

# Case study

## Improving organisational culture.

East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust

### Assessment of the workforces' perceptions of the organisation's culture, and how it impacts health and well-being.

The East of England Ambulance Service Trust (EEAST) provides full-time accident and emergency services to those in need of emergency medical treatment and transport across Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire. It also provides non-emergency transport services for patients needing non-emergency treatment, who can't travel unaided.

As a large organisation, it employs more than 5,500 staff and volunteers across more than 130 sites, coordinating the movements of more than 780 vehicles in dealing with around 3,600 emergency 999 calls every day.

Over the next two years, the Trust is committed to putting into place a new, responsive operating model to deliver sustainable performance and improved outcomes for patients, and ensuring it has a patient-focused and engaged workforce.

It appointed Zeal Solutions to help build an understanding of the workforce's perceptions of the organisational culture, and how it impacts employee well-being.

#### How Zeal approached organisational culture.

Zeal Solutions were approached to help EEAST to get a better, more in-depth understanding of how its staff feel about working there, so it could implement a series of evidence-based, strategic initiatives to improve its workplace culture.

Although assessing organisational culture can be challenging, Zeal has developed a very accurate method and process to achieve this, while also establishing how the experience of work impacts on individual and organisational health and well-being.

Zeal used a survey-based method to draw out the information. The unique way in which Zeal measured, processed and analysed the data enabled them to pinpoint things which are of critical importance to an organisation, and provide evidence of what is required to create a positive change.

The process began with Zeal thoroughly researching the organisation, to make sense of the experience of work among staff. They used interviews and focus groups with around 150 staff to understand their perceptions about the work environment and culture.

The information gathered from this meant they could develop a bespoke assessment for all staff, which enabled them to collect evidence about the collective experience of the workforce. This tailor-made assessment helped EEAST to get a real feel for working conditions, the day-to-day climate across the entire organisation, employee experiences both good and bad, and the sort of behaviours embedded and ingrained within the organisation at all levels. It also helped the understanding of how the work climate and culture impact on employee health and mental well-being.

Zeal produced a series of reports on their findings, before creating a working group and working with the organisation to help it make sense of the feedback and take the necessary steps to address some of the issues uncovered.

Where the evidence showed that something in the experience of work was positive, the steering group identified what could be done to preserve and amplify that particular experience. Likewise, when we found issues that were having a negative impact on employee well-being, they explored solutions to reduce and prevent them.

EEAST has embarked on an organisational culture change programme which has seen it introduce a more coordinated and strategic approach to employee well-being issues. This includes an investment in leadership development, performance appraisals and employee engagement initiatives.

## Lindsey Stafford-Scott, Director of People and Culture at EEAST comments:

"I enjoyed working in partnership with Zeal to deliver our cultural review and look forward to continuing our work to change the culture at EEAST.

Their expertise and insight was invaluable and ensured we were able to draw the most appropriate conclusions from staff feedback to target our activity to where it would have the most positive impact for our staff and patients.

Their independence supported healthy debate and challenge and they were responsive to our needs, supporting both staff and Board engagement."