

Assessment Report

Investors in People assessment report for
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear, NHS Foundation
Trust.

Undertaken by
Lesley Curtis

On behalf of Investors in People North of England

Project Number: 16/0036 & 16/0037
Date: 15th October 2016

Accreditation Date	18 month interaction due	Accreditation Expiry Date
17/10/16	17/04/18	05/08/19

Commercial in Confidence

Introduction

Background

The Organisation has been accredited with the Investors in People standard and the Health and Wellbeing Good Practice Award since August 2010 and was last, successfully, reviewed against both Standards in January 2014. The organisation continues to face a number of challenges in respect of budget cuts and external pressures, NHS priorities and government led initiatives. There has been an organisational restructure since the last review visit and some new appointments at a senior level including the appointment of a new Chief Executive Officer and some non-executive director posts. The organisation had recently undergone a CQC inspection visit and been recognised as being “ Outstanding” one of only five NHS Trusts in the UK to have achieved this standard.

Methodology

A planning meeting took place on the between the Assistant Director HR and Organisation Development the Workforce Projects Manager and the IIP Specialist when the objectives and plans for the review visit were discussed and agreed. Agreement was reached that this would be a joint Investors in People Review against version 5 of the standard and the Health and Wellbeing Good Practice Award. This report covers both accreditations, as agreed with the client.

The review was undertaken between the 3rd and 17th October when 108 people were interviewed across five of the main hospital sites, the majority of interviews being undertaken individually face to face with a very small number of group and telephone interviews. The sample was representative of the structure of the Trust and included newly employed staff, the chairman, directors, managers, part time and full time staff. Immediate feedback on the outcome of the review visit was given to the Director of HR and OD, the Assistant Director and the Workforce Projects Manager at the end of the on-site visit and agreement was reached that a follow up meeting would be arranged to agree the content of the Continuous Improvement Plan, a draft of which is included at the end of this report.

The objectives for this assessment were:

- To confirm that the organisation continues to meet the requirements of the Investors in People Standard
- To confirm that the organisation continues to meet the requirements of the Health and Wellbeing Good Practice Award
- To identify strengths and areas of good practice within the organisation in respect of both accreditations
- To identify any areas for further development for continuous improvement

I would like to thank Claire Baxter for her work in coordinating the interviews and managing the site visits, I would also like to thank all staff involved in this Review for their co-operation during interviews.

Summary

Based upon the evidence collected during this review visit the Assessor is able to confirm that the Investors in People Standard and the Health and Wellbeing Good Practice Award have both been maintained by **Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust**.

Strengths and areas of good practice

You have a number of examples of good practice which I have outlined below. I would encourage you to reflect on these and continue to build upon the good practice you have in place to drive forward your priorities:

<u>Strengths and Areas of Good Practice:</u>	
1.	<p><u>Strategic Development:</u> The Workforce Strategy, a copy of which was made available to the Assessor, describes the key priorities for development of a workforce capable of meeting the vision of the Trust. The Strategy includes the commitment to ensuring the health and wellbeing needs of staff are a priority. During interviews with Directors and Senior Managers they explained that a new long term strategy and plan were currently being developed through consultation with key stakeholders, including; service users; carers; staff teams; non-executive Directors etc. The approach to strategic planning was considered to be an area of good practice.</p> <p>During interviews with staff some were able to describe the approach to service planning used within their group which was seen to have been more consultative than in previous years, although it was not possible to confirm that this approach was widely used across all parts of the Trust.</p>
2.	<p><u>Trust Values:</u> Since the last review visit the level of understanding of the Trust Values was considered to have improved, with the vast majority of people feeling that these are now embedded into the organisation and demonstrated in the behaviours adopted by staff.</p> <p>Having developed the recruitment and selection processes using the Trust Values is considered to be an area of good practice, whilst not everyone believes that "Central Recruitment" is beneficial for all posts, it is clear that improvements have been effected to the recruitment and selection processes.</p> <p>The two areas mentioned above are recognised as being strengths beyond the requirements of this version of the IIP Standard, although they are both a pre-requisite of Version 6, and as such should be an advantage moving forward towards the next review visit. (Indicators 1.7, 1.19 & 3.6)</p>
3.	<p><u>Learning and Development:</u> Throughout interviews people described a whole range of opportunities for learning and development in addition to the statutory and mandatory training required by all staff across the Trust. Leadership development programmes have been extended to include people at all levels including a programme aimed at specifically at Medical staff. A Management Skills programme ensures that all managers have an understanding of their responsibilities for line management and are clear about the application of appropriate policies and procedures. In house training sessions and departmental training sessions are made available to meet job or team specific training needs, and there are some opportunities for staff to access external qualifications and training sessions, although it is understood that reducing budgets have necessitated restrictions in some areas.</p>

