

# Understanding Your Home Through Your Staff's Eyes

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# Today

“How you can be best placed to take learning from the team through observations and reflective practice to develop the strongest team around the young people in your care.”



# Why is this important?

- Without staff, you don't have a business
- Staff are your greatest and least predictable commodity.
- The way staff act and interact is a reflection of the values, ethos and culture of the organisation.
- Understanding what your staff do and what they think is vital to establishing safe and effective practice.



# Discussion.....


The way staff act and interact with each other, their young people and the environment, is a tangible reflection of the values, ethos and culture of the organisation.

What do you think?

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# What is workplace culture

- *Research evidence highlights that the attitudes and behaviours of leaders, managers and staff in a residential setting are essential for creating an organisational culture in which good quality care and effective safeguarding flourish. A range of studies characterise that culture as reflective and progressive, with opportunities for staff to develop and learn. Managers lead by example and treat staff and the children with warmth, respect and value. Staff take opportunities to share good practice with colleagues. They are open in their interactions with children and young people and responsive to their needs.* **Safeguarding children with disabilities and complex health needs in residential settings October 2022**
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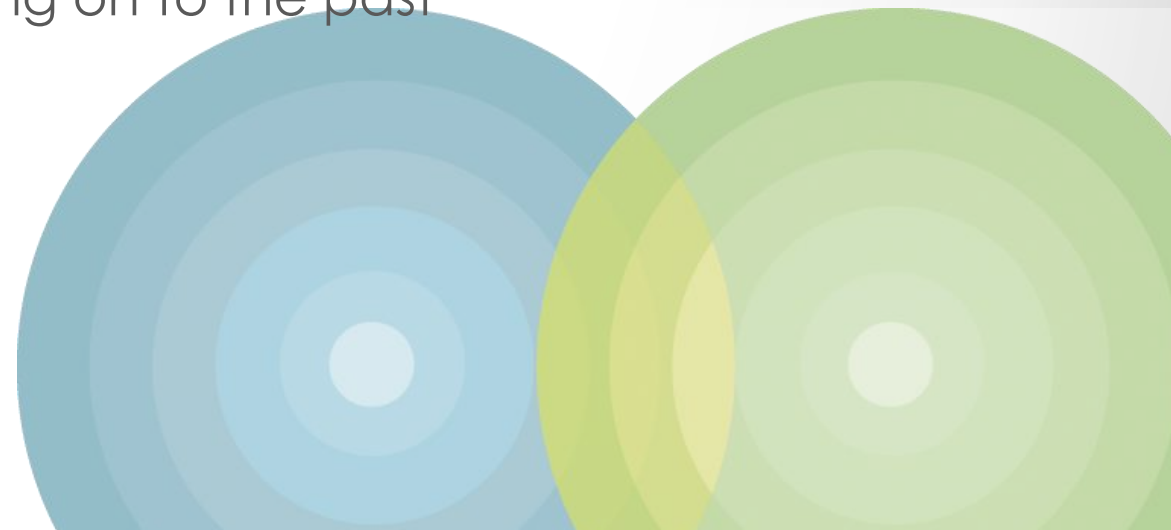
# Understanding your culture through observation

- Taking control of the narrative about your home means that at senior leaders, you have to set the culture and culture is highly observable
- What will you see in a good culture
- What will you see in a poor/closed/struggling culture



# Signs of a poor/closed culture

- High staff turnover/sickness
- People don't know who does what-Unclear lines of responsibility
- Nobody sets the rules/boundaries and expectations
- Lack of accountability-"not my issue/above my pay grade"
- Blame culture
- Low levels of reflection and self-critique
- Cliques/freezing staff out
- ?No complaints-poor complaint management
- Child not heard-staff needs take priority
- Maintaining the same practices despite evidence
- "Been there-done that-it doesn't work"-clinging on to the past
- Defensive
- Collusion-gossip-lack of transparency
- Hiding evidence
- Any more....



# Positive Culture

- Strong relationships
- Strong voices
- Advocacy
- Challenge
- Reflective practice
- Outside scrutiny welcomed
- Vibrant workforce
- Outcome focussed
- Low sickness
- Resilience
- Joy (dare I say it)
- [Positive environments where children can flourish - GOV.UK  
\(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)





- Many SLT members have worked on the 'shop floor' but we rapidly forget the daily reality, and times change
- How or indeed **do**, you gather information on what your staff do and what they think?
- Do you truly know what they deal with daily?
- Do you understand how or if their working conditions impact on them?



“The emotional and physical wellbeing of staff is essential to their role, but can also be impacted by the work that they do  
Promoting staff wellbeing enables them to be emotionally available and attuned to the needs of the children  
This requires supportive supervision and training, a mental wellbeing policy, a nurturing organisational environment, a sense of community and belongingness, professional pride, and recognition of existing skills”

[Research: Exploring the wellbeing of children's home workers \(mmu.ac.uk\)](http://mmu.ac.uk)

# Discussion

What might you **see** that will help you understand staff wellbeing within your sphere of operation...



# Reflective Practice

“The active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it”

*John Dewey*





Reflective Cycle (Gibbs, 1988)

# Schon 1983

- Reflection-in-action refers to the quick thinking and reaction that occur as you are doing,
- Reflection-on-action is what occurs outside the home when you consider the situation again.



# Key features of reflective practice

- Helps you to be conscious of bias and discrimination
- Involves the use of knowledge (and recognising own and others gaps)
- Involves self-awareness
- Encourages the use of different perspectives
- Helps scrutiny of our values and assumptions
- Avoidance of past mistakes and challenges
- Challenges improvement in practice
- Maximises opportunities for learning
- An active process of learning
- Keeps skills updated
- Cyclical process: ideas lead to learning leads to new ways of working leads to reflection.....



# Group

- What methods/tools do you use with staff for:
- Personal reflection?
- In action reflection?
- On action reflection?





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