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Convener
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Dear Lewis,

NHS Governance – iMatter Employee Engagement Index

Thank you for your letter of 28 March 2018 seeking clarification on behalf of the Committee regarding how the scores for the iMatter questionnaire are calculated and presented.

As you may be aware, the iMatter Staff Experience Continuous Improvement Model was developed by NHSScotland staff to provide a new mechanism for measuring Employee Engagement levels in response to concerns that the previous approach led to low levels of engagement, typified by low response rates. We recognise that improved staff experience should, ultimately, benefit patient care, and that is why we have invested in this new transformational approach.

I am very pleased that an unprecedented 170,000 views were gathered through the iMatter and Dignity at Work surveys and represented in the national Health and Social Care Staff Experience Report, which for the first time included the perspectives of both health and social care staff.

It would be helpful to explain that the questions in the iMatter Continuous Model were compiled by focus groups from four Health Boards for individual teams and managers to measure, understand, improve and evidence staff experience and tested with 2,300 staff. Several ways of measuring the results were considered and the focus groups were clear that the responses should either be positive or negative to leave no room for dubiety. The focus groups therefore agreed that the likert scale should be on a scale of six to allow for three positive and three negative responses. The staff were clear that the lowest weighting should be one rather than zero, because those who took part in the focus groups within the four pilot NHS Boards felt that a zero score was not their preference and not in their opinion indicative of how they felt.



The model and formula used to calculate the iMatter Employee Engagement Index was developed by the University of West of Scotland (UWS) who were also commissioned by the project team to validate the questions as a robust measure of employee voice of progress against the Staff Governance Standard.

Following receipt of your letter my officials contacted Professor Snowden (now of Napier University) as the lead study evaluator for the UWS validation report (available on the Scottish Governance website at <http://www.staffgovernance.scot.nhs.uk/monitoring-employee-experience/imatter/background/>) to seek his comments on the weighting issue. Professor Snowden has acknowledged that a mistake was made in his report, namely that for a 1-6 weighting to be applied a different formula would be required to transfer the EEI into a percentage. This has led to the iMatter results within the Health and Social Care Staff Experience Report unintentionally referring to the index scores in percentage terms when they were not. These should have been presented simply as the 'index' or 'level' Professor Snowden has also recommended use of a 0-5 weighting scale within the formula to achieve a percentage score. As the Dignity at Work results do not use a weighting scale this issue does not apply to that section of the report. These results simply reflect the percentage of responses to each of the options within the scale.

The iMatter results however do provide an index that can be used to compare the experiences from and across participating teams, organisations and staff groups.

Whilst using a different formula (such as a 0-5 weighting) to calculate the EEI could result in a different index figure, whether 1-6 or 0-5 weightings are used it would not materially change the nature of the results themselves; the areas of challenge or the areas where performance was shown to be strong. It should be noted that it is not as simple as to say that changing the formula to one that could represent a percentage would always 'inflate' results – this would be entirely dependent on how staff complete the questionnaire and which proportions of staff selected the different response options.

I remain of the view that the iMatter continuous improvement model remains a valid and robust measurement of employee voice and measurement of employee perceptions of progress in the implementation of the Staff Governance Standard. The model whilst still in its infancy is helping to give staff more of a voice in influencing the decisions that affect them. This is reflected within the 23 team stories contained within the Health and Social Care Staff Experience Report that demonstrate the changes that staff have made through using the model.

Clearly the model has strong levels of buy-in and support, however in light of the acknowledgement from Professor Snowden of the mistake made in referring to the formula in percentage terms within his validation report I have asked for the formula and scale used to generate the EEI to be explored further.

Given that the development of the iMatter model was overseen in full partnership by the Scottish Workforce and Staff Governance Committee who are also currently in the process of developing recommendations to me on the intended approach for 2018 and beyond and I have asked them to consider your comments in light of any potential misperceptions around the EEI. An external evaluation of our approach to staff experience through the iMatter and Dignity at work surveys is already planned and a review of the measurement of the EEI will also be built into the scope of that work.

I would be happy to ask my officials to keep the committee updated with the findings of this work when available.

I hope this is helpful in clarifying the Scottish Government's position.



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