	<p>The organisation provides secondment opportunities which enable staff to develop areas of interest or specialism in new roles and assume additional responsibilities, this was considered to be an area of good practice and beneficial in terms of personal development, and succession planning.</p> <p>The organisation demonstrates a continuing commitment to supporting apprentices and has a track record of employing people via this route. There is a dedicated resource in terms of apprentices and once again this is an area of good practice to be commended.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p><u>Communication and Consultation:</u></p> <p>During this review visit a significant number of those interviewed believe that there have been improvements to communications within the Trust. Throughout interviews people described the weekly Trust Bulletin as having improved in terms of the tone and information communicated. There are a whole variety of meetings in place within the Trust and people were able to describe the purpose and benefits of the meetings they regularly attend. The CEO described the intention to more meaningfully engage with staff using events like “Speak Easy” and “Conversations”, and there was some evidence that this approach is working, to a degree, although it is perhaps too early to comment on the effectiveness and value of these approaches at present. (Indicators 7.4 & 7.5)</p> <p>Everyone interviewed was aware of the “Speak Easy” approach to employee engagement and those who had participated were able to describe the purpose of the sessions, although not everyone was convinced that the issues discussed were taken forward. This relatively new approach to employee engagement was considered to be an improvement to the 250 and 150 events, previously in place, giving more of an opportunity for sharing of issues and encouraging a more collaborative approach to problem solving, it may take time for this initiative to be perceived as fully effective.</p> <p>Interviews with TU representatives confirmed the effectiveness of relationships and between Management and Unions and consultations are considered to be genuine and meaningful.</p> <p>There have been numerous changes in terms of working practices, restructuring of services and departments, all of which have included consultation exercises, some considered to be more effective than others, but all done in line with employment legislation.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p><u>Supervision and Appraisal:</u></p> <p>The approach to appraisal was considered to be consistently applied with all of those interviewed able to confirm that this is undertaken annually, providing an opportunity to discuss and review performance, agree objectives and consider future learning and development priorities. The supervision or one to one processes were described by all of those interviewed as being supportive and consistently applied in line with Trust guidelines. This is an area which was seen to have been improved since the last review visit and is considered to be an area of strength.</p>

<p>6.</p>	<p><u>Internal and External Reviews:</u> The annual staff survey was in the process of being completed at the time of this visit and confirmation was received that everyone is invited to complete the survey. Interviews with Senior Managers confirmed that the results of this Survey are used to identify areas for improvement and that staff have been encouraged to suggest ways of addressing issues through the “Speak Easy” events.</p> <p>Evidence was provided of a Health and Wellbeing survey having been carried out to assist in the identification of priorities and areas for improvement, in terms of the Trust provision. The Trust has also utilised feedback from the Better Health at Work Award to help develop the approach to promoting Health and Wellbeing across the Trust.</p> <p>At the time of this review visit the Trust had recently been involved in a comprehensive Care Quality Commission inspection visit and whilst having achieved an “outstanding” status confirmation was received that the feedback received has helped inform areas for improvement. Once again this is an area of good practice beyond the current Standard, to be commended. (Indicators 10.4 & 10.12)</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p><u>Recognition Strategy:</u> There is a good level of awareness of the formal approaches adopted by the Trust in respect of recognition, including the annual Shine a Light Awards and Long Service Awards. There are opportunities for all staff to make nominations for the annual awards scheme and throughout interviews people were able to confirm their understanding of the process. In addition to these formal processes the vast majority of those interviewed believe that they receive some form of recognition of their contribution to the success of their team/department either through regular communications with line managers, carers or service users, via meetings and also via the Trust Bulletin. Having achieved the “Outstanding” CQC result people were delighted to have been granted an extra day’s annual leave and confirmation that this was welcomed as were the thank you cards distributed to all staff.</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p><u>Health and Wellbeing Resources:</u> The Trust invests in a number of resources to support health and wellbeing and everyone interviewed was able to describe the availability of suitable resources including counselling and occupational health. A wide range of activities are provided to support people maintain a healthy lifestyle and a regular health and wellbeing bulletin ensures that all staff are aware of the availability of resources and latest health initiatives and campaigns. This was considered an area of good practice.</p>

