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Health Service Executive

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Staff Engagement Improvement Plan

1. Introduction

The first ever health sector wide employee survey was undertaken in late 2014 and the results from the survey were published and communicated to our employees, service users and the general public in April 2015.

While there were some encouraging positives coming out of the survey that could be built on, there were other areas identified as requiring further attention, which also included leadership challenges. These are briefly detailed below:

Positives to build on:

- Employees have clear planned goals and objectives
- Teamwork metrics 'reasonably good'
- Around average levels of 'Satisfaction', 'Motivation', 'Enthusiasm' and 'Happiness in their jobs'
- Trusted to do my job / My level of responsibility / Using my skills
- Job security / Intention to stay
- Pride in working for Health Services
- Average: Working conditions, workplace atmosphere & work life balance
- Incident and fraud reporting encouraged and majority reported

Areas that require further attention:

- Uncertainty about personal futures
- Resources to do my job
- Involvement in decisions / Ability to make improvement suggestions
- Feeling valued by HSE / Recognising my performance
- Level of pay
- Understanding HSE strategy
- Belief that services are deteriorating
- Belief that Patient care is not HSE's top priority
- Diversity, equal opportunities and respect
- Poor culture 'fit'

Leadership challenges:

- Collecting and Acting on feedback
- Communication – upward (Listening) and quality
- Managing change
- Promoting confidence in our decisions
- Only one in three endorse our strategy
- Many unsure of our strategy
- Providing opportunities to develop
- Promoting Staff Health & Wellbeing
- Protecting ‘whistle-blowers’, acting on incidents
- Overall employment ‘offer’

In addition the results of the survey recommended the following seven areas for improvement:

1. **Address uncertainty:** There is pessimism among some staff about what the future holds and a lack of clarity on the Health Services’ strategy and direction
2. **Reconnect with Leadership:** Most staff do not have confidence in Senior Management in terms of their decisions, communications and change management
3. **Improve poor advocacy:** Some staff feel that care of patients is not the top priority of the Health Service, making them less likely to recommend it, either as an employer or its services
4. **Enhance communications:** Despite having many channels for internal communications, many of these are not meeting employees’ needs
5. **Demonstrate employee value:** Many employees do not feel their work is valued or acknowledge by managers and the organisation as a whole, with a lack of recognition and respect in evidence
6. **Maximise potential:** Staff want more involvement in decisions that affect them and greater opportunities for training, development and career progression
7. **Recognise diversity:** Many do not believe that the diversity of employees is valued, with some discrimination also in evidence

2. Action Plan to Develop Employee Engagement Initiatives

Once the survey results were published the next steps agreed with the Leadership Team was use the results to strategically determine where to focus resources for maximum impact by identifying the areas of disengagement/dissatisfaction for targeted initiatives/improvements.

To inform this process Focus Groups, representative of staff from all grades and disciplines, were held across the country to seek their views and opinions on what actions could be taken to address areas requiring attention. Focus Groups were led by each Hospital Group, Community Healthcare Organisations (CHO) and HSE Corporate supported by the relevant HR Partner. The sessions provided a platform to seek input from employees on how to address the shortcomings highlighted in the survey and to specifically address the seven areas recommended for improvement. These groups were also encouraged to further explore the areas identified in the survey as requiring improvement and to establish if these were indeed the most important areas of concern.

The sessions were held within a tight timeframe of six weeks and we are grateful to all staff that so willingly participated and engaged in the process. The outcome from the focus groups has formed the basis of local Staff Engagement Improvement Plans.

It is important to acknowledge that to affect real change in employee engagement across the health services the biggest impact will be made by local management at delivery unit level. In this regard it is recognised and accepted that the newly formed Hospital Groups and CHO's may experience both challenges and opportunities in implementing local Staff Engagement Improvement Plans while at the same time trying to establish their new organisational structure. In addition it is acknowledged that this survey is the first time a health sector wide approach has been taken to both seek the views and opinions of employees and to take action to address the gaps identified. For this reason trying to address every possible action item identified through the process may stretch resources thin and is likely to overwhelm both employees and managers and may create a turbulent organisational environment.

