

## Activity sheet eight: Subcultures

# Activity 3 - Promoting open cultures

**Read the scenario and answer the questions below.**

David has been running Harberton Care and Support Services since 1994, supporting people in the community, two residential services and one nursing home. He prides himself on his leadership and feels that the workplace culture is positive and anyone new is integrated into the ethos of the services quickly. He has high expectations of his staff and expects everyone to do their best and deliver a very high-quality service.

The organisation has grown over time from a small family-run service and now has over 150 staff and David sometimes finds it hard to remember everyone’s name. There have been some recruitment issues in the care homes, but David has put this down to poor public perception of care careers.

However Sarah, the new operations manager, has reported regular incidents of bad practice including staff taking people they support to their own homes for tea and inappropriate use of language.

She has also picked up on poor management practices with staff, such as swapping shifts without informing their manager. She's identified low morale amongst staff who are feeling unsupported and are just ‘doing their own thing’. David is shocked to hear this and wonders what has gone wrong and how this culture has been able to develop.

Harberton Care and Support Services have had financial challenges in recent years. Rising costs and reduced fees have meant that David has struggled to pay competitive staff salaries. He had been proud of the strong tradition of staff training but has needed to cut this budget in recent years. David can now see that both staff performance and expectations have noticeably declined.

By comparison, the relatively new domiciliary care service has a very positive workplace culture. Led by an excellent manager, staff turnover is low and morale is high. Day-to-day running issues always seem to be overcome and feedback from customers and families/relatives is 99% positive. David considers all these factors but still does not understand why the workplace culture is like this.

Questions:

* What has gone wrong?
* What can David do to rekindle and then maintain the positive culture that was so much a part of the organisation?
* Thinking about your own organisation, what could you do to nurture a positive workplace culture?
* How are people supported and encouraged to positively challenge poor practice?