



CETAD, LANCASTER UNIVERSITY

EMPOWERING YOUR WARD MANAGERS WORK-BASED LEARNING PROGRAMME

Blackpool Teaching Hospitals 
NHS Foundation Trust



SUMMARY

In the current NHS landscape the ward manager role is one that has experienced dramatic change. In addition to a clinical role ward managers are also required to undertake a range of managerial tasks.

In this changing environment, **Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (Blackpool FT)**

wanted to empower its ward managers, enabling them to step up and develop as leaders. By supporting and developing them to respond to the new challenges and needs of their job, it was anticipated that their knowledge and skills would increase, which in turn would impact on patient experience, patient safety and quality. Blackpool also wanted to raise the profile of the role and make the job something which early career nurses might aspire to.

To make this happen a dialogue began in 2010 between **Blackpool FT and Lancaster University's Centre for Training and Development (CETAD)**, which is part of the University's new and dynamic Faculty of Health and Medicine. It was with the centre's specialist work-based learning team that a collaborative partnership was formed.

The Trust was keen to develop a robust, accredited learning programme for its ward managers. It was not looking for something 'off the shelf' but something more flexible and innovative. The collaborative partnership involved the Director of Nursing, her team, and senior members of the Trust's HR and OD team together with CETAD staff. The partnership culminated in an agreement that the Trust's needs could be met by contextualising the University's Postgraduate Certificate in Organisational Change (Health Care) and dovetailing in specialist clinical inputs from the Trust along with sessions on finance and HR.

It was anticipated that the programme would contribute to the 'Blackpool Way', the Trust's engagement strategy focussing on themes of management style, communication and recognition. The programme was developed around core national clinical leadership competencies, key organisational values and participant self-review, via a repeated 360 degree skills questionnaire.





GOOD PRACTICE CASE STUDY

KEY OUTCOMES

- “Ward managers are the lynchpin, clinical leaders, and key to creating the right environment for the delivery of safe patient-centred care. This was a call to action for all the ward managers to fine-tune their leadership and management skills and to develop new areas of knowledge to drive Energising for Excellence in their clinical areas. The partnership approach with CETAD has been very successful in supporting the desired leadership outcomes.”* (Marie Thompson, Blackpool FT’s Director of Nursing & Quality)
- Forty ward managers in total have taken part in the programme. Each one has completed a Change Management proposal which has led to significant increases in efficiency across the Trust (see the How it Works - Evaluation section for a list of projects undertaken).
- Additionally ward managers have developed a sound understanding of the drivers for change within the current NHS landscape, and the skills necessary to build effective working relationships and to reflect on their own practice. This is beneficial for the Trust, but also for individuals in terms of career progression (see the ‘How it Works Section’ for a more detailed evaluation).
- A further benefit of this programme is that it equips a group of staff with the capabilities to progress within their organisation. Participants achieve a Postgraduate Certificate so they can progress academically to the final year of a Masters Degree or professionally within their organisation. One criterion of progression to a senior clinical position at Blackpool FT is the achievement of a postgraduate qualification.
- One participating ward manager has recently been promoted to a matron post and several other participants plan to progress and complete a Masters Degree.

BACKGROUND

Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

The Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust was established on 1st December 2007. The Trust then gained teaching hospital status and became Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust in 2010. In April 2012 the Trust merged with community health services from NHS Blackpool and NHS North Lancashire as part of the Transformation of Patient Pathways Programme.

It now serves a population of approximately 440,000 residents across Blackpool, Fylde, Wyre and North Lancashire, employing more than 6,000 staff with a budget of approximately £335m per year. It has around 830 beds across all sites and sees more than 56,000 day-case and inpatients, 250,000 outpatients and over 91,000 A & E patients every year.

Centre for Training and Development (CETAD)

Established in 1990, CETAD (Centre for Training and Development) is a specialist work based learning centre within Lancaster University’s Faculty of Health & Medicine. CETAD’s core aim is to enable people to learn by delivering work based learning. CETAD designs innovative programmes that deliver relevant knowledge and skills that can be applied directly to the workplace with immediate impact. Its supportive practitioner tutor team understands the needs of mature learners and can design courses to help students balance work, life and study. CETAD’s clients include the public, private and voluntary sector and it offers courses for individuals and tailored organisational programmes.

KEY AIMS

- Ward managers to become supernumerary
- The ward manager role to become an aspirational one
- The course to provide accredited learning, via work-based assessments, specific to the context of the Trust



KEY STAGES OF SET-UP

In 2010 a dialogue began between CETAD and Blackpool FT as the Trust needed a development programme to empower their ward managers in the changing NHS landscape. Subsequent meetings between the Director of Nursing, members of her team and Blackpool’s OD department, together with the CETAD team, culminated in an agreement that, by contextualising the University’s Postgraduate Certificate in Organisational Change (Health Care) and including input from specialists in The Trust, this need would be met.

In the initial meetings, the University put forward a suggestion that an evaluation of the programme would be a useful outcome for both the Trust and CETAD. The data gathered from such an evaluation would be useful to inform future development programmes for both the Trust and CETAD, and to evidence good practice.



GOOD PRACTICE CASE STUDY

HOW IT WORKS

Training Delivery

Forty ward managers enrolled to take part in this programme on a part-time basis. Participants were split into two groups of twenty, with each cohort running concurrently.

Whilst this was a postgraduate programme, a first degree was not a prerequisite because as a work-based learning centre, CETAD recognises prior learning gained from experience. The CETAD team are experienced practitioners in supporting and encouraging mature learners, many of whom have often not studied for some time. The flexible approach enabled the programme to be delivered in Blackpool FT via interactive workshops facilitated predominantly by university tutors - with key sessions being delivered by the NHS Trust staff on subjects such as finance, budgets and HR.