Recommendations and opportunities for development

These have been included under the one heading of 'Recommendations and Opportunities for Development' as they all intertwine and cannot be seen in isolation. This is the area which I believe will provide support for you as part of your journey of on-going continuous improvement.

The key areas for development that suggested are detailed below:

Recommendations and Opportunities for Development	
1.	<p><u>Devolution and Empowerment:</u> The intention to establish a culture where responsibility is devolved to individuals at an appropriate level within a structure and framework is to be commended. At the time of this review visit there were some examples of this having been implemented, to a degree, although it was clear that this is a relatively recent approach and it will take some time to develop this culture. There were a number of examples cited during this visit to suggest that the management style adopted by some managers did not reflect this vision.</p> <p>This approach is considered to be conducive in respect of developing a high performance organisational culture and aligns with version 6 of the IIP Standard against which the organisation will be reviewed in three years' time.</p> <p>It is suggested that clearly defined levels of responsibility and authority in respect of decision making will assist develop this approach. There may be some potential to improve people's understanding of "Devolution" and it is suggested that in addition to allowing time for this approach to be implemented some staff development may be necessary.</p>
2.	<p><u>Collaborative Leadership:</u> As with the previous point the intention to have a "leader in every seat" will take time to be implemented and understood. It would be fair to say that not everyone interviewed during the review believes that they are listened to or their views are taken on board. The work and training already being undertaken is to be commended, although it is anticipated that, as always, a change in culture takes time and people need to have the confidence that they are trusted to make decisions and that they will receive appropriate support.</p>
3	<p><u>Transformation of Services/ Restructuring:</u> At the time of this review visit, some parts of the organisation had recently been involved in a restructuring exercise and other areas were under review or working practices were being amended. As with any change there is inevitably some anxiety and whilst examples were cited of formal consultation being undertaken, not everyone felt that their views, opinions or concerns were genuinely being heard. There were some examples of sharing of experiences it is suggested that perhaps more could be done in this respect.</p>
4.	<p><u>RIO – Administration:</u> There were numerous negative comments received regarding the perceived duplication of effort in respect of this system. It is understood that this is an area which has been already been identified as requiring streamlining, or simplification and whilst a number of people explained that there are benefits in terms of patient records, many staff believe that valuable time is taken up administrating the system.</p>
5.	<p><u>Staff Engagement:</u> The introduction of "Speak Easy" sessions and "Conversations" are both ideas to be commended, although it is suggested that there is some potential to raise awareness of the purpose of these initiatives in some areas and in order to maintain the momentum ensure that these approaches deliver quantifiable results and actions.</p>

6.	<p><u>Sickness Management and Mental Health:</u> There were some issues raised regarding perceptions of the sickness management policy and the potential impact of this approach on people’s mental health. It is appreciated that the policy is intended to help reduce the sickness levels within the Trust, providing a clear and consistent approach. There may be some potential to review the current policy, although this is merely a suggestion.</p>
7.	<p><u>Leadership and Management Effectiveness:</u> Whilst there was evidence that managers adhere to the HR policies in respect of supervision and appraisal, there were some issues raised regarding the effectiveness of some managers in terms of empowerment, listening and consistency in their approach to supporting people.</p> <p>There were a couple of examples cited where “bullying” was seen to be part of the culture, which of course is extremely worrying, although it was evident that the Trust has very clear policies in place for dealing with this issue.</p> <p>The availability of appropriate leadership and management training was in evidence during this review visit. It is suggested that the style adopted by some line managers is not in keeping with the proposed culture of the Trust and where this is the case it is recommended that 360 degree feedback should be used to effect changes in behaviours and leadership style.</p>
8.	<p><u>Version 6 of the Investors in People Standard:</u> As mentioned in the previous development points, the next review visit will be undertaken against a different version of the IIP Standard and it is suggested that benefits would be gained from developing an action plan which aligns to this new version of the Standard. It is suggested that the organisation may wish to access the Investors in People website to undertake a self-diagnosis and, at some point in the future, it may be worth attending a Version 6 workshop.</p>

Quotes from Interviews

I have included below a range of quotes from my interview notes, all are anonymized to ensure confidentiality but reflect overall the views of those interviewed during this review visit.

