

Q&A

“You can pick and choose what’s best for your team”

Tracey Leete, Manager at NHS Grampian, recommends the Affina Team Journey



Tell us about your team

I line manage a team of Administrators who support NHS Grampian’s Board and Senior Leadership Team. I would describe us as lively, professional and caring! We have a great mix of talent, from legal and advisory to administrative and financial.

How did you get involved with the Affina Team Journey?

Gail Groves, from our Organisational Development team, asked me to take part in a pilot. It seemed like perfect timing. We were a new team with a new manager, facing change and incredibly busy, but there was a real sense of wanting to get things right.

Is it difficult to do?

It was daunting at first, but Gail was so supportive as my coach. We ran the initial assessment with the whole team and two months later Gail and I ran our first workshop. It was such a positive experience.

After that we added the Team Journey as a standard agenda item to our team meetings – setting aside about half-an-hour or more every month to ‘Affina’ time. It didn’t feel like additional work, it complemented our team meetings. You can pick and choose what’s best for the team, but we worked through most stages of the journey – communication, constructive debate, inter-team working and so on. In the first year we used the materials all the time, and now we regularly review where we are in relation to our team structure and processes.

Why is it so important?

It’s really all about avoiding complacency, not becoming bogged down by the day-to-day work so that the fundamentals get forgotten. Coming into the first meeting there was a feeling from the team that they were ‘just admin’ but even that first session on team identity brought out so much – the importance of what we do in the organisation. By discussing team identity and purpose, members came out of the workshop with a new sense of pride and importance.

Have you seen your team working improve?

Yes, we work differently and more effectively. Everyone is more involved in decision making and, because we know more about each other’s roles, we share information much more efficiently. We ran the questionnaire again after 12 months and realised just how much we had achieved as a new team, which was really encouraging.

What was your biggest challenge?

I think it was protecting the time allocated to the Team Journey in our meetings. It was establishing this as a standard agenda item that kept us on track.

Any surprises?

I thought our team objectives were clear but our session revealed this was not the case for all team members. It was useful to know this at the beginning, especially as having clearly defined objectives is key when it comes to improving performance. Identifying specialist knowledge and skills within the team was also beneficial. Even agreeing the team name prompted some great discussion.

Above: Tracey Leete leads the Board Admin team at NHS Grampian. Bottom left: The Affina Team Journey is available through the North East Learning Collaborative

