INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD

Date of Meeting	07 May 2024
Report Title	Outcome of Culture Research Project
Report Number	HSCP24.024
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Consultation Checklist Completed	Yes
Directions Required	No
Exempt	No
Appendices	a. IJB Culture Review – Consolidated Report Summarised b. Culture Sounding Board – Commitments and Progress as at 19th March 2024
Terms of Reference	7. The approval or amendment of the Strategic Plan and ongoing monitoring of its delivery through the Annual Performance Report

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1.   The purpose or this report is to feedback to the Integration Joint Board (IJB) on the outcome of the Culture Research Project and seek approval for the proposed actions resulting from it.

2. Recommendations

2.1. It is recommended that the Integration Joint Board:

    a) Notes the Consolidated Report Summarised attached as Appendix A to this report and the analysis contained within paragraphs 4.9 and 4.10.

    b) Approves the proposed actions to be taken as a result of the project findings, noted within the Culture Sounding Board Commitments and Progress document at Appendix B.

3. Strategic Plan Context

3.1. As the current Strategic Plan was being developed, the IJB agreed that improving culture would have a positive impact on our ability to deliver it and developed the following Culture Statement.

"At Aberdeen IJB we are committed to a culture of high trust, built on strong relationships developed through effective conversations.

We believe that in order to be able to develop the most effective strategy and to take brave decisions required to transform health and care in Aberdeen which make it fit for now and the future, we need to foster this culture and support the development of strong, trusting relationships across Aberdeen IJB and HSCP.

Effective relationships are based on building trust between people, which creates psychological safety which in turn enables high quality conversations, honest and open communication, joint problem solving, creative energy and mutual respect.

In order to develop strong relationships, Aberdeen IJB will be intentional in protecting informal spaces for IJB and Leadership team members to come together. The informal spaces will be in the form of seminars, thinking spaces, buddying opportunities and specific joint work-streams on agreed areas of interest. Aberdeen IJB will also encourage IJB members and Leadership team members to connect informally as and when they feel appropriate via email, Teams, or over coffee as an important way of strengthening relationships."

3.2. A series of activity then followed including culture becoming a standing agenda item on the IJB Insights sessions and the creation of the Culture Sounding Board to ensure the implementation of the IJB's intention around culture and the successful delivery of the Strategic Plan.

4. Summary of Key Information

4.1. Over the summer of 2023, two masters students at Aberdeen University were tasked with undertaking a research project to determine whether there was evidence that the focus on culture was positively impacting the IJB's strategic decision making and scrutiny. It was thought that lessons learned could be fed into the development of new arrangements under the National Care Service (NCS). The research brief provided to the students was "To provide evidence of the impact of Aberdeen City Integration Joint Board's culture development work on the effectiveness of strategic decision making and scrutiny to ensure lessons learned are factored into health and care reform under the National Care Service (NCS)."

4.2. In terms of methodology, participants for the research were identified as everyone who had been involved in the IJB both past and present, including voting members, Stakeholder Representatives and members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) of Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership (ACHSCP), all including both relatively new members and more experienced members. For those who agreed to take part they were first asked to undertake an online survey where they were given 10 statements and asked to rate their attitude towards these using something called a Likert Scale which involved selecting an appropriate rating along the scale that best indicated their feeling. There was also the opportunity to elaborate on any of their ratings using free text if they wished. The next stage was an interview which was offered online. The interviews were semi structured but had a degree of flexibility. The questions used were open ended to allow participants to respond freely and all participants were assured of being in a safe space where their responses would be treated confidentially. The final report does not personalise any responses nor seek to identify any of the respondents.

4.3. The objectives of the research were: -

- To assess the effectiveness of the culture development work in fostering strong, trusting relationships across the IJB and ACHSCP teams.

- To determine the effectiveness of communication channels within Aberdeen IJB.
- To evaluate the extent to which the IJB's culture development has played a role in achieving its strategic goals and objectives.
- To assess the impact of the culture development work on staff morale, motivation, and engagement.
- To evaluate the impact of the "informal spaces" established by the IJB on promoting collaboration and effective decision making.
- To identify any gaps or areas for improvement in the current culture of the IJB and make recommendations for how these can be addressed.

4.4. The students reported some challenges they encountered before and during the research. A survey of this nature requires ethics approval, and that process required more time than initially anticipated. In terms of the sample size, 28 individuals were invited to participate, however only 11 of them agreed to this. We understand a 39% response rate to these kinds of requests is positive and anecdotally we were advised that a lack of capacity or time was the reason for those not agreeing to participate, rather than a reluctance to do so. Of the 11 participants, two were voting members, and nine were non-voting members. There were also challenges for participants who had agreed to take part finding time in their busy schedules, particularly for the interview part of the process, and this further extended the timescale to complete the research. More than 11 people completed the online survey but these submissions were not considered as participative as they could not be correlated with the interviews. The results of the research need to be considered in the light of these limitations.

4.5. Due to the extended timescales of the research itself and unavoidable delays within the governance and approval processes at the University, the report on the outcome of the research was only received in January this year. The conclusion of the report notes that "Aberdeen IJB's success lies in the deliberate cultivation of a culture of trust, cooperation, and effective communication. Despite challenges, it stands as a remarkable example of integration within healthcare and social services. Valuable insights and recommendations from their experiences can guide future initiatives, including those of the National Care Service, ensuring effective service delivery and operational excellence. The organisation's commitment to continuous improvement and adaptation positions it as a valuable case study for the broader healthcare sector".