“We feel as though we are more valued than previously”

“We have established a Positive Workforce Group, which includes representatives from each site and staff group”

“You can nominate anyone for the Shine a Light Awards - which are really great”

“My manager has been very supportive in terms of meeting my health and wellbeing needs”

“There is a delegated approach to management of both the service and staff”

“We have had a number of internal promotions and succession planning is happening as we are investing in junior staff”

“...emails from senior managers, it’s the little things that matter”

“Staff turnover is high due to the pressure of the role”

“Service users are more challenging, although we have a great team who have excellent skills and are highly motivated”

“We have a drop in on the ward which is a good opportunity to meet with the service manager”

"I'm not sure what is meant by Devolution"

"Training dashboard... people are taking responsibility for booking themselves onto training"

"I've always had good managers, who have been caring and supportive"

"The tone of the Bulletin is more relaxed"

"I've received training in supervision and appraisal"

"There is not always time to do additional training"

"I've done NVQ level 3 and autism training"

"De-escalation.. managing violence and aggression is patient centered, it is safe and the whole team adopt this approach"

"The new CEO is keen to listen to staff, there are more listening events, through Speak Easy"

"I've heard of the Speak Easy but not yet attended one... I don't think they've had one at this site"

"I have attended a Speak Easy but it wasn't what I expected and I'm not sure that anything came out of it"

"Complete autonomy as long as we are following good practice"

"Team members feel a sense of ownership of decision making... don't feel that they are clinically compromised"

"I am proud to work for the NHS to make a difference by helping people"

"I value my staff, but I personally don't feel that I am valued"

"I am not sure that central recruitment works for our department, we have staff shortages"

"The shift pattern suits my lifestyle and I believe I have a good work life balance"

"I feel I can make decisions but with support"

"I manage staff wellbeing, carry out return to work interviews and refer people onto Team Prevent"

"It would be good to get a bit more recognition, we occasionally get some during team meetings"

"The afternoon staff don't attend meetings but there are notice boards"

"I've undertaken Stress Risk Assessments in the team as there is a lot of pressure and we have agreed plans to address the issues"

"I personally don't feel valued, everything I've done hasn't been recognized"

"I enjoy the job, the majority of people who work here are nice people"

"We have monthly business meetings, in addition to clinical meetings and an away day is planned to discuss strategy"

"They were very supportive when I was ill, they arranged counselling"

"Words but not action"

"I'm not given the opportunity to use my skills and not encouraged to progress"

"Too many meetings not enough action"

"This is an excellent team, with a clear structure and the pathway is very clear"

"The mentoring support has been very professional"

“As a team we look after each other”

“We’ve done a staff wellbeing questionnaire and had mindfulness and relaxation sessions”

“North East Learning Academy ... I’ve attended a 3 day Leadership Programme and Coaching and Mentoring sessions”

“There wasn’t much consultation when we were restructured”

“There are really good communications in the team”

“The Schwartz Round sessions have been really useful”

“The Health and Wellbeing Bulletin informs about lifestyle events and physical health campaigns, like the Flu campaign happening at the moment”

“Staff wellbeing projects and a wellbeing calendar with a list of activities like weightwatchers, walking groups and relaxation sessions”

“I feel that RIO is impacting on my ability to see patients, it takes up so much time”

“Communications have improved.... The Bulletin, Chatterbox, Twitter Feed”

Conclusion

Overall this was a positive review visit, although there were some issues regarding the attendance at interviews, however a concerted effort was made to ensure a sufficient number of people were interviewed to ensure a representative sample was covered during the review visit. There was, generally, a feeling that the culture was changing to become more inclusive and less of a “command and control” type of approach. There was evidence in some areas that the collaborative leadership approach is beginning to be adopted, although it will take some time for this significantly different style to be embedded into the organisation. Whilst a number of areas of the organisation are in the midst of changes to working practices there was evidence that there are opportunities for sharing of good practice and learning from the experiences of others.

