



LANCASHIRE CARE NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

# APPRECIATIVE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

## SUMMARY

In September 2010, Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust (LCFT) commissioned an innovative Appreciative Leadership Programme to underpin an organisation-wide culture change programme. Fiona MacNeill Associates (FMA), an independent people development consultancy, based in Scotland, was appointed to deliver the programme following a procurement tender process.

The Trust ran a very successful pilot programme involving 50 delegates, from a range of different services, clinical and non-clinical roles and pay bands, prior to rolling out the programme across the Trust. To date, 345 staff from across the organisation have attended a series of world cafe events, workshops, leadership learning sets and have completed an Appreciative Inquiry based Action Research Project. A further 200 staff will attend the programme over the next 15 months.


To date, the programme has engaged a diverse group of leaders to change/improve the way that they think and behave in line with the organisation's values. It has created connections not just between delegates but with line managers and teams. The programme has been powerful, challenging to individuals and to the leadership team and it has genuinely made a positive difference. 100% of delegates believe that the learning has had a lasting impact on how they deliver their service, which in the end is what really matters!

**Chief Executive – Professor Heather Tierney-Moore recently said of the programme:**

*"I recently attended a World Café event and saw some excellent action research projects that people have undertaken.*

*I am also seeing how the course is starting to have an impact in terms of how staff in the organisation are interacting with each other and going about their day to day work. Appreciative leadership is strongly linked to all of our values, especially Excellence, Integrity and Accountability.*

*Having excellent leaders in our organisation is vital, especially at a time of change and there is a direct link between effective leadership and providing high quality care which has to be our number one priority".*



**What if we only asked powerful  
and appreciative questions?**



# GOOD PRACTICE CASE STUDY

## KEY OUTCOMES

Following the pilot, a comprehensive post programme evaluation was conducted, in October 2011. This evaluated the sustainability of the learning 8 months after the programme. Delegates were asked to complete a detailed questionnaire and take part in telephone, or face-to-face interviews. The results indicated a high level of response, consistency and success in terms of values, relevance and sustainability of the learning from the programme. Some of the themes that have emerged in terms of qualitative data were:

- ▶ Improved confidence, positivity and renewed energy in leadership role.
- ▶ Greater understanding of how the organisation's values can be used especially around team working and accountability.
- ▶ Improved understanding of personal impact and the results of changing patterns of behaviour that have been established over time.
- ▶ Creating the space for meaningful conversations remains a challenge but always delivers a more positive result.

## Some of the quantitative results showed that;

- 95% of delegates had noticed a positive change/improvement in their communication and impact.
- 98% of delegates had noticed a positive change/improvement in how the learning had supported them in leading people through change.
- 97% of delegates had noticed a positive change/improvement in how they used the organisation's values.
- 93% of delegates believe that the Action Learning Project was significant in linking their learning to the operational environment.

*"The Appreciative Leadership model does provide a valuable framework to support practice and I have found this very useful as I consider future practice"*

*"Clear links between Appreciative Leadership and the Trust Values are demonstrated throughout the workshop, activities and supporting materials"*

*"It has highlighted to me the power of focusing on the positive 'what do we do well and how can we do it even better' rather than the negative 'what's wrong'. It outlined the importance of questions rather than answers."*

*"Using strengths-based leadership has helped to validate my role as a leader. It has also helped my own personal sense of authority as a leader".*

## Some Action Research Project Titles undertaken:

- ❖ 'Ensuring team time together is energetic, exciting and helps us to be better at what we do'.
- ❖ 'How do we create and deliver the best possible speech and language therapy service for children in the resources available?'
- ❖ 'Creating Opportunities to Engage with Service Users – An Appreciative Approach'
- ❖ 'Co-creating constructive and purposeful acute in-patient service'
- ❖ 'How can we successfully integrate all the teams across the nursing directorate and deliver an excellent service?'
- ❖ 'Using Appreciative Inquiry to develop HR Business Partner Model with an agile team'
- ❖ 'How do we improve communications between inpatient services and community teams?'

- ❖ 'Big Thinking precedes Great Achievement - Leading Transformation "The development of meaningful "Protected Learning Time" within a Community Mental Health Team'
- ❖ What if you move from problem solver to possibility thinker?
- ❖ 'The involvement of young people in planning their care'
- ❖ 'Re-establishing good working relationships after a period of enforced change'
- ❖ What possibilities do I bring to LCFT as an Occupational Therapy Lead?