Workplace Assessment

Innovative workplace assessment methods were introduced and included:

- A group task to analyse the drivers for change impacting on ward managers
- The completion of a personal development plan linked to change, the Trust's competence framework and 360 feedback
- The production of a change management project proposal
- A reflective diary on the ward Managers' experience of leading others through change
- The design of an evaluation for achievement of change in a work context
- A final group presentation to design and conduct their own evaluation of learning from the programme, including an evaluation of their experience of working in action learning sets

Evaluation

Upon completion of the programme an independent evaluation of the learning was undertaken with the following four themes emerging:

• Understanding change

Ward managers have much more awareness of NHS Strategy; they have a wider understanding of change drivers and of the changing landscape in which they operate. They can 'manage change'; they have a more strategic approach and can look beyond their individual ward. This is clearly evident in the day-to-day implementation of their role, and they can now articulate drivers for change to their staff so they too have greater understanding of the bigger picture and the changes affecting the NHS in Blackpool. The ward managers have more financial awareness, more understanding of budgets and their greater insight to finance enables them to understand how it affects their post. Line manager feedback included: *"they have awareness of how policy changes will impact on their role, the service they manage and their staff" and "I think all managers on the course have a wider understanding of 'Drivers for Change' as a result of doing the course".*

• Increasing efficiency

As part of their programme the forty ward managers were tasked with submitting a change management proposal designed to do one or more of the following: increase efficiency, save time, reduce waste and meet targets. Proposals included:

- a more robust discharge system enabling earlier discharge therefore increasing efficiency, saving time and meeting targets
- reduction of waste via a nutrition mission
- a timer introduced into a ward dealing with blood and blood products to ensure that the products are used within the thirty minute window

- the extension of outpatient service for Dermatology patients enabling them to manage their care at home – thus reducing admissions as in-patients to have their conditions managed.
- changes in systems to ensure oxygen therapy is administered and recorded correctly to increase efficiency and improve patient care
- changes in delivery of patient meals saving time and resulting in patients getting their meals quicker so they are still hot and therefore more appealing, more nourishing and there is less food waste
- an hourly falls monitor chart to reduce patient falls and to be proactive in the Trust meeting its falls reduction targets

These proposals are a small sample of those submitted. Nevertheless these change proposals clearly have the potential to both improve efficiency and empower those who can implement their proposals in their areas. Supporting and encouraging change to be implemented in order to improve patient care is a very positive outcome of this development programme. Clearly the ward managers have good ideas about how to make improvements and efficiencies in their areas and the programme has both given the confidence and offered the platform for them to take these forward.

• Peer support

The value and power of the new working relationships and networks that have been formed as a result of the programme cannot be overestimated. Matron's comments include: *"It has really helped them build relationships offering support and advice to one another" and "I feel the peer support is excellent, good for working relationships between the divisions"*. Without exception everyone made reference to the positive impact of supportive peer networks. Introducing Action Learning sets enabled the sharing of good practice, offered the opportunity for discussion and afforded shared understanding of challenges facing others in the same role in different areas of the Trust. Ward managers have made links across the Trust and now work collaboratively to improve patient care.



GOOD PRACTICE CASE STUDY

• Reflective practice

Ward managers are now reflecting on what went well and what didn't, which is enabling them to be more productive in their role. They are aware if mistakes have been made and so reflect to make positive changes. Line managers' comments on reflective practice include: *"Reflecting has enabled them to deal with challenging situations". "Can identify issues and act on them". "The ward managers attempt to solve issues themselves rather than passing them on to someone else"*. It is also recognised that they are giving priority to reflecting on their role and analysing what they have done. Using reflection in this way is giving them the opportunity to identify areas in which they have performed well, but also to identify where improvements can be made.

RESOURCES

The programme was funded through the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) contract with the NHS Strategic Health Authority. The Trust facilitated the ward managers being released in two cohort groups to attend the training and they also delivered some Trust specific inputs. In addition the Trust provided the venue and the refreshments. Delivering the programme on-site resulted in a cost saving, as participants did not incur travel expenses.

KEY CHALLENGES

- Releasing forty members of staff on a regular basis over a twelve month period was difficult.
- The Trust required ward managers to attend the programme and whilst the majority were keen it required the skill of the tutor team to ensure everyone was engaged and fully participated
- A questionnaire was designed to gather data for the evaluation. Gaining participation in this process was a challenge that was tackled by personal representation to the respondents and encouragement to respond by senior Trust staff.

KEY LEARNING

- A strong partnership between the University and Trust is imperative.
- Clarity of context and an understanding of organisational needs is vital.

CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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SUSTAINABILITY

As a result of the programme, staff have developed skills and knowledge. New networks have been formed and their power and value should not be underestimated. The programme design, which enabled group presentations to be assessed, has clearly contributed to the building of these new peer networks. The Action Learning sets facilitated by the Trust have again enabled ward managers to work together and supported them in finding solutions to problems. The Trust is continuing to support these powerful networks and in the fullness of time it is anticipated that they become self-facilitating.

The partnership that was formed between the Trust and CETAD to deliver this initiative has clearly been successful. The success of the programme and the lessons learnt in developing it, have ensured that it will be transferable; the model can be adapted and offered more widely to other NHS Trusts.

NEXT STEPS

Following delivery of the ward manager programme, the University's partnership across the Trust has broadened, with CETAD jointly delivering the accredited management programmes for both new and junior managers and senior managers. CETAD is also delivering a postgraduate programme for junior doctors in the Trust. More widely, the programme and CETAD's collaborative way of working will be promoted to Trusts across the North West.

SUPPORTING MATERIAL

- **Appendix 1** – Empowering Partnerships Poster
- **Appendix 1** – [Video](#)