Acknowledging these challenges and opportunities, key emerging themes in addition to more locally focused actions, have been identified from each individual local plan and this information has been brought together in this document to form an overall national plan for the health services to be approved by the Leadership Team. This organisational wide plan identifies specific actions required to be undertaken across the health sector to ensure consistency of approach and employee experience in the future. These actions have been set out under key emerging themes set out in No. 2 of this document.

2.1 Communication

- Opportunities to share the Vision and Organisational Strategy must become part of 'how we do business around here'.
- Internal communication between managers and staff requires significant enhancement to ensure two-way communication processes are further developed and implemented. All communication opportunities should be based on the principle of encouraging employees to 'speak truth to power' with leaders/managers receiving feedback openly without prejudice or stereotyping employee behaviour.

2.1.1 Specific actions:

Outcome to be achieved	Action Required
Open regular, honest and transparent staff briefing sessions / workshops that build trust	Quarterly Briefing Sessions held face to face with facility to broadcast on web
Formal opportunities for staff to give feedback on organisational strategy and direction	Bi annual Focus Groups / Workshops
Listen and act on employee feedback promptly	Internal Communication Strategy to be developed in consultation and collaboration with employees
Reduce over reliance on email to communicate vision/message from senior management	Explore through exploitation of social media platforms that facilitate two-way communication e.g. Yammer (MS product)
All employees have own email address and access to PC in work	On appointment to role email address to be set up. This can be done at recruitment/induction stage

2.2 Senior Management

- Visibility of managers needs to be enhanced
- Consistency and understanding of impact of decision making by senior management required
- Coaching management style the preferred way of working

2.2.1 Specific actions:

Outcome to be achieved	Action Required
Greater understanding and recognition of challenges at front line by senior management	'Back to the floor' interactions between senior management and staff on a regular planned basis. At least once a year
Coaching management style adopted throughout the organisation as a way of working	Provision of coaching to all senior management to assist with their management style

2.3 Performance Management

- Relationship with line managers – ensure managers and staff discuss their job and development regularly
- More involvement of staff in planning new and existing services

2.3.1 Specific actions:

Outcome to be achieved	Action Required
All staff have clear role/job descriptions	Line managers to work with their direct reports to ensure clear role/job description is in place
Every employee has a Personal Development Plan (PDP)	Line managers to work with their direct reports to ensure the development of individual PDP's
Training in place for line managers on how to conduct Performance Management / PDP reviews	Training programme developed in consultation / collaboration with service managers

2.4 Reward/Recognition

- Develop mechanisms to acknowledge, recognise and value the work of staff
- Celebrate and share success
- Develop organisational brand, identity and pride

2.4.1 Specific actions:

Outcome to be achieved	Action Required
Annual event to celebrate and recognise employee achievements and success	Establish mechanism to identify employee achievements and success. Nominate and award employees

Non-monetary employee incentives implemented on a monthly basis	Identify and agree incentives e.g. employee of the month, long service award, rotation of staff
The employee value proposition is clearly articulated and the health services is seen as an employer of choice	Establish a health sector wide Working Group that includes direct engagement with staff in the development of an organisational wide Employer Branding Strategy , which will also include specific plans for each delivery unit

2.5 Teamwork

- Involve staff in decision making that affects their role and service area
- Encourage and foster cross team communication and working

2.5.1 Specific actions:

Outcome to be achieved	Action Required
Regular team meetings held by all teams, at least monthly	All line managers to ensure team meetings are held at least once a month
Employees are always consulted on all decisions that affect their role and the service they provide	Employees are actively encouraged to table items for discussion at team meetings and have a voice in decisions that affect them and their role
Employees are appraised of developments in their service area and are clear about how their role is aligned to the organisational strategy and direction	Organisational strategy is included in team meeting agenda and mechanism for employees to feedback to senior management is established

2.6 Development Opportunities

- Every staff member to have a clear line of career progression identified and facilitated
- Career development opportunities consistently applied
- Job rotation / enrichment should be part of continuous career development
- Promote gender balance in leadership roles

2.6.1 Specific actions:

Outcome to be achieved	Action Required
Talent management and succession management proactively planned and executed	Identify employees for talent management and succession management training /development annually