## Impact of the programme on other areas of work

The Trust has decided to incorporate some key elements from the Appreciative Leadership programme into its approach to the new Performance Development Review (PDR) process (appraisal system).

The new PDR framework has been designed to support meaningful conversations about things that matter to staff and the organisation including; how engaged staff feel at work, how staff demonstrate the organisation's values through their behaviour and in day-to-day service delivery, career aspirations personal development and support available to them.

The new PDR framework was piloted using a number of delegates who had completed the appreciative leadership programme. The pilot was well evaluated by both appraisers and appraisees who reported that the process felt more meaningful as it was a real conversation about them as individuals, their working relationships and their future as aspirations and development needs.

The new PDR process is being launched in January 2012.



# GOOD PRACTICE CASE STUDY

## BACKGROUND

Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust was established in April 2002 and authorised as a Foundation Trust on 1st December 2007. The Trust provides health and wellbeing services for a population of around 1.5million people. The services provided include community nursing, health visiting and a range of therapy services including physiotherapy, podiatry and speech & language. Wellbeing services provided include smoking cessation and healthy lifestyle services. The Trust specialises in inpatient and community mental health services. Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust covers the whole of the county and employs around 7,000 members of staff across more than 400 sites.

## AIMS

- To deliver high quality integrated services
- To work well with others in health and social care
- To make the best use of all our resources

LCFT is experiencing a period of unprecedented change. Importantly, in a difficult changing landscape and financial constraints, there is an even greater drive to continue to support individuals to develop to meet the changing needs of health improvement and health care.

LCFT want staff to think about their own leadership journey, to enrich their own contribution, improve leadership, team building, coaching, and to genuinely think about how to improve the culture of the organisation for the benefit of the service user/patient and for the people who work within the Trust.

## PURPOSE

### Mission and Vision

- To improve the lives of the people we serve and ensure that health matters across the whole community.
- 21st Century health care with well-being at its heart.

### The programme is designed to:

- Embed the Trust values into leadership thinking and behaviour.
- Support leaders in times of significant organisational and political change (Transforming Community Services – 1 Foundation Trust and 3 PCT's becoming one of the largest Mental Health & Community Trust in the region)

- Support leaders in engaging more effectively with their teams, and making the team environment more positive.
- Support leaders in adopting a more appreciative style of leadership based on values, engagement and relationships.

## HOW IT WORKS

Appreciative Inquiry underpins the values based approach.

The format of the programme consists of:

- Attendance at 2 x 2 day workshops,
- 3 half day leadership learning sets,
- A world café event,
- Participation in a values based 360 degree feedback activity,
- An Appreciative Inquiry based Action Research Project.
- An on line learning portal space

The programme is delivered in Phases. Each phase consists of 4 groups of 25 delegates. Internal LCFT facilitators are trained to support each phase in order to ensure longer term sustainability of the programme.

The approach is learner centred and focuses on building on existing knowledge, skills and experience. It is delivered in a creative, innovative and energetic manner. Stories, images, conversations and powerful questions are used to engage and inspire learners.

The programme challenges delegates to be an 'appreciative leader' who demonstrates the values in their behaviour and uses them as a compass to guide how they respond

to the varying leadership challenges that they will a fast changing and increasingly competitive operational environment.

The programme is supported by a tailor made Personal Development Journal that enables reflection between workshops.



## Workshops

The workshops cover a wide variety of topics including transactional analysis and the art of asking powerful questions. They also:

- Create an opportunity to reflect on how appreciative leadership can positively contribute to the organisation functioning as a living system and create a focus on strengths-based development, rather than deficit based change.
- Explore the concept of the leader as a 'conversational practitioner', influencing, engaging, challenging and empowering through meaningful conversations.
- Explore the challenge of listening for newness, innovation and stories, instead of actions, results and reasons.
- Offer up the idea of the teams as "communities of purpose" that form their own cultural values, developing a unique worldview and attitude towards the wider organisation.





# GOOD PRACTICE CASE STUDY

## Leadership Learning Sets (LLS)

Each learning set is co-facilitated by FMA and LCFT trained facilitators. The purpose of the LLS is to create a positive and supportive space to:

- Provide a space for leadership learners to explore learning in a small group.
- Create an opportunity to discuss challenges and successes of implementing learning in the operational environment.
- Enable the development of conversation as a means of learning and improvement.
- Allow a group of people from within the organisation to develop their skills as facilitators.
- Build learning relationships between leadership learners and facilitators which will outlast the programme.
- Ensure that learning transfer is being supported by the organisation and is making a difference in the operational environment.

Leaders leave the LLS feeling appreciated and valued whatever it is that they have to say. The facilitators will ask questions that build on strengths, energising leaders to take forward areas that they want to improve on for the future. Leaders will be invited to tell stories of what is working and how that can be magnified.

## Action Research Projects

Action Research is a reflective conversation about improvement, which joins the individual learning to the organisational learning. The idea of self-reflection is central. Leaders are asked to think about their own life and work, and this involves asking themselves why they do the things they do. The action research project shows how they have carried out a systematic investigation into their own behaviour, and the reason for that behaviour. The methodology of action research means evaluating what the individual is doing and this awareness of the need for self-evaluation shows their willingness to accept responsibility for their own thinking and action.

## World Café events

The World Café is a full day celebration event which takes place at the end of each Phase (i.e. when 100 delegates have completed). This event creates the space for delegates to share their learning and showcase the results of the Action Research Projects using a variety of creative and innovative thinking techniques. It brings the learning full circle and creates the space for the leaders to create a 'living leadership strategy' that can underpin transformational change in their teams. This strategy is a fantastic resource for leaders within the organisation to support the continuing drive towards all staff becoming appreciative leaders who behave in line with the organisational values.

## The Learning Space

In addition to the LLS, a web based social networking 'Learning Space' online community portal has been designed which allows delegates to communicate with their own and other leadership groups. The Learning Space allows them to ask questions, share ideas, reflections, and access reading materials and a variety of other useful resources.

## KEY CHALLENGES

- Sustainability –preparing to build in-house capacity e.g. internal facilitators.
- Having a clear evaluation strategy with measures of impact and return on investment.
- Ensuring that managers and delegates have conversations before, during and after the programme about key elements, such as 360 degree feedback and action research project.
- No real history/culture of conversation and feedback, so some concerns as to openness and honesty of 360 degree feedback process.
- Some delegates worried about impact on colleagues covering for them and concerns about workloads left behind.
- Getting staff used to viewing from a 'positive' perspective rather than a 'deficit based' perspective – getting them out of the mindset of focusing on problems rather than looking for what is working well and building on it.
- Getting staff to accept that it is ok to challenge behaviour that is not in keeping with the Trust values

Overcoming some of these challenges included; having regular quality review meetings with the programme leader to discuss current and future programme developments, developing and agreeing an evaluation strategy which included qualitative/quantitative reports and delegate feedback comments, and having a clear plan in place for training internal facilitators to assist and support the Learning Sets.

What if we looked up and out more often than we do?



# GOOD PRACTICE CASE STUDY

## KEY LEARNING

- Importance of having a clear procurement process to ensure;
  - ▶ Specialist procurement advice and support is available to manage process effectively from the outset.
  - ▶ Sufficient time is allowed for tender process to ensure that the provider is appointed in sufficient time to allow for appropriate planning and set up of arrangement.
  - ▶ Output specification and criteria is clearly defined to support shortlisting and invitation to tender process, if appropriate.
- Stakeholder engagement and Board/ Executive buy in/support is crucial.
- Communication is key particularly around explaining the reasons for the programme and the significant investment being made in people as individuals because they are valued as leaders.
- Importance of monitoring non-attendance and follow up to ensure strong message that the programme is a priority.

- The need for reviewing, refreshing and refining the 360 degree process to ensure it is appropriate/up to date.
- Ensure that IT infrastructure is in place to be able to support the Learning Space.
- Importance of having dedicated admin resources to administer the programme with a clear/accountable project plan.

## RESOURCES

- Corporate budget covered the cost of the programme, which included; development and delivery of workshops, course materials, evaluation, administration, development of the Learning Space.
- Executive team members: time and availability to open and close each programme.
- Cost of external venues for workshop delivery and world café events.
- Dedicated additional in-house administration.
- In-house venues were sourced for all the Leadership Learning Sets.

## NEXT STEPS

The Trust is hoping to extend the programme to a further 1000 staff, following Transforming Community Services and the merger of 3 PCT's into LCFT, as part of its wider Organisational Development Strategy and culture change. In addition, a number of LCFT facilitators (who have attended the Leadership Programme) are being trained throughout the duration of the programme in order to ensure the future sustainability of the programme when the existing contract comes to an end.

## CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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What if we saw the  
organisation as a living system?