4.6. In terms of key findings there was a significant list of positives captured from participants in terms of what they liked about working within the IJB. These included: -

- Reduced formality
- Welcoming, positive atmosphere
- Inclusivity
- Personal Relationships
- Trust
- Promoting collaboration
- Conflict Resolution
- Willingness to Learn
- Efficient Meetings
- Effective Conversations
- Good information
- Ability to focus on issues
- Supportive, Non-Hierarchical Leadership
- Creative Meeting Format
- Constructive Interactions
- Transparency and Accountability

4.7. Three areas for improvement were identified from the Key Findings as well as five Recommendations and three Lessons Learned

Areas for Improvement

1. Attendance at Development (now Insight) Sessions and Seminars
2. Uncertainty on progress towards goals and objectives
3. Hierarchical approach and insufficient structures for non-voting members to actively participate.

Recommendations

1. **Induction and Onboarding**:
   - Strengthen the induction process to provide a comprehensive understanding of the organization's vision and unique culture.
   - Mandate a thorough onboarding process for all newcomers, including the assignment of mentors to guide them.
   - Emphasise the importance of personal connections through buddy systems and informal meetings for smoother transitions.
2. **Culture Workshops and Informal Spaces**:
   - Increase the frequency and purposefulness of culture workshops, ensuring optimal scheduling for maximum participation.

- Enhance the authenticity of informal meetings to foster genuine interpersonal connections and deeper understanding among members.
3. **Politics**:
- Leaders must proactively safeguard IJB meetings from political influence to maintain a non-partisan atmosphere.
- Implement careful scrutiny of meeting materials and strategic agenda-setting to prevent political elements from overshadowing organisational objectives.
4. **Public Awareness**:
- Prioritise public awareness campaigns to educate the general public about the IJB's role and contributions.
- Organise workshops or open sessions for staff to interact with IJB members, increasing internal awareness of roles and activities.
5. **Meetings**:
- Prioritise face-to-face meetings to nurture cohesive and trust-driven organizational culture.
- Advocate for activating cameras during virtual meetings to showcase active participation and engagement.
- Exercise caution to maintain a balance between meetings and reports to prevent overwhelming workloads.

Lessons Learned

- The pivotal role of proactive leadership in maintaining a politically neutral environment within the organisation.
- The significance of face-to-face meetings in building strong relationships and fostering trust among board members.
- The importance of balancing the quantity of meetings and reports to avoid overwhelming workloads.

4.8. These were all discussed at the last two meetings of the Culture Sounding Board on 23rd January and 19th March and during the culture item at the IJB Insights sessions on 20th February and 16th April. The Culture Sounding Board maintains a 'Commitments and Progress' document which is in effect an action log. The areas for improvement, recommendations and lessons learned were reviewed and where appropriate additional actions recorded. The full document can be found at Appendix B.

4.9. In terms of the Areas for Improvement, it was noted that a hybrid option was now offered for the Insights Sessions and these are also recorded so those who cannot attend can still benefit. Progress against goals and objectives is reported monthly to the Senior Leadership Team, quarterly to the Risk Audit

and Performance Committee (RAPC), and annually to the IJB as agreed when the Strategic Plan was approved. In light of the comment made regarding uncertainty around progress, it was suggested at the Insights session on 16th April that we draw attention to the quarterly reports as they are presented to RAPC and provide the link to the Agenda which is public and can be accessed by anyone. The comment about there being a hierarchical approach and insufficient structures for non-voting members to actively participate contradicts the 'supportive, non-hierarchical leadership' comment in the key findings. During discussion at the Insights session on 16th April, most members present indicated they felt the IJB approach was collaborative and inclusive however we have included an action to investigate ways to ensure non-voting members feel included and fully involved in IJB business.

4.10. With regard to the recommendations, an action has been included to review the induction and onboarding process. At the Insights session on 16th April members were positive about their induction experience but it was felt a review could only strengthen and improve this further particularly linking IJB and the Senior leadership Team. There is already an action to increase public and staff awareness of the IJB, and action has already been undertaken in relation to the workshops and informal spaces. The other points made within the recommendations and the lessons learned served more as a reminder for the continued way IJB undertake their business rather than requiring specific action.

5. Implications for IJB

5.1. Equalities, Fairer Scotland and Health Inequality

There are no direct equalities, fairer Scotland or health inequality implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

5.2. Financial

There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

5.3. Workforce

There are no direct workforce implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

5.4. Legal

There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

5.5. Unpaid Carers

There are Unpaid Carer representatives on the IJB as Stakeholder Representatives who are non-voting members. Their views will be sought as part of the action to investigate ways to ensure they feel included and fully involved in IJB business.

5.6. Information Governance

There are no direct information governance implications arising from the recommendations.

5.7. Environmental Impacts

There are no direct environmental implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

5.8. Sustainability

There are no direct sustainability related implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

5.9. Other

None

6. Management of Risk

6.1. Identified risks(s)

If the IJB do not get the culture right there is a risk that this will impact strategic decision making and scrutiny which could ultimately impact on successful implementation of the Strategic Plan.

6.2. Link to risks on strategic or operational risk register:

This report links to Strategic Risk 5

Cause: Performance standards/outcomes are set by national and regulatory bodies and those locally determined performance standards are set by the board itself.

Event: There is a risk that the IJB, and the services that it directs and has operational oversight of, fails to meet the national, regulatory and local standards.

Consequence: This may result in harm or risk of harm to people

This report gives the IJB assurance on the work being undertaken to improve culture with a view to improving overall performance.