

REPORT TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**HELD ON WEDNESDAY 15 JANUARY 2014****INCREASE THE VISIBILITY OF SENIOR MANAGERS TO IMPROVE STAFF
ENGAGEMENT AT STHFT****PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

To increase visibility of both TEG and Operational Board managers in the Trust.

Background

In 2009, the Macleod Report commissioned by the Government was published which brought together much of the research linking increased levels of staff engagement with increased productivity. More recently Health Service research (West et al 2011) identified a link between high levels of staff engagement and a better quality patient experience. The importance of staff engagement is reflected in the Trust's strategy and its aim of employing caring and cared for staff.

The Macleod report also identified the following enabling factors which have to be in place in an organisation in order to increase levels of staff engagement:

- Strong visible leadership and everyone understands how their role fits into the delivery of the corporate objectives
- Engaging managers who facilitate and empower their staff (rather than control), appreciate them and committed to developing them.
- Voice for staff i.e. employees views are actively sought, listened to and acted upon - staff feel they can make a difference.
- Integrity –behaviour throughout the organisation is consistent with the stated values
- High degree of Trust

These are reflected in the Trust's Staff Engagement Strategy. One of these enablers, or a barrier if it is absent, is visible senior managers which research suggests becomes more important to employees in challenging times.

Feedback from the 2012 staff survey and all of the 'Let's talk' events both trust wide and directorate, indicates that staff perceive that the visibility of senior managers is low within STHFT both at Trust and directorate level. Clearly the visibility of senior managers needs to be improved in order to improve staff engagement in the Trust. Although this initiative will have a positive impact, there is a need to increase the visibility of all senior managers in the Trust to improve staff engagement not just TEG members.

A number of steps have already been taken to improve the visibility of senior managers in the Trust over the last year, for example:

- the introduction of visible uniform for Nurse Directors
- regular clinical sessions by senior nursing staff
- increased number of Chief Executive roadshows
- increased number of Board of Directors visits

This paper is about formalising and accelerating the process of increased visibility of both TEG and operational board managers in the Trust.

A number of steps can be taken to support this:

1. 'Back to the Floor'

In common with other organisations external to the NHS, many Trusts have recognised the importance of visibility and have introduced 'Back to the floor' days which they believe have brought a number of benefits, a practice which is recommended in the recent Kings Fund leadership review 'Leadership and engagement for improvement in the NHS' (May 2012)

For example:

Bath and Northeast Somerset senior directors have gone back to the floor as part of an initiative known as Dignity Day, they want to demonstrate the importance senior staff place on this within the organisation by working along side front line colleagues.

Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust is undertaking a similar back to the floor initiative, where staff of band 7 and above work alongside colleagues in a similar role every Friday. This has felt empowering to all involved, increasing communication and motivating change.

At Salford Royal Hospital, (the acute Trust with the highest levels of staff engagement in the 2011 staff survey), members of the executive team ensure that they have a high visibility on the wards not only by doing weekly walk-arounds but also through regularly working along side frontline staff. They have also found that so long as managers explain why they are there patients and relatives appreciate it too.

Staff at Let's talk events across the Trust have suggested that a Back to the Floor scheme would be beneficial at STHFT, this was tested out in a Trust communications audit. Staff were asked the following question

There have been suggestions from members of staff that senior managers could spend a day every 3 months shadowing a front line member of staff in order to improve their understanding of

- *current issues and pressures front line staff face*
- *patient and staff experience*

and to share their perspective with front line staff and vice versa.

Do you think this would be welcomed by you and your colleagues?

Of the 2288 staff who completed the Communications audit, **80%** were in favour of a Back to the Floor programme.

Back to the floor at STH

The CEO, staff engagement and leadership executive groups have requested that a 'Back to the Floor' programme is adopted at STH FT effective from April 2014.

This would entail a senior manager shadowing/working alongside a front line member of staff in order to improve their understanding of

- the current issues and pressures frontline staff face,
- patient and staff experience
- and to share their perspective with frontline staff and vice versa.

It has been agreed that for a **minimum** of half a day per quarter, members of TEG and the operational board spend the half day shadowing/working with staff members on the front line. For example, a Nurse Director could spend the day working with a clinical support worker; a General Manager could spend a day with a ward clerk, and so on.

Some members of the Trust Executive Group and Operational Board e.g. Chief Nurse, Assistant Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Nurse and Nurse Directors already do this, so it is a matter of formalising and sharing good practice.

It is imperative that once this scheduled programme is in place commitments must be honoured, if participants start to cancel it will have a detrimental impact.

Rhian Bishop, Trust Staff Engagement Lead, will be responsible for co-ordinating, monitoring and evaluating the programme. However, each directorate team will be responsible for arranging their own 'Back to the Floor' days to ensure maximum coverage across their directorate. It is recommended that operational board members focus on their own directorates in the first instance.

To maximise the impact of the programme the experience of frontline staff and managers will be shared through articles in the Link magazine etc.

2. Trust Executive Group meetings to be held in Care groups

It has been agreed that from 1st April 2014, following one TEG meeting per month i.e. formal TEG, there will be an executive briefing (1 hour) with an opportunity for an open question and answer session for staff, held in a care group / hotel services/corporate directorate location. This will ensure that each care group is visited annually. Rhian Bishop will be responsible for scheduling and evaluating this initiative.

Rhian Bishop/Mark Gwilliam
January 2014