



# Jan's Weekly Update

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## Talking to each other is important

You know that, obviously, but how much time do you really spend talking with the people that make the difference to you at work, the work you do and the work you will do in the future? Do you take time to get to know each other, understand what motivates you, what's worrying you and what ideas you have with each other?

That could be people you work alongside every day in your team, staff from other teams or services, leaders and corporate staff who dip in and out of your working lives.

## Why am I asking the question?

This week the value of talking became very visible to me.

I started the week meeting with other system leaders to discuss how we will ensure we have services to meet the needs of our population in the future, how we will ensure staff what to work in health and care now and in the future, and how we will share our resources and skills to accomplish that. This is all part of the STP work I talk about. We are making sure that all the projects and plans we are involved in join up and make sense for everyone across the system.



We worked hard all day then, probably for the first time I can remember, we all went out for dinner together. It wouldn't have been my first choice on a Monday night due to the early start but it was really worth it - I learnt so much more about the people I work with in a couple of hours over dinner than we could have achieved in weeks of meetings. That will help us when the challenges come because we have a better understanding of each other's values, strengths and motivations.

## More Feedback

I met with a member of staff leaving our organisation soon - sadly leaving Shropcom but going on to exciting new things, so that's okay. I heard some feedback that was both insightful and will help me think about how we do things differently in the future. My only regret is that conversation didn't happen sooner - with those involved or through people like me.

We're getting there, but have still got work to do to make it okay for everyone to feel comfortable to explore when things haven't gone as they'd expect - to be able to talk it through - maybe not always agree but at least get a shared understanding of what prompted actions and behaviours.

I always start with the premise that everyone comes to work to do a good job and doesn't come to work to make my life difficult - it's a good starting place for difficult conversations, I've found.

I've been in Manchester for a couple of days, which I'll tell you about in a moment. I got the milk train up there and want to mention what the taxi driver told me on the way to the station.

He asked me what I did and I said I worked for Shropcom - he then said "well I've written to your Chief Executive", at which point I felt I should tell him that was me ! I braced myself for the next line... which was how fantastic our Diabetes Service had been for him - life changing - and in particular the time Rebecca had spent with him, who really helped him make sense of how he would live with Type 2 Diabetes without lecturing him. I always remember feedback I get but couldn't recall this one - and we've since looked and can't find it. We think it's gone to the wrong address.

So Rebecca in our Diabetes Service, Ian thinks you are amazing and he said to tell you he's enjoying cricket and has just signed up for the gym! You treated him with respect and dignity, which he won't ever forget.

If it had been tricky feedback I'd have welcomed that too - it's just harder to manage well in a 10 minute taxi ride and 0530 in the morning!

## So Manchester

Nuala O'Kane, our Chair; Jaki Lowe, Director of People and I went to the NHS Confederation Conference - you may remember I go most years.

In two days we get the opportunity to learn what others are doing, hear from National leaders, policy makers, politicians and service users and patients. It's time to spend time with my colleagues and catch up with people I've not seen for a while.

Stand out moments ?



Opportunities to talk with other leaders from Community Trusts – check we're on the right track, swap notes and learning, explore new technologies with some of the companies on the stands, hear from staff, service users and public about what they want from their healthcare or the place they work and get a sense of what is on the minds of senior leaders in the NHS. It's also an opportunity to bend their ear about things that are bothering us and we'd like some help with - or shout out about what Shropcom are doing well - a bit like you do when Board members or Execs come to visit you in your services.

The sessions and stands were high quality but the real value was in the conversations it stimulated over coffee or on the way to the next session that really added value for me.



I listened to an amazing lecture from Professor Topol, who produced a report recently on the next generation of technology in the NHS for our Health Secretary, Matt Hancock, and how we will all need to develop to work effectively with it. He was beamed in from San Diego which worked really well, it was a very impressive presentation talking about the capabilities of Artificial Intelligence in the future of health care - mind blowing.

However, what really struck me was his clear message that AI's greatest gift will be to give us back time to care, to talk to each other and our patients because that's what makes us human - time for compassion, care and interaction with others play as big a part if not bigger in the healing process or enjoying the work we do as any diagnostic, treatment medication or procedure.

I know you know that but always worth reminding ourselves.

The conversations you have with your patients, their families, colleagues and strangers in the street will be the most important things you do in your working week. Invest in them... make them count.

Until next week...

**Jan Ditheridge**  
Chief Executive

**PS** The Topol Review I talk about above is well worth a read. [You can find it here.](#)

**PPS!** Hot off the press news: I found out earlier this week that the Telford Wound Healing Service had been shortlisted for a national award but I wasn't allowed to talk about it as the news was embargoed. Well that embargo was lifted this afternoon, so I can now share it publicly. Congratulations to the team who are one of the finalists in the 'Innovation in Chronic Wound Management' category. These are prestigious awards, so it is a measure of the team's impact that they have made it through.

