

REPORT TO ABERDEENSHIRE INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD – 25 OCTOBER 2017

PRODUCTIVITY & EFFICIENCY OF MULTI-DISCIPLINARY WORKING

1 Recommendation

It is recommended that the IJB:

- 1.1 **Note and comment on the initial feedback from the productivity project undertaken in the Kincardine and Mearns area**
- 1.2 **Agree to receive a further report following a repeat visit by the Meridian Productivity Ltd to evaluate progress since their initial piece of work in May and June 2017**

2 Risk

- 2.1 This report relates to IJB Risk 1; Sufficiency of resources and IJB Risk 3 – Workforce capacity.

3 Background

- 3.1 At the Integration Joint Board (IJB) on 22 March 2017 members agreed for the Chief Officer to explore the use of external support and implement any identified savings.
- 3.2 The Chief Officer commissioned Meridian Productivity Ltd (Meridian) to carry out a piece of work in the Kincardine and Mearns area to establish the level of staff productivity, system compliance and quality of service.

4 Programme

- 4.1 The test with Meridian included work with staff within Kincardine Community Hospital, District Nursing, Care Management, Home Care and Allied Health Professions. The programme of work was split into 2 phases. Phase 1 consisted of an initial analysis with Meridian personnel scrutinising existing performance data, use of resources, and 'shadowing' staff to observe working practices and reviewing existing management systems (particularly those for the allocation of work to teams and individuals.) Phase 2 consisted of the design and implementation of new processes and management control systems, and included workshops to introduce their concepts and new systems to staff concerned.
- 4.2 Meridian introduced what they refer to as a "System Concept" consisting of a "closed system loop" staged as Forecast – Plan – Assign – Follow up. The illustration below summaries the simple concept;



- 4.3 In practical terms this meant breaking down and specifically defining the most common tasks associated with each profession and agreeing a working norm time allocation. This allowed for the development of daily work plans for teams and follow up monitoring against the pre-defined targets.
- 4.4 An overview of the system put in place for District Nursing is given in Appendix 1. Daily, weekly and monthly data is gathered and is intended to be reviewed by management to inform decisions about allocation of staff resources to maximise productivity.

5 Feedback from Teams

- 5.1 Feedback from teams has been very mixed. Some staff felt that the initial observational shadowing was overly intrusive and resembled 'time and motion study' techniques. Concern was also expressed that breaking the working day into a series of pre-defined 'tasks' was an over simplification of Health and Social Care roles and risked undermining person centred approaches. Other staff felt that a more robust and systematic approach to work allocation was positive and supportive, allowing greater transparency in terms of workloads and productivity.
- 5.2 Local Managers reported some benefits, particularly more robust data on which to base decisions around the deployment of staff resources. There was however concern that some of the new processes seemed overly cumbersome. In addition, of particular concern was a feeling that Meridian struggled to comprehend the integrated 'core team' model and that these approaches could actually encourage staff to revert into more traditional silo ways of working. Given the time limitations of the Project the pace of change required was



rapid, leading to some concerns that staff had limited opportunity to reflect and take ownership of the change.

6 Summary

- 6.1 Whilst this exercise provided a greater awareness of workload scheduling it did not highlight particular areas of practice where significant budgetary saving could be made. Meridian have made some particularly helpful suggestions in terms of efficiently deploying a dispersed team of multi-disciplinary team members across a geographically varied area such as Kincardine and Mearns.
- 6.2 A significant attraction for using an external agency to undertake this piece of work was to establish if there were significant efficiency opportunities of multi-disciplinary working, especially within an environment where a single line management at a middle management level has recently been introduced. This piece of work has led officers to believe that current multi-disciplinary working in Aberdeenshire provides the best outcomes for service users and patients and, in addition provides the foundation for efficient working.
- 6.3 Aberdeenshire has historically had well-functioning multi-disciplinary teams, this work underscored that this is not the norm in some other areas where professions and organisations continue to work in silos. This exercise reinforced how valuable these long established structures and culture are to both the service users and patients but also how broadly efficient they are in terms of resource allocation.
- 6.4 Meridian will return in October 2017 to carry out an audit of information gathered by managers since July 2017 and provide further feedback.

7 Equalities, Staffing and Financial Implication

- 7.1 Finance - cost
- 7.2 Staffing implications
- 7.3 An equality impact assessment is not required as the report has no differential impact on people with protected characteristics.
- 7.4 The Chief Officer, along with the Chief Finance Officer and the Legal Monitoring Officer within Business Services of the Council have been consulted in the preparation of this report and their comments have been incorporated within the report.

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Report prepared by, Iain Ramsay, Health & Social Care Partnership Manager (South), 23 September 2017