**Our 2018 iMatter Story**

**OD, Leadership & Learning Management Team**

**NHS Education for Scotland**

The team came in to being when our department was formed in 2016 from the joining together of a number of NES teams working in these national specialist support areas. Encouragingly, our 2018 iMatter results were, like in 2017, very positive, with a response rate of 100% and an EEI of 95. We indicated in our action plan for the year ahead that we felt this was because:

‘We work cohesively as a management team, using time together to support fair and consistent leadership and management of the wider department, to further our own development and to support improvement in the way that the department works.”

As the report was predominantly green, in order to identify areas where we felt that work was required to sustain and further improve staff experience, in our team and more broadly in the department, we had to draw on the psychological safety that comes from spending regular ‘reflexive’ time together over the previous two years and having open, honest conversations. This led us to identify three areas of focus:

* Ensure we model organisational level iMatter components around involvement and leadership visibility during the organisational change that our department was expected to go through in 2018/19.
* Focus on our weekly team huddle practice to ensure that we are maximising the benefit of time together for our collective effectiveness and experience, focussing on headlines and what we need help with rather than outlining busyness.
* Advocating for and modelling the principles for matrix working reviewed with the wider team in September 2018, noting the importance of these to helping people to gain clarity on expectations of them in their roles and on performance feedback.

When we came together to review progress as part of the 2019 iMatter cycle, we noted that our progress included:

* Full engagement and consultation with staff during organisational change - formal and informal. Video blogs from Head of Dept as a way of getting key information out in between monthly team meetings well received by colleagues and helpful to us.
* Reviewing huddle practice and identifying need to streamline updates on planned activity in order to make time for exploring issues that matter / require peer support. Effective in making good use of time and creating further psychological safety.
* Shared a framework for matrix working with wider team and explored how this could be used to enhance involvement and feedback.

Whilst we recognised also the need to persevere with all of these actions, and specifically the need to do further work on each in light of organisational change, we felt proud that we had sustained a positive level of staff experience within our own team and the wider department during a year that has saw a significant degree of work and a degree of uncertainty about the future shape of the department and scope of roles in it. Our connectedness and relationships as a team have served us well during that period, and are reflected in our continued willingness to explore, identify and acknowledge areas where further work is required to help each of us continue to have the positive experience of being in this team and working together that we have come to enjoy.

The lessons for others form our experience are hopefully the value of relationships, and how these are supported by spending regular time together. Sometimes this is done with a questions based rather than a task focussed agenda to help build a broad understanding of issues and generate the trust necessary to challenge group norms and established practices.

Also, as we are not all based in the same office, and often work in different locations, we have learnt how to make best use of the technology available to us – Phone, Skype - to stay connected. People have valued the weekly huddles and other scheduled time together enough to not let distance get in the way of participating. This has shown us that not being in the same physical location is not a barrier to cohesive team working.