



# Jan's Weekly Update

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## Do I Listen?

One of my jobs and the job of any team leader is to listen to staff, patients, their families and the public and then to make sense of what I hear. Do I need to take action, prompt and encourage to make sure someone else takes action, keep watch to see how things go, or am I being told to help someone make their own decisions who just need an ear and a bit of advice.



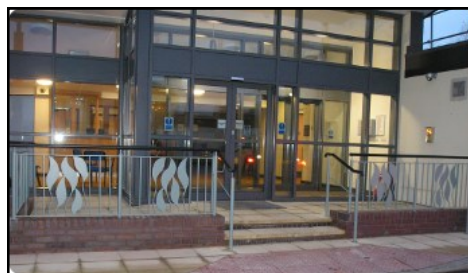
## For Example

I've done a lot of listening this week, it's come in the form of emails where I'm quietly watching to see that we deal with an issue for an individual member of staff - something not in my gift to sort but my responsibility to make sure it happens fairly and in a timely way; I met with Alison Trumper in her Freedom to Speak Up Guardian role who shared some issues staff had shared with her and interestingly I shared some concerns I'd heard and asked her to check out; I met with a team leader who is having some real challenges who wanted help to work out what to do next and actually on this occasion I can take action to help - doesn't take the challenge away but I can help.

I've read a number of complaints this week and thought about how we've investigated and responded. I always ask myself did we listen to the person complaining, what we have done to fix it, have we explained in a way that's understandable and where it's unfair or factually incorrect, have we politely said that.

## Out and About Listening

The Exec team visited Bishops Castle yesterday. It was, as always lovely to be there. We are always made welcome and able to have open and honest conversations about the challenges they've faced recently and what's gone well. The patients reported they felt safe and well cared for, the team cared about each other and respected their leaders. Their problems with staffing are improving, not out of the woods but much better.



Today I'm at Board all day - I will hear our Non-Executive Directors and my team discuss our reports, hear what they are worried about, what they need help with and where they've succeeded. The public will be there and will ask questions, they will understandably expect to be heard and today we will hear what it's like to be a student nurse in our organisation.

## Making sense of it all.....

So how do I make sense of all this listening - how do I ensure staff know I've heard and how do I know when to keep the information to myself because someone just wanted to tell me and when to act. It's complicated but also simple - any team leader on a daily basis works out when they are being asked for support, when to let people solve their own problems (because they do it better) when to offer advice and when to act. It's no different to how we work with patients, supporting them through their challenges. We can't always make the challenges go away but we can make things easier, safer, and more doable.

So, this week I followed up to ensure someone is being treated fairly - they won't know I've done that. I listened when two individuals came to share their challenges and left the door open if they need to do it again. I made changes to the way we responded to a complaint and asked that we take action to a new complaint. I asked my team to split up on our visit to focus on their responsibilities and see if we can help with issues raised by staff and to check where we have taken action. It's having an effect and I will watch to see if actions agreed reduce the risks where people have reported that they are under pressure. Finally I made sure that our teams that will be working this weekend have what they need, know who's around to support them and that our partners in the system know what we are doing to support them.

I don't walk alongside you every day and I don't need to know how you deal with every challenge you competently manage daily but I do listen, and my team listens and we agree how we will respond. We won't always agree with you on what we should do because we have other things to consider in the mix, but we should share that thinking with you if the decision affects you. We can't take all the challenges away, but we can support and learn...

## And finally

It's obviously Easter this weekend many of you are off and I wish you a happy restful weekend with whoever you want to be with. For those of you working, thank you - and make sure you get your "Easter Break" soon.

I am taking some time off next week so Julie Thornby will be in my slot.

So until next time.....

HAPPY EASTER

Jan Ditheridge

Chief Executive

Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust

