wellbeing, as well as that of their colleagues and this strategy will put a number of initiatives in place to support employees to look after their own health and wellbeing.

1.5 This strategy reflects the organisations intention to embrace the national and local objectives to improve the health and wellbeing of all its employees, improving employee engagement with models of best practice. This strategy is underpinned by a programme of support and activity over the next year, September 2012 – August 2013.
Chapter Two: Context

There has been a surge of National NHS Wellbeing and Engagement Programmes, NHS Governance and National Engagement Programmes over the last few years and this strategy fully embraces these initiatives.

The NHS Health and Wellbeing Review – Boorman Final Report, 23 November 2009 and the Secretary of State Response to the Boorman Review, 28th November 2009 set out to investigate how to improve the health and wellbeing of NHS staff, and their health and wellbeing provision at work and in response the Secretary of State gave 3 key messages; The NHS must be an exemplar employer in ensuring the health and well-being of its staff; Good staff health and well-being improves the quality of services for patients and reducing sickness absence and improving staff health and well-being makes a significant contribution to productivity. The Boorman Review made a number of recommendations and the Secretary of State makes it clear that there is an expectation for all NHS organisations to implement these recommendations, develop or refresh strategies, invest in their health and wellbeing services and deliver significant improvements in sickness absence and improved staff health and wellbeing.

NHS 2010–2015: From Good to Great - Preventative, People-centred, Productive sets out the direction and challenge for the NHS over the next 5 years. Meeting the productivity challenge is crucial to its continued success and where once it was all about building up capacity, now all our efforts must be on getting more for the public and the taxpayer from this expanded system. This five-year plan maps out how this journey of improvement in our NHS will continue in a new financial era. It is intended to give people working in the NHS a clear sense of direction and time to plan for the challenges ahead.

Public Health Responsibility Deal: March 2011 recognises that the Government has a vital role to play in improving people’s health. On top of the impact on individuals’ lives, estimates of the annual direct costs to the NHS as a result of physical inactivity, alcohol misuse, and obesity are as high as £8.7 billion – and, of course, there are significant costs to the wider economy. The pledges launched in the deal are the start of a long-term programme of work. The Government's approach to improving health is wider than simply considering what Government can do, and is based on; positively promoting ‘healthier’ behaviours and lifestyles; adapting the environment to make healthy choices easier; and strengthening self-esteem, confidence, and personal responsibility.

East Cheshire Trusts Workforce Strategy 2012 -2015 pledges to provide support to improve the health and wellbeing of all employees. The Trusts workforce strategy reflects the organisations intentions for developing its workforce and maintaining a motivated and engaged workforce during a period of transition and large scale organisational change. Its successful delivery relies upon the commitment and participation of the whole organisation. Through providing mechanisms and opportunities for staff to maintain and improve their health and well-being, a healthy, engaged and motivated workforce, capable of delivering the Trust's vision will be created.

The health and wellbeing of our staff is crucial in ensuring that our governance standards are met. This strategy ensures that East Cheshire Trust embraces the standards laid out in the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence; the Care Quality Commission annual health check and ensures that we maintain compliance with Standards for Better Health. In addition, a focus on employee wellbeing and employee engagement will assist in meeting some of the criteria set within the NHSLA – risk management standards.
The 2011 annual staff survey highlighted 5 key themes for required action. One of these key themes is health wellbeing and work related stress. The Trust score was benchmarked and fell within the worst 20% of Acute Trusts nationally for work pressure felt by staff and the impact of health and wellbeing on ability to perform work or daily activities.

As an organisation our model of service delivery has been evolving and maturing, it is therefore essential that our Wellbeing Strategy is both responsive to the strategic direction of the organisation and sensitive to changes and developments particularly in view of the Trust’s Foundation Trust application. The ambitious OD plan and workforce strategy will need to be underpinned by strong employee engagement supported through links with the listening in action programme (LiA). The wellbeing of all employees will be ever more important in achieving the Trust’s ambitions in its existing quality strategy. 

Wellbeing is not about a department or service, it is a way of working. A variety of factors such as schemes, services, people management and behaviour are all key elements for increasing employee wellbeing.
Chapter Three: Our Vision

Our vision is to improve the health and wellbeing of staff and as a result improve the quality and standard of care the Trust delivers, thereby improving the safety and cost effectiveness of the services we provide.

The Trust’s sickness absence rate in the twelve months prior to the publication of this strategy is 4.71% with the chief reasons for absence, in all business groups, being stress related and musculoskeletal. The cost of agency and bank staff in the Trust is high as we use temporary staff to cover for absence.

The 2010 NICE audit of NHS organisations against their workplace clinical guidance reported the Trust’s lowest scores were those related to the introduction of measures to reduce obesity in the workplace. As a result, through this strategy we will concentrate on 3 key areas for improvement;

- **Mental Health and wellbeing at work**  
  We will reduce stress in the Workplace thereby improving employee engagement, discretionary effort and reduce sickness absence rates.

