

LET'S IMPROVE OUR CULTURE



What is Culture?

Culture is described as the shared ways of thinking or values that are core to an organisation, within healthcare culture can be central to many healthcare failings (Mannion and Davies, 2018). As a healthcare organisation, culture can be the driver for change or can impact quality improvement, it is therefore key to identify cultural issues early before potential failings can take place (Mannion and Davies, 2018). Organisational culture shapes the behaviour, performance and engagement of its workforce and having a good culture in place has significant benefits including promoting a culture of innovation, empowerment, trust and collaboration (Barajas, 2024). Having poor culture can hinder these aspects, therefore, to improve culture across HDUHB it is key for leaders and managers to be the driving force for this improvement to navigate change effectively, create a space for the workforce to thrive, create a motivated and loyal workforce and align to strategic goals of the organisation (Barajas, 2024).

How as Line Managers can we improve culture?

Workforce planning can be a helpful way to mitigate workforce gaps, meet the balance between demand and capacity and implement workforce strategies that meet the needs of the workforce (Peck, 2025). The imbalance of these can lead to retention and recruitment challenges, increased sickness, an impacted culture, these factors are all interconnected and can impact one another (Peck, 2025). Workforce needs can include cultural aspects such as work life balance and the desire for flexible working, HDUHB has a female heavy workforce and the ONS (2024) finds that most females leave their workplace or become economically inactive due to home and life reasons highlighting that a flexible working is needed to keep this workforce profile in work. Flexible working does not have a standard definition instead it is made up of characteristics such as where and when the work is done, this could be in the form of home working or working outside the normal working pattern to ensure work is completed (Ray and Pana-Cryan, 2021).



What are the positive and negatives?



Embedding workforce planning and strategies like flexible working can have many advantages for staff including the balance of conflicting priorities such as work patterns and childcare, increased job satisfaction and wellbeing and lessened job related stress (Ray and Pana-Cryan, 2021). Disadvantages include lines becoming blurred between home working and personal life leading to unclear boundaries for staff. However, embedding strategies that support work life balance can have many benefits to the organisation including improved culture, increased engagement and less burnout which leads to improved sickness rates and turnover (Ray and Pana-Cryan, 2021).

Effective Planning is Key to Workforce Wellbeing



Providing development opportunities for staff can build culture amongst the workforce and build reputation as an employer, although it must be clear to staff how to navigate this process, this could be achieved through the intranet site (Redwood et al, 2024). Alongside this, it is essential for leaders to effectively plan for the release of staff to enter education and training so that the remaining workforce do not absorb overwhelming workloads as a result. It is essential for managers to handle workloads with care to avoid decreased performance, disruption to service and impacted workplace happiness (Spagnoli et al, 2020). The main factor that contributes towards workplace stress is overwhelming workloads; this can be particular in healthcare settings as it can become the norm to go the extra mile from perceived cultures and values and can lead to staff being harmed by the system (Hewett, 2022). It is essential for managers and staff to manage their workload efficiently to avoid potential burnout and embed a culture of safe systems of work to deliver to patient needs and improve outcomes (Hewett, 2022).

Action Planning is Essential for Staff Voice



HDUHB's staff survey has received increased participation rates in recent years however engagement with the recent staff survey was 21.9%, showing there is room for improvement and follow up is needed (HDUHB, 2026a). Previously actioning staff survey results was the responsibility of Human Resources (HR) although this has since developed into a tool to drive organisational development (OD) led by leaders (Huebner and Zacher, 2022). Organisational and team level action planning can be beneficial to improving staff survey participation the following year and improve overall results as staff feel heard and valued (Huebner and Zacher, 2022). Actioning survey results can have a positive impact on organisational performance, Huebner and Zacher (2021) found that incident rates can reduce up to 50% where reported action is taken from staff surveys. There is also evidence of reduced turnover, less entering the workplace when unwell and the improved achievement of organisational goals (Huebner and Zacher, 2021). Training managers to transform words into action can lead to increased job satisfaction, decreased burnout amongst staff and is key to enable change (Harikkala-Laihinien, Faldt and Backman, (2024). HDUHB are scoping the potential of developing roles to deliver training to transform results from staff surveys into action to enrich a culture of staff voice being heard and valued to increase retention, reputation and organisational success (Maynes et al, 2024).

The elements listed are some of the ways managers can help to shape the organisational culture of HDUHB, as an organisation HDUHB will continue to emphasise that the workforce is a critical component to service delivery and enhancing patient outcomes (HDUHB, 2025c). For more information on the subjects covered in this poster, please visit HDUHB's intranet page.