There is a good understanding of the resources available to support people’s health and wellbeing and the majority believe that appropriate support is provided by managers and the Trust, in this respect, although there were some issues regarding the sickness management policy and the potential impact of this on mental health.

There have been a number of improvements effected since the last review visit including those to communication, and the consistency in application of appraisal and supervision.

The vast majority of those interviewed commented positively on improvements to the visibility of Directors and Senior Managers and the more relaxed style of leadership evidenced in the approachability of the Directors.

Morale within the Trust was considered to be relatively high in most areas and people were genuinely delighted with the result of the CQC visit and the positive feedback and recognition they had received as a result of this achievement.

Having carried out this assessment process in accordance with the guidelines provided by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) I am satisfied that Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust continues to meet the requirements of the Investors in People Standard and the Health and Wellbeing Good Practice Award. On behalf of Investors in People North of England I would like to congratulate you on this achievement.

This review was only conducted against the Standard and all indicators within the Standard were fully met and where there was evidence of criteria being met beyond the Standard this has been annotated at Appendix 2

Following the Review visit, you will be asked to complete a feedback questionnaire. I would be most grateful if you would complete this following the receipt of your report as I am performance managed through this mechanism. It is now a pre-requisite of Investors in People that an 18 month development visit is undertaken – the scale of this activity can range from a telephone call to a full scale assessment. We can discuss in more detail when we meet to discuss and agree the content of your Continuous Improvement Plan, a draft of which is attached to this report. (Appendix 3)

Appendix 1

Health & Wellbeing Matrix

Evidence Requirement	Health and Wellbeing Indicators									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
2	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
3	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
4	█		█	█	█		█	█		█
5	█		█	█	█					█
6	█		█	█	█					█
7	█									
8	█									
9	█									

Appendix 2

Investors in People Feedback Matrix

Evidence Requirement	Investors in People Indicators									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
2	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
3	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
4	Green	Green	Green	White	Green	White	Green	White	Green	Green
5	Green	White	Green	White	White	White	Green	White	Green	White
6	Green	White	Green	White	White	White	White	White	White	White
7	Green	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White
8	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White
9	Green	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White
10	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White
11	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White
12	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	Green
13	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White
14	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White
15	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White
16	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White
17	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White
18	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White
19	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White
20	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White
21	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White
22	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White
23	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White
24	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White
25	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White
26	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White
27	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White
28	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White
29	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White

APPENDIX 3 : Continuous Improvement Plan

Issue What	Suggested Action(s) How	Potential Benefits / Impact of Taking No Action Why	Suggested Timescale When	Potential Solutions / Support Available Who
<u>Devolution and Empowerment</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased understanding of devolution 2. Clarity of roles and defined levels of decision making responsibility 3. Provision of appropriate training/support for staff at all levels 4. Encourage staff to challenge the status quo 5. Share successes and achievements through communication channels 	<p>Benefit:</p> <p>Development of high performing teams and a high performing organisation, using the skills, knowledge and experience of staff across all disciplines and parts of the organisation.</p>		
<u>Staff Engagement and Consultation</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve awareness of “Conversations” 2. Share successes of changes made as a result of Speak Easy sessions 3. Improve perceptions regarding effectiveness of consultation events 	<p>Benefit:</p> <p>Achievement of the desired organisational culture and a workforce who believe their views and ideas are heard.</p>		

<p><u>Leadership and Management</u></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Utilise feedback from staff surveys to address any issues raised regarding management effectiveness 2. Application of 360 degree feedback process 	<p>Benefit: Consistent approach in terms leadership style</p>		
<p><u>Investors in People Version 6</u></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Undertake a self-assessment of performance using the IIP benchmarking tool 2. Consider attendance at IIP Workshop 3. Develop an appropriate action plan based upon findings of self assessment 	<p>Benefit: Advance preparation for next IIP review visit and implementation of recognised good practice.</p>		