**Q6 What is being done to deal with bullying and harassment in management, being encouraging and supportive to staff?**

This is a work in progress. We must step back and recognise it’s one of those areas. We said the pulse survey was a snapshot and I can see a question on here about ‘only 800 staff responded to the recent survey, this is a small percentage of the organisation.’ But it is a percentage of the organisation. This is not a case of nobody speaking up and nobody commenting. I guess the worst case for us would be nobody talking, the ability to affect change and measure means we always must be able to talk. 800 people, indicates that there is less bullying from managers and colleagues, is a step in the right direction.

I started off by saying, this is absolutely not the end, this does not mean we’ve succeeded, or we stop. What it does mean, is that we have conversation, at the raising concerns forum the pulse survey combined with anonymised Freedom to Speak Up and anonymised cultural work, the other bits around areas of focus in complaints, in terms of employee relations cases and sickness absence, all of this paints a picture of where we are. Nothing for us should be taken in isolation but remember a pulse survey is very much about a snapshot view, it is one of our tools and it is a chance for us to say to you, please help, share your views with us, tell us how, plus conversations that I or other leaders may have with you, plus interactions with colleagues that you will share with us as well. This will always be one part of that.

Coming back to what’s being done to deal with that, well first of all understanding. You’ll have seen we put the infographic up of the interventions through the cultural work and the cultural work itself shows there are a number of things that have been done. Some of these are not visible, and we need to be really clear on this as one of the things people have told us time and time again is anonymity and confidence in processes are absolutely key. As we build those relationships and trust, people feel, or may feel, able to speak up with names etc. The big bit at the moment though, is the confidence, because people feel things won’t be dealt with, there’s nepotism, favouritism, all of those things need us to encourage anonymity. On balance, some of it we can’t speak about because it is confidential.

The infographic we put out, and were keen to put out, demonstrates that this is not just about lip service, it isn’t just about us talking about stuff, there have been some tangible actions. Some of them are really difficult, and I’m not saying this for sympathy, this is the job I choose to do, but these are conversations that keep you awake at night, they are the things that are difficult to balance between action, proportionality and fairness. I’ve had to take more high-risk decisions based upon the feedback, but where we are as an organisation and what you’ve all told us and the CQC have played back is, we need you to deal with some of this, we need you to take action.

We are, some of it will be really difficult to understand because no-one can have all of the story because it’s that confidential, and we maintain confidentiality because colleagues in the workplace, and this is just something I’d ask us all to think about, colleagues are coming forward asking for help and for us to deal with things and some of those are historic, some may be current, some may affect them personally or professionally, and we are having to make that risk based. I think for me, our commitment was always that we would look to take action and I said very early on from the CQC report last year and in these discussions around progress, I will look to, with the support of exec colleagues and us as a collective, deal with some of this and it will be tough, it will be really, really hard. For me, that is also about that linkage between how managing it looks. It would be really great to have a conversation with managers and staff because in terms of the team element it’s about how people feel, people are tired and tensions rise when people are tired.

The other bit I’m really keen that we do is, not just correcting or dealing with things, but it’s about learning. Next week, we start our first round table just culture conversation, it’s actually to do with a management event. It’s not clinical, but it’s taken from the cultural approach of, we need to talk about it, we need to talk about how I felt, how others felt, about the impact, and we need to do that to learn because it’s about doing something differently and not repeating.

One of the biggest things I’d observe over my time in the trust is honesty of conversations, we need to have more of them, and the second thing is rescuing stuff, so not dealing with stuff and not having these honest conversations. Because if you do not have them, you never give people that chance to reflect and learn. You also never get the chance to break the cycle and it creates a sense of frustration, that nobody’s dealing with something, whereas a lot of time and effort goes into it and that is really important as well.

I want to reiterate, clearly, bullying and harassment is not acceptable but sometimes it can be a difference of opinion, sometimes it’s about walking in other people’s shoes. It is ok to have discussions and people disagreeing, it is ok for the difference of opinion to be there. But it is not ok to do it in a way that offends people and it is not ok to threaten physical violence or sexualise people in the workplace. It is not ok to do it in a tone that demeans, harasses, or undermines. We have to re-engineer ourselves to have those open conversations because that is what’s really important.