- **Physical wellbeing at work**  
  We will reduce musculoskeletal problems in the workplace, thereby reducing accidents and sickness absence rates.

- **Weight Management and Healthy lifestyles**  
  We will reduce obesity in the workplace, thereby fully implementing the NICE Public Health Guidance for the workplace and actively supporting the organisations commitment to support our workforce to lead healthier lives through our Public Health Responsibility Deal pledges.

To complement this strategy we will develop a ‘rapid access to treatment and rehabilitation for NHS staff Policy’. This policy will reflect good practice guidance and support employees in returning to work more quickly following a period of sickness absence or prevent a period of sickness absence from occurring by offering a rapid access service to employees with a mental health issue or those requiring therapeutic services.

Concentrating on these three key themes over the next three years will support the Trust to:

- Achieve objectives and key performance indicators such as sickness absence rates
- Support Foundation Trust application
- Increase the commitment and satisfaction of staff leading to increased productivity
- Increase the numbers of staff wanting to work for the Trust, giving more choice of candidates and quality of recruits
- Improve the retention of good staff, reducing the cost of organisational turnover and retaining our skilled and experienced workers
- Enhance the trusts reputation in the local community
- Increase the morale and engagement of staff
- Reduce stress levels through targeted actions
- Ensure that all staff have access to support to help them keep themselves healthy and safe
- Ensure stability in the workforce providing consistent and safe care
- Ensure that Patient experience is improved by being in a more positive, energised and happier environment

Chapter Four: Our Pledges

This strategy is based on the following pledges which reflect East Cheshire Trusts commitment to employee wellbeing, particularly in the ever changing environment currently facing NHS staff.

Mental Health and Wellbeing at Work Core Pledge

We will reduce stress in the Workplace thereby improving employee engagement, discretionary effort and reduce sickness absence rates.

We will:

Actively embrace the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) Management Standards These standards represent a set of conditions that promote high levels of health, wellbeing and organisational performance. The HSE’s Management Standards cover the seven key areas shown below which, if not managed well, put employees at risk of stress-related ill-health.

- Ensure employees are able to cope with the demands of their jobs (Demand)
- Ensure employees are able to have a say about the way they do their work (Control)
- Ensure employees receive adequate information and support from their colleagues and supervisor/Manager (Support)
- Ensure employees are not subjected to unacceptable behaviours (Role)
- Deal with conflict encountered in the workplace in a positive manner (Relationships)
- Ensure that the organisation engages employees frequently when undergoing organisational change (Change)

Physical Wellbeing at Work Core Pledge

We will reduce musculoskeletal problems in the workplace, thereby reducing accidents and sickness absence.

We will:

Encourage all employees to be physically active whilst implementing the relevant recommendations of the NICE public health guidance for the workplace.

- Introduce measures to reduce musculoskeletal problems in the workplace, thereby reducing accidents and sickness absence rates.
• Encourage staff to use local leisure facilities as well as Trust organised/subsidised schemes and events.

• Provide staff with information about walking and cycling routes; encouraging staff to take short walks during work breaks and to walk to work where possible, providing information and encouragement through promotions.

• Encourage staff to make pledges and informally monitor their progress, encouraging departmental competition as well as organisational competitions and initiatives.

Chapter Four: Our Pledges

Weight Management and Healthy lifestyles Core Pledge

We will reduce obesity in the workplace, thereby fully implementing the NICE Public Health Guidance for the workplace and actively supporting the organisations commitment to support our workforce to lead healthier lives through our Public Health Responsibility Deal pledges

We will:

We will actively support our workforce to lead healthier lives by committing to the Public Health Responsibility Deal.

• Embed the principles of the chronic conditions guides within HR procedures to ensure that those with chronic conditions at work are managed in the best way possible with reasonable flexibilities and workplace adjustments

• Use only occupational health services which meet the new occupational health standards and which aim to be accredited by 2012/13

• Include a section on the health and wellbeing of employees within annual reports and/or websites, including sickness absence rates.

• Implement some basic measures for encouraging healthier staff restaurants/vending outlets/buffets for staff

• Encouraging staff to stop smoking, by facilitating onsite stop smoking support services or by encouraging them to attend local stop smoking services during working time without loss of pay. We will also take action to reduce other risks to respiratory health arising in the workplace.

• Offer staff health checks, with appropriate follow up and audit. We will also encourage eligible employees to participate in the NHS Health Check for vascular disease and other NHS screening programmes.

• Encourage staff to limit their alcohol intake, providing information and promoting healthy lifestyles in relation to reducing alcohol.
The Wellbeing Strategy will focus on improvements in the three key areas mental wellbeing, physical wellbeing and weight management and will monitor feedback reports illustrating improvements at an organisational level, Business Unit Level and where appropriate, team level in the following areas.

