

in conversation with....

Episode 5: Eve Russell

A People Plan Review

Key themes:

The main achievements to date

How we hold on to the progress that has been made

What more needs to be done

What NHS organisations need to focus on as part of their Covid recovery plans

- **01:23** – Since the publication of the NHS People Plan, what do you think have been its main successes, and what has it changed for the better?
- **05:29** – What challenges has the pandemic created when looking to implement the NHS People Plan?
- **11:22** – What further could or should be done to further health and wellbeing for the NHS' workforces, particularly those on the frontline?
- **19:40** – If you were the new NHS CEO, what would be the first change you'd look to make to benefit NHS workforces?

01:23:

Ed: Since the publication of the NHS People Plan, what do you think have been its main successes, and what has it changed for the better?

Eve: "It's incredible isn't it, to think that not very long ago, we didn't have a People Plan in the NHS, we didn't have a Chief People Officer; things have moved such a huge amount in a relatively short space of time and in really, really trying circumstances, so almost the existence of the People Plan itself is its best achievement in that people really are the top of the agenda now in a way that we've never seen before in the NHS."

"I think we've seen really good progress [for the People Plan], but we've also now got a better understanding of how much more there is to do around inclusion, so really good to see the priority that the People Plan has given to equality, inclusion and belonging in the NHS."

05.29:

Ed: What challenges has the pandemic created when looking to implement the NHS People Plan?

Eve: "We talked a lot about Covid being the same storm for all of us, but we're all in different boats, and I think we've really felt that in health in that people's experience of Covid has been really, really different and a huge variation in what it has meant to live through this time, so I think the significant

challenges in implementing the People Plan throughout this time are because there has been so much pressure and it has been so difficult.”

“Where I am, in the southwest, we’ve seen some amazing pockets of practice which have sprung up, without any significant policy shift or requirement. People have just got together and had really sensible conversations about how we can do things differently and thinking about collaborative workforce sharing, bank arrangements, and some really innovative and good practice that has moved on in a way that none of us saw coming.”

11.22:

Ed: What further could or should be done to further health and wellbeing for the NHS’ workforces, particularly those on the frontline?

Eve: “Without a doubt, everybody has had a different experience of Covid. You experience Covid in your own way, personally and professionally, and it’s very difficult I think to come to a conclusion about solutions or remedies or actions that will work for everybody because we’re all unique. I think it’s important to hold on to that so we don’t get into a mentality of XYZ has fixed things or improved things across the board, because that won’t be the case.”
“In terms of what we do next [after Covid], it’s about really listening to people, giving them time and space to reflect, share what they’ve experienced, share what they need now, and then really working on the fundamentals about culture, line management, leadership, compassion, and inclusion, to make sure that we really hold on to those values and we create working environments, working lives and working structures for people that mean they stay [in the NHS].”

“Never has there been a better time to be an HR professional in the NHS. The moment of opportunity for our profession is just incredible. We’ve got to rise to that challenge now and make sure we don’t lose that momentum”

19.40:

Ed: If you were the new NHS CEO, what would be the first change you’d look to make to benefit NHS workforces?

Eve: “Where to start and what a terrifying job. I think there are some principles that feel to me to be really important, but there’s something about listening, and I do mean really listening. Whoever comes into this post is fortunate that the NHS is 1.3m people, and there are amazing and talented and compassionate and brilliant people, so many of them, in that 1.3m that actually this person doesn’t need to do all of the thinking and all of the work. But really listening, and asking people those simple questions – “hello, how are you?”, “what does good feel like?”, “what do you value?”, “how can we make you feel valued?”