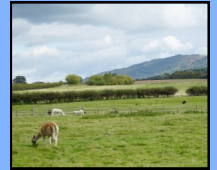




Jan's Weekly Update

Jan Ditheridge, Chief Executive

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Talking to each other

Disappointed - a bit of a negative and not particularly helpful feeling - that's how I felt for about 24 hours this week. I'd heard a fair amount of feedback that communication hadn't been as good as it could have been, leading to confusion and, in some cases, upset. Then I thought, hang on, we're all talking about it. People are saying they don't understand, need something different, feel upset by the way something has been done. We can learn from this, put it right, we're talking to each other. That's a really good thing.

Our Future

So, we sent out a communication recently describing next steps for our future. I've heard from a number of places that it wasn't very clear and people have questions about what it really means. You're right - it's not nearly as clear as our original ambition to find an organisation to acquire us but there are somethings that are clear. We need to continue to be the best we can be, maintaining and improving what we do today and influencing what services should look like tomorrow.



We are part of a system change, a move to more integrated services which is happening everywhere in the country and actually something we know a lot about. It may eventually mean we, or others, don't exist as a particular organisation, but our services and skills will be required if we are to meet the needs of our population going forward.



This week, we heard that a new leader has been appointed as the Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP) Chair. His name is Sir Neil McKay and he is an experienced system leader who will help our economy think differently about how we join up services, where it makes sense, to deliver better care. Neil led on the workshops to decide our next steps, so he knows us quite well and, I think, this helped him make the decision that he wanted to come and work in Shropshire. This new leadership will help our system refocus and some things that are happening nationally will make it easier for us to work differently together.

We intend to do some half-days soon where you will hopefully be able to pop in to discuss and hear more. We'll put some communications out for those who prefer to read it.

We will also ensure your leaders are well briefed so you can talk about it and ask any questions in your teams. It isn't all clear and set-in-stone, but we are good at what we do and should continue to be just that. I can assure you, you'll be involved in any plans for the future in a timely way. Maybe we can get Neil to come to one of those sessions so you can meet him.

Our people

Some of you have been going through significant change separate to what's happening in the system. Our 0 - 19 service in Shropshire are well into implementing the new model for our young people and we heard a very motivating presentation at Quality and Safety Committee yesterday about how far they've come, what the new service is revealing in terms of positives, where the challenges are and how things are improving for staff. We know the change wasn't easy and there were things we could all have done differently to make things easier for individuals, but I hope we've learnt loads from that to ensure people are involved, can and do ask when they're feeling uncomfortable and there are more ways to work through issues. Change is tough - but also, done well, it can be energising and motivating. We all have lots to learn from how this service have worked through this change.

What's kept them together through the tough times? They care about and respect each other and they are passionate about delivering outstanding services for Children and Young People.



Speaking up

A few weeks ago, I talked about something that didn't go well - one of the teams involved felt quite emotional about that because they thought it was a bit unfair, and they told me that.

So I thought about it and went to talk to them. I'll admit to being a bit nervous because I wasn't sure how the conversation would go. It was important to me that they feel valued, know their hard work is recognised and that they can take a step back and think about what learning they could take from the situation.

I shouldn't have worried. They were open, respectful, professional and I hope we all got the opportunity to talk, share our thoughts and get a sense of what we've all learned from this. I took away a lot of learning and I can do something to make sure it changes. I will make sure that staff are absolutely involved in feedback we get, have the opportunity to contribute to the investigation and feel involved in any actions and learning that come out of that investigation. I need to support those we ask to investigate on top of their busy day job.

I saw a group of staff who are passionate, skilled, compassionate and experienced who, like me, still have things to learn and maybe change. The important thing is we create the environment where discussion can lead to the best outcomes.

I don't regret saying we didn't get it right, I will continue to do that, but I am really pleased they called out so we could talk. It's not about blame, it's about understanding, learning and accepting we can't make absolutely everything right for patients and their families, but we should know where we can. Interestingly, the one phrase they hadn't seen in my brief was "outstanding care" - I think some of us find it harder to hear genuine praise than we do less positive feedback!

That was a very positive experience for me. After an hour with one of our teams, I learnt more about so many things that I would in weeks of meetings...

So, let's keep talking. We all come to work to do a good job, we won't always get it right but we can all learn, understand each other's point of view and make work life a bit easier if we talk to each other once in a while.

Until next week...

Jan Ditheridge
Chief Executive