- 0.25% year on year reduction of sickness absence rates to 3.5% overall by March 2015
- Year on year reduction in staff absence on work related stress
- Year on year reduction in staff absence relating to musculoskeletal issues
- Year on year improvement in staff reporting high stress levels in the staff survey
- Year on year improvement of HSE Stress Indicator survey scores
- 80% of all staff with an annual appraisal and personal development plan
- Quarterly improvement in the pulse survey question ‘I believe East Cheshire Trust takes my health & wellbeing seriously’
- Level 2 Achievement of NHSLA Standard 3.2 – Sickness Absence
- Level 2 Achievement of NHSLA Standard 3.10 – Stress
- Improved patient satisfaction levels as reported through the annual patient survey
- Improvement year on year of staff engagement score evidenced through the annual staff survey.
- Improved health and wellbeing scores as evidenced through the annual staff survey
- Number of staff accessing health and wellbeing activities
- Number of staff reporting lifestyle changes and improved health and wellbeing as a direct result of Trust health and wellbeing activities.
- Number of staff reporting improvements in agreed health indicators as a direct result of attending Trust wellbeing activities, for example, weight loss, reduced stress, improved sleep, improved fitness levels, increased moral and energy.

The Trust’s performance will be measured against NICE, HSE, and DoH guidance in preparation for Foundation Trust application.
Chapter Six: Delivery

The Wellbeing Steering Group will support the implementation of the strategy through the development, monitoring and communication of wellbeing actions. It has wide membership to ensure management and staff are represented and have joint involvement in the delivery and development of the strategy. The group has representatives from health and safety, physiotherapy, dietetics, occupational health and staff side. To assist in the achievement of this strategy the wellbeing group will ensure it has links with the Ageing Well Quarterly Meeting, the Listening in Action programme and the Mindful Employer Strategy.

The Trust recognises the importance of ongoing monitoring and evaluation of its systems and processes as well as practices. The role of the governance structure would be to monitor and ensure the strategy is delivered and the Staff Health and Wellbeing Strategy is reviewed on an annual basis.

The strategy, and the themes contained within it, will be underpinned by an annual delivery plan that is informed by both internal and external factors, national drivers on health and wellbeing, results from the annual staff survey, local sickness absence indicators, Trust board objectives and local health improvement drivers. The annual delivery plan is detailed in Appendix 1.

The Wellbeing Advisor (CHR service) will support the delivery of wellbeing activities, increasing the wellbeing of the workforce by maintaining strong links with all key stakeholders as well as the lead for the LiA programme. The wellbeing Advisor will facilitate and co-ordinate all wellbeing activity and manage the communication of all aspects of wellbeing.

Full consideration will be given to the accessibility of wellness programmes for all staff. The socioeconomic, gender, culture, ethnicity, religion, age, disabilities, shift working patterns, and parental responsibilities of staff will be considered when designing and implementing the wellness programmes to ensure inclusiveness and where necessary the requirement for an alternative option.
Chapter Seven: Accountability

Achievements of this strategy will be monitored via the Trust Wellbeing Group and reported to the Trust board through the Finance, Performance and Workforce committee. Further in depth investigations into areas of concern will be undertaken periodically.

The success of this strategy will be monitored through the analysis of a variety of external and internal measures. Benchmarking information and Trust analyses will be monitored by the wellbeing group quarterly.
# Chapter Eight: Risks

Mitigation of risks to achieving Trust objectives

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<th>Result of Strategy</th>
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| **Continuously improve quality, safety and the patient experience** | • Reduced sickness absence through action on stress and musculoskeletal problems in the workplace.  
• Increased continuity of care to patients  
• Improved morale thereby improving productivity and patient experience  |
| **Achieving financial sustainability within an effective governance framework** | • Reduced costs of bank and agency staff through fewer absences  
• Achievement of NHSLA level 2 3.1 – 3.2 |
| **Encouraging staff to be innovative when developing and planning services** | • Improved engagement and staff discretionary effort  
• Improved morale, thereby increasing staff incentive to be innovative |
Increasing numbers of organisations are beginning to look at employee wellbeing as a strategic advantage. Professor Dame Carol Black and Dr Steve Boorman have produced interesting results from their research which this strategy has embraced. The Prime Minister David Cameron is championing a general wellbeing index to help inform policy. There is an increasing pressure and necessity for organisations to focus on employee wellbeing as a mechanism to increase engagement of their employees and thus improve service quality, productivity and performance.

East Cheshire Trust will take positive actions through this strategy, to improve all employees’ overall well-being through the annual planned workplace interventions.

Employee well-being can be viewed as being a critical enabler in supporting high levels of engagement. It is increasingly important for East Cheshire Trust during these challenging times to take the health and wellbeing of their staff seriously. In doing so, the Trust will optimise effectiveness in the workplace and improve the services it provides to its patients and be an ambassador for health and wellbeing in the local population.