

**Creating a wellbeing strategy using an appreciative inquiry approach**

Covid-19 has elevated the importance of staff wellbeing and it is critical that wellbeing remains a top priority, this strategy aims to ensure that this happens.

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**Discovery**

NHS Lothian commissioned 'Kamwell' to support us to develop a wellbeing strategy in September 2020. We had the expertise internally to do this work but not the capacity. A external commission was also an opportunity to challenge our assumptions and have a mirror held up to our ways of working. Kamwell would normally design a staff survey and base the strategy development on the findings. Given that our staff had survey fatigue due to the number of wellbeing Covid related surveys we opted to take an appreciative inquiry approach to strategy development. We attended every meeting, forum, network, committee that we could get into to ask 'What is working well' and 'Even better if....'. We also arranged multiple 1:1's to ask the same questions, trying to ensure that all perspectives were represented.

**Dream**

Our 'even better if' conversations led to our vision 'creating a healthier, happier culture for our staff'. Our dream is to see a measurable improvement in staff wellbeing, a reduction in burnout and all staff being able to access the right support as and when required



'A great day at NHS Lothian starts when staff feel inspired and motivated about the work they do and have a clear sense of purpose and identity with their role. They are capable, developed and trusted to carry out their tasks, know how to manage their energy and feel equipped with the resources to meet any challenges with clarity and balance. They can ask for support and when they do, they are met with compassion and understanding. A sense of camaraderie and support at all levels means they feel psychologically safe and able to be themselves. Leaving work, they feel fulfilled, can let go of the events of the day and switch on to a life away from work'



**Design**

The strategy design was iterative and consultative and this led to our objectives and enablers. We drafted, consulted and redrafted over and over until the intention, aspiration and language felt right for as many people as possible.

**Delivery**

We are at the early stages of delivery but some early learning is:

- Making the strategy a corporate priority gives senior leader commitment and focus
- Making the case for wellbeing, leading with the 'ethical case' - we invest in staff wellbeing because we genuinely care about staff and feel that it is fundamentally the right thing to do, in addition to the 'business case' we invest in staff wellbeing as we know it leads to better patient experience and outcomes, and with a lower focus on the 'regulatory case' we invest in staff wellbeing because XYZ says we should and finally the 'tragic case' we invest in staff wellbeing because something tragic like a suicide has happened
- Strategy delivery and impact will not happen without resource, we have pushed hard for a dedicated senior leadership role with sole focus on delivery of the strategy
- Staff wellbeing needs to be viewed through the lens of individual, team and system levels - beware of the resilience/self care sticking plaster that places the responsibility for wellbeing fully on the individual!