



Jan's Weekly Update

Jan Ditheridge, Chief Executive

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Making sense of it all

When I worked in a clinical role while I valued my line manager I have to confess I had very little interest in what those above them did.

My curiosity grew as I developed as a leader, mainly motivated by how I could change things, make things better - no different to my motivations as a nurse.

I am really pleased I moved into leadership and management and although you have to look in different places still believe I'm making a difference for patients and their families.

However there are days when I still doubt that - probably your equivalent of why am I filling these 25 forms in, why is this bit of information so urgent, are we focusing on the right priorities - I've just spent hours in a meeting going over the same ground, agreeing little and still not sure how it's making things better for staff and patients.

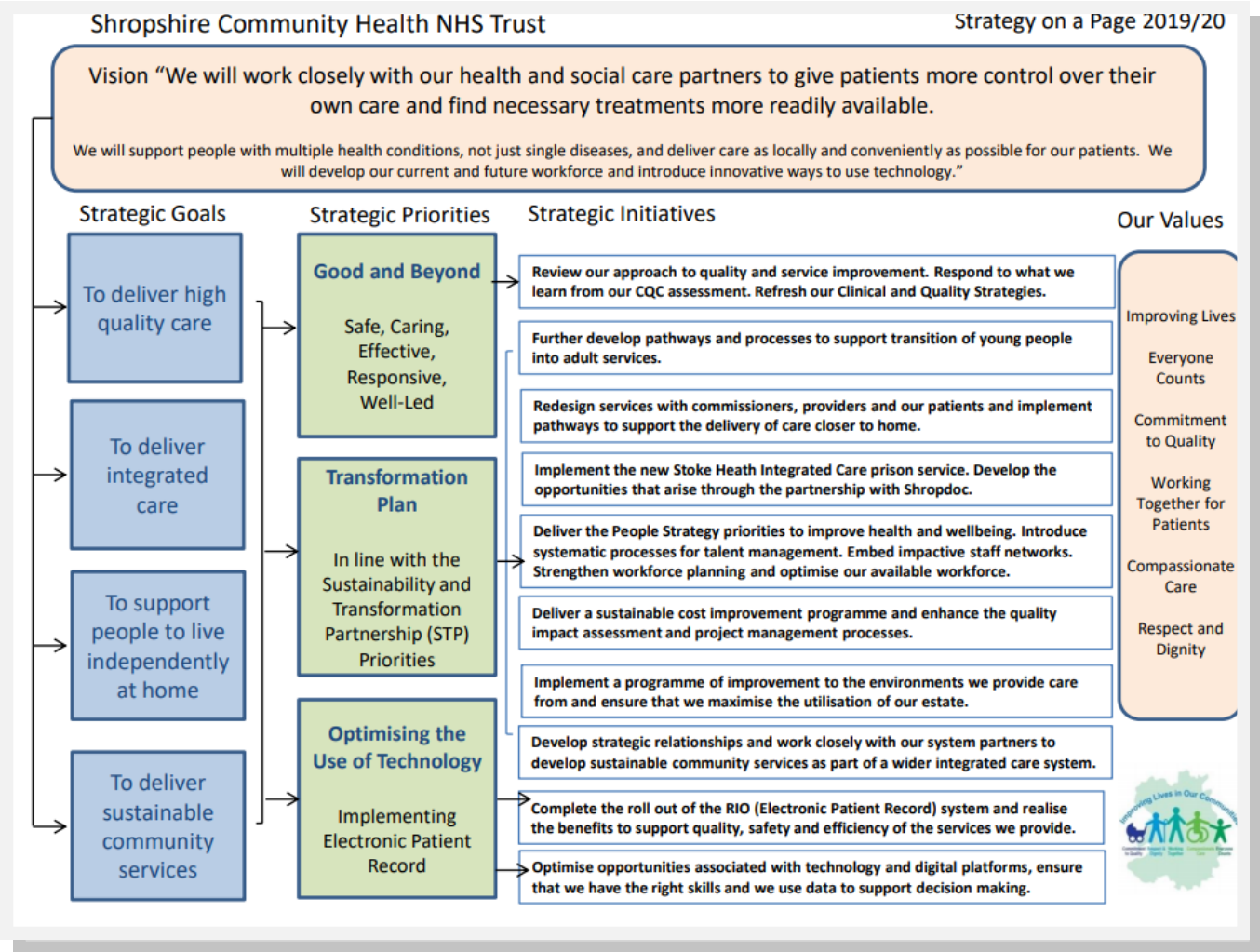
The downside is I know days like this de-energise me The upside is that they don't happen that often and when they do it reminds me to think about what impact me and my team might be having. Do we make things over complicated, take people away from important work unnecessarily - are we focussing on the important things that will make a difference? I do know there is a place for bureaucracy - it helps us think, change things and keeps us safe.

Good bureaucracy in action

It was our Board meeting yesterday - we took some time to consider the National NHS Long Term Plan in detail, what it might mean for us and asked ourselves if we need to refresh our priorities in light of the national plan.

We think we are pretty much on track and the priorities we need to refresh are mainly because we've done what we said we would do - Getting to Good and Implementing EPR for example.

One thing we did consider was our goals and what we mean by 'Support people to live independently'. There was a suggestion that should develop that into "support people to live the lives they want to lead" - something many of you have heard me say many times - we debated what that meant. Can we really do that? I've added our Strategy on a Page below to remind you what I'm talking about. I'd love to hear your thoughts on what our next big priorities should be. Let me know...



In the afternoon we went on our clinical visits and it was really easy to show how we realise that goal every day - making it possible for people to live the lives they want to lead.

Harmesh Darbhanga, one of our Board non-executives, and I went to visit the Continence team at Lancaster Road, where we heard many examples of how lives improve significantly with their support - people get trapped in their homes, won't pick up their child in the playground, never go on holiday or shy away from a new job because of the limitations incontinence puts on them. Our team of skilled practitioners help them reverse this, expertly and compassionately.

I then took the opportunity to show Harmesh the Wheelchair Service and introduce him to some of the staff there - again zillions of examples of person-centred care - listening to what people need and want to enjoy a fulfilling life despite their disability or illness.

What also struck me is the power of team work - the continence team rely on each other to be an effective team, punching far above their weight or size (there aren't many of them) to provide expertise and support to our community teams, as well as individual patients.

Relatively small interventions like the Catheter challenge making a big difference to patients and the community teams ability to manage their workload, sharing knowledge, and skills, supporting each other across professional boundaries creating better care for patients. Fantastic examples of constantly finding ways to improve care and keep the stuff that works well.

The word 'Team' in many of our services - and certainly Continence and Wheelchair Services - means integration, cooperation and blending of skills. It took two minutes to see that working really well at Lancaster Road - exceptional administrative staff organising the day (and coming weeks), providing really good front of house customer care skills keeping people calm and on track, clinicians using their expertise to inform good patient plans and skilled technicians and drivers making sure the kit is all it can be and get it out there at the right time.

We took some thoughts back about how good bureaucracy - systems and processes - could help improve things and make their ideas come to life.

So after a bit of a week bogged down in bureaucracy I ended the week seeing exactly how leadership, management and hands on care blended together at its best makes a massive difference to the people we care for and does on a daily basis massively contribute to helping them live the lives they want to lead. It reminded me that good bureaucracy is alive and well.

So I'm going to leave it there this week.

Until next week...

Jan

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Chief Executive