Multidisciplinary training is the preferred option as appropriate	Links are established across all professional training programmes to identify and agree training programmes that can be delivered through multidisciplinary programmes
Local training on basic people management and personal development skills e.g. interview skills, presentation skills, minute taking etc. implemented throughout the organisation	Review and critique of all local personal development training programmes and development of standardised approach across the organisation
Protected training time agreed for each employee and facilitated every year	Review and identification of training needs for all staff to ensure attendance at required training programmes

2.7 HR Initiatives

2.7.1 Specific actions:

Outcome to be achieved	Action Required
Opportunity for job rotation within and across services to be available to all employees within each Hospital Group, CHO and HSE Corporate	A mechanism for employees to seek a role change/transfer to be established within each Hospital Group, CHO and HSE Corporate
A formalised 'Buddy System' for all new recruits is established in each delivery unit	Volunteer employees to be sought to act as a Buddy for new recruits in each delivery unit

3. Action the agreed initiatives

In order to ensure the successful implementation of each initiative a Working Team in each Hospital Group, CHO and Corporate with clear roles and responsibilities should be established to develop the action plan and be accountable for its implementation. The Working Team will include the following four key roles:

- (1) Executive Sponsor
Hospital Group CEO/Chief Officer, CHO/National Director for Corporate, who leads in the action planning and implementation of the initiative
- (2) HR Project Manager
A member of the HR Partner's team accountable for the engagement plan. Co-ordinates and manages the project while ensuring the business maintains ownership

(3) Task Owner

Service manager who has accountability and decision making power and leads the working team in breaking down each initiative into smaller tasks

(4) Task Performer

High-potential employees or employees with special skills. A critical member of the working team they are the ones that get the work done. Participates in planning individual initiative tasks and works with Task Owners to bring initiative plans to life.

In addition to the Working Teams, a health service wide Employee Engagement Strategy Steering Group has been established under the joint chairmanship of the National Director of Human Resources and National Director of Quality Improvement Division. Draft terms of reference and wider membership of the group is currently being considered. Further details will be provided to the Leadership Team during the summer period.

Key to the success of the Staff Engagement Improvement Plans will be keeping employees updated on the progress of initiatives agreed and implemented. This requires on-going communication and will be delivered through the development of a formalised Communication Plan between National HR and National Communications. Communication will be made at both a National level to the wider organisation and then locally to each Hospital Group/CHO/Corporate.

Once the overall Staff Engagement Improvement Plan has been approved by the Leadership Team the detail on the Communications Plan can be formalised to include:

- Agreed communication touch points
 1. High level
 - ✓ Broad messages about the survey
 - ✓ Summary of results of Focus Groups
 - ✓ Intended initiatives that will be implemented and how and why they were chosen
 - ✓ Next steps – timelines, working team members and their accountabilities
 - ✓ How employees can get involved and/or get more information
 2. Specific to each Staff Engagement Improvement Plan
 - ✓ How each initiative will impact employees
 - ✓ Checkpoints and status updates
 - ✓ Milestones and roadblocks
 - ✓ Celebrations of progress
- Key messages, audiences and who will be delivering the message at each stage. (There is a role in delivering messages for the Leadership Team, the Service Manager, the Working Team and HR)
- Communication channels to be used
- Checkpoints to get feedback on action taken, monthly through the NPOG process, to ensure accountability and evaluate progress

This communication plan should run with agreed timelines until the end of the year.

4. Review and Renew

In September 2015 work will commence on planning a second health service wide Employee Engagement Survey to be conducted in Feb/March 2016. Conducting a second survey during 2015 is considered too early to be able to realise and measure the actions implemented from the Staff Engagement Improvement Plans. This cycle of employee engagement will be repeated every year thereafter as the health services embarks on a continuous improvement journey. In addition, the employee engagement scores from the survey will be included in the organisation's Balance Scorecard (BSC) and communicated to all employees alongside the other BSC measures.

5. Conclusion

It is only by listening to the views and experiences of staff that we can build improvements in the health service as a place to work. The findings of the employee survey will be used to shape our organisational values and culture. We have a unique opportunity, during this period of reform, to create a common culture across the entire health system that seeks to improve our health service so that we can be proud of it and our patients and clients can have trust in it.