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BLACKPOOL TEACHING HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

DRIVING IMPROVEMENTS THROUGH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

The organisation

Blackpool Teaching Hospitals (BTH) provides a range of acute, community and tertiary services to 1.5 million people across Lancashire and South Cumbria.

It employs 6,964 staff, 216 of these are consultants and 64 are specialty and associate specialist (SAS) doctors.

Background

When the associate medical director for clinical leadership and engagement came into post in February 2015, she asked colleagues about life in the trust, what frustrated them, and what could be done differently.

What she found was two-fold. Firstly, that newly appointed doctors found it stressful adjusting to the demands of a senior clinical post in a new trust. Secondly, that senior doctors wanted leaders who promoted engagement, participation and involvement as their core leadership approach.

At the same time, it was recognised that SAS doctors are a key part of the trust's medical workforce and should have the same development opportunities as consultants.

What the trust did

In response to the findings, the trust launched a leadership and development programme for new consultants and SAS doctors in 2015. The programme was developed to address the concerns that had been raised and deliver a holistic package of support to develop skills, engage teams and deliver results in challenging times.

Since its inception, the programme has been instrumental in enabling senior doctors to gain a better understanding of the trust, their role and, importantly, the current financial climate. As such, attendance is deemed mandatory and every new consultant and SAS doctor that joins the trust is booked onto the next available induction.

Here is an overview of the programme content and its key staff members, which other trusts could find useful in terms of supporting new senior doctors and their development as leaders.

Introduction to the trust and the programme

Led by the associate medical director for clinical leadership and engagement, the opening session shares the trust's vision and values, and provides an overview of the local, regional and national NHS landscape.

Maintaining high levels of performance

This session looks at performance, raising concerns policy and the freedom to speak up service.

Led by the trust's deputy medical director, he shares his experience of being a whistleblower: "The consequences for me were awful, although my career ultimately did not suffer. We are still hearing of suppressed concerns in the NHS, and the subsequent consequences from more than 25 years ago and the culture has to change.

"I highlight all the processes and systems that should prevent a recurrence today. The key issues for leaders are to feel free and safe to raise concerns, to ensure all staff know and understand the same and to be ready to hear and support those with concerns."

Working effectively with others to achieve a positive outcome

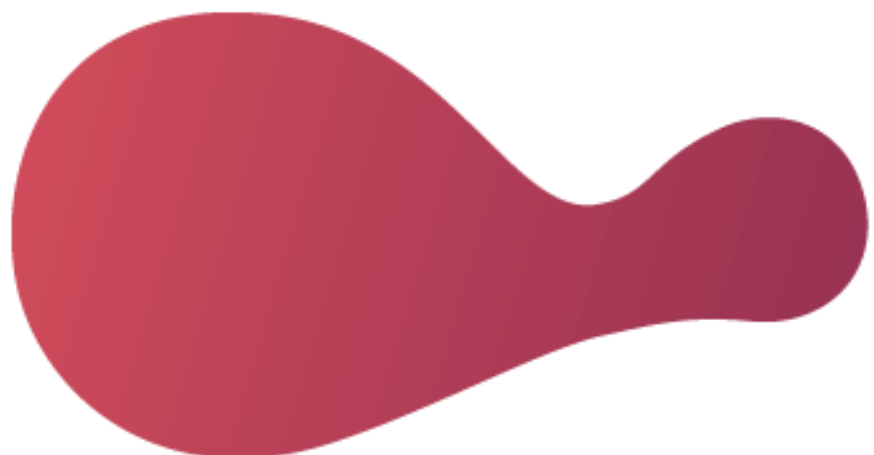
The trust's medical director leads this session to provide doctors with an opportunity to share their views with the most senior doctor in the trust.

This is followed by a workshop to raise awareness around emotional intelligence and conflict management with tools and techniques to build and maintain healthy working relationships with team members and colleagues.

Delivering high levels of quality patient care within budget

Doctors are introduced to the trust's approach to patient care and safety, and how to maintain an open and transparent culture.

The finance team share information on the financial structure of the NHS and how the trust acquires its funding.



Delegates learn about the importance of clinical coding to ensure that activity is coded to the correct consultant or SAS doctor. One delegate said: "I will definitely change 'impression' to 'diagnose' on patient notes to allow more coding."

An introduction to human resource management and staff engagement

The HR team provides information on policies and procedures on attendance management, grievance, annual leave, flexible working, and bullying and harassment. An additional session on 'taking care of yourself and others' is delivered by the trust's consultant in occupational health.

The senior doctor as leader and change agent

This workshop, opened by the trust's chair, is designed to help doctors understand the dynamics of leadership and how to successfully implement change and continuous improvement initiatives.

All aspects of transformational change are explored including resistance to change, how to overcome it, and communicating with key stakeholders. The finance team delivers a session on developing a robust business case.

Additional support

Sessions on reflective leadership encourage further networking, sharing best practice and working through challenges with the associate medical director for clinical leadership and engagement.

Each delegate also has access to a trained in-house mentor throughout the duration of the programme.

Collaborative leadership programme

This multi-professional programme gives practising or aspiring middle managers and clinicians the opportunity to develop their role as collaborative leaders.

The benefits are improved working, enabling clinical leaders and managers to work with colleagues and their staff to drive change and improvement.

A consultant commented: "I don't think any of us would claim to be 'born' leaders. The collaborative leadership program has provided me with numerous techniques, tools and peers to help me develop my leadership potential."



Senior collaborative leadership programme

This programme is by invitation only via the trust's succession planning process. The aim is to support senior managers and clinicians to develop their strategic leadership knowledge through a process of peer support, self-awareness and reflective learning.

Platform for transformational leadership programme

The target audience for this programme is senior leaders and consultants responsible for leading the implementation of the trust's five-year strategy and those identified as having potential for future executive director roles.

The aim is to support them with their self-confidence, courage, belief and authenticity to enable them to deliver and embody strategic vision and ambitions.

Coaching and mentoring

The trust offers an in-house service which is open to all staff

Outcomes

Evaluation of the leadership programmes has been positive. Doctors have increased their skills and knowledge around leadership and management, and transferred this learning into practice with positive impact on service improvement, personal health and wellbeing, and ultimately patient care.

Attendees have commented on how much they enjoy working with colleagues across disciplines, clinