



MID CHESHIRE HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A COACHING FOR QUALITY STRATEGY IN MID CHESHIRE HOSPITALS

SUMMARY

Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust adopted a Trust wide coaching culture to improve quality of services. It supported the delivery of a Coaching for Quality Strategy that included development of an internal coaching team and the development of a 1.5 day coaching essentials programme for all managers.

In December 2008, the Trust's Board of Directors approved a five-year quality strategy. The strategy included a commitment to developing a coaching programme across the Trust to allow trained coaches to support, challenge, develop and build success in all areas of the organisation. In addition, it was accepted in the strategy that coaching would become the preferred leadership approach.

In April 2009, the Board agreed its objectives, with 'Workforce Development and Effectiveness' becoming one of the overarching themes. Under this element, a specific objective of delivering a coaching programme to support senior managers was agreed.

KEY OUTCOMES

Whilst it remains a challenge to quantify the full financial impact of the Trust's investment in the 'Coaching For Quality' framework, we can be assured from the research of others such as The London Deanery (The London Deanery produced a report in 2011 about their internal coaching support "Why do Medical staff need coaching?"), and Harvard Medical School (Anthony M Grant

PhD Director at the Coaching Psychology Unit at Harvard Medical School showed results from trials with Medical staff at the Coaching in Medicine and Leadership Conference 2009).

and from the experience of those who have engaged with coaching at MCHFT, that the real return on investment may be calculated through:

- increased staff engagement,
- reduced recruitment cost,
- reduction in sickness and absence (particularly stress-related illness)
- improved leadership skills
- improved quality outcomes for patients.
- an increase in our ability to spot talented staff and succession plan effectively
- retention of key staff.

Staff who have taken part in 1-2-1 coaching or attended the Coaching Essentials

Programmes which are one and a half day programmes focused on helping managers to gain coaching skills that they can use in their everyday interactions with their teams, shows qualitative evidence relates to improvements in behaviour, business and experience

- Increased self-belief and confidence - Behaviour
- More innovative thinking – Business
- Better work/life balance – Experience
- Reduced work place stress – Experience, Behaviour
- Ability to prioritise tasks more efficiently - Business
- Increased ability to think strategically and reflect more on personal impact – Business, Behaviour
- Empowerment to act – Behaviour, Business
- Managing relationships with others better – Experience, Behaviour and Business





GOOD PRACTICE CASE STUDY

BACKGROUND

The Trust was originally established as an NHS Trust in April 1991 and became a Foundation Trust in April 2008. It is a small acute Trust and it employs approximately 3,300 members of staff and has around 540 hospital beds.

Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is the organisation which manages Leighton Hospital, Crewe; the Victoria Infirmary, Northwich, and Elmhurst Intermediate Care Centre, Winsford. A range of services, including A&E, maternity, outpatients, therapies and children's health are provided for people predominantly from the Crewe, Nantwich, Congleton, Middlewich and Northwich areas, although patients from other areas are also cared for.

KEY AIMS

The Coaching for Quality Strategy included a commitment to developing a coaching programme across the Trust, to allow trained coaches to support, challenge, develop and build success in all areas of the organisation. In addition, it was accepted in the strategy that coaching would become the preferred leadership approach. The key aims were:-

- Improving the overall performance of the Trust and individuals
- Development of a more strategic perspective on an individual and organisational level
- Supporting talent management and succession planning by developing people in their current roles to perform to their optimum, and to develop in preparation for their next role.
- Improving staff satisfaction results through improved management and leadership skills
- Improving how sustainable organisational change is conducted in the Trust for most effect

- Individual development to deliver strategic and individual objectives
- Improving learning knowledge management
- Building management and leadership capability at all levels, through cascading of coaching through coaching conversations
- Increasing productivity and patient outcomes through having more satisfied and self-aware staff who feel empowered to use their initiative.

KEY STAGES OF SET-UP

- Gaining agreement for this approach at Board level
- Tendering for an external provider to train the group of internal coaches
- Agreeing how many coaches there would be and interviewing and recruiting 12 people to undertake the 6 month training course with i-Coach Academy.
- Completing the Foundation Certificate in coaching assessment. The 12 coaches included staff from all levels across the organisation, from Director to Assistant PA.
- Training two members of staff to deliver the 1.5 day Coaching Essentials for Managers Programme (Director of Workforce and OD and Head of OD & Learning).
- Training the Lead Internal Coach (Head of OD & Learning) to Post Graduate certificate level through i-coach and Middlesex University in order that they could support and provide Continuous Professional Development for the other coaches
- The Lead coach trained to be a supervisor through the NHSi and Bath Consultancy.
- Delivery of the Coaching Essentials Skills for Managers programmes across the Trust.
- Delivery of 1-2-1 coaching for senior managers and those on development programmes.
- Implementation of a Coaching Newsletter.

HOW IT WORKS

The Trust initially trained twelve staff through a six month programme with i-Coach Academy, to Foundation level in Coaching Practice level. These coaches are from across roles and bands in the Trust and give up to four hours per month to working with coaching clients. Potential clients are matched by the Lead internal Coach who arranges for the prospective client to meet several coaches for a "Chemistry" session before they choose which coach they feel they could work best with.

Access to a coach is aimed at staff who work in senior roles or who are on development programmes. Contact is generally made with the lead internal coach after the staff member has spoken to their line manager to agree the time for coaching away from their duties. People are not coached by anyone from their own work area or with whom they have already established relationships. Coaching clients are then offered 4 x 1hr sessions with their chosen coach, with the offer of a further 2 sessions if required.

Managers are invited to a 3 way contracting meeting at the start of the first session and objectives for the coaching are established.

4 x 1 hour sessions take place and a review of objectives by the client and their line manager takes place in written format.

Coaching Essentials

Trust managers and supervisors book onto the 1.5 day programme via the Learning and Development Department. After Day One there is a break of approximately 6 weeks before the 2nd session (half day) to give participants the opportunity to practice their skills before returning to consolidate their learning and have further skills practice.





GOOD PRACTICE CASE STUDY



RESOURCES

- Funding to use an external contractor to train the 12 in-house coaches to work 1-2-1 with clients and provide assessment and certification at Foundation Level in Coaching Practice
- Funding for the lead internal coach to complete further study at Certificate level and to time for them to complete the Leadership Academy / Bath Consultancy Coaching Supervisors programme
- Time for the lead internal coach to deliver the one and a half day coaching essentials programmes and administer the internal coaching register. (This is part of their job description rather than an addition to it.)
- On-going funding for CPD events
- Coaches give a maximum of four hours per month to their coaching practice which is completed within their normal working hours. No backfill monies have been used.

KEY CHALLENGES

Initially some staff thought coaching was a performance management intervention and that staff would only access a coach if they were underperforming.

MCHFT is clear that coaching here is not to be used for managing performance as this firmly stays the responsibility of the line manager. Some managers have requested a

coach for their staff member and have been refused after discussion with the lead coach about what the purpose of the coaching was.

Some staff initially also felt that coaching was a bit “pink and fluffy” but those undertaking the coaching have realised that the ‘soft stuff’ is very much the ‘hard stuff’ and in no way is coaching a relationship without challenge or a requirement for change. Via the coaching newsletter we have been able to share the experiences of those who have accessed coaching to dispel these myths.

KEY LEARNING

- Strong buy-in from the CEO and Executive team was critical to the success of the strategy.
- Engage with key clinical staff such as Matrons and Medical Leads early on in order for clarity about what Coaching is and how we will use it to be understood. Those clinicians who have engaged with coaching have commented on how they have changed and improved their performance, in particular in their confidence to deal with difficult conversations with their teams and in their confidence in their own ability to lead teams through change. They have also commented that feeling more confident to deal with a variety of situations has meant that they have improved the quality of their care for patients and the overall management of their teams.

SUSTAINABILITY

- Managers using a coaching approach and asking questions of their staff rather than providing answers all of the time
- Managers moving away from the “Heroic” style of leadership and moving towards Shared leadership
- Managers listening more
- More feedback being given to staff about their performance generally.

NEXT STEPS

- Development of the internal coaching team via appropriate CPD opportunities.
- Continuation of the offer of 1-2-1 coaching and the running of the Coaching Essentials programmes.
- Completion of Team Coaching training for six of the internal coaches, again through I-Coach Academy.
- Coaching register is maintained by the Lead internal Coach (Head of OD & Learning) and clients are matched accorded to the coaches capacity and area the client is from as well as what the main focus of their coaching is about.

SUPPORTING MATERIAL

The following resources are available as an appendix to this case study

Appendix 1 – Coaching Newsletter – Issue 1 – Autumn 2011

Appendix 2 – Coaching Newsletter – Issue 2 – Summer 2012



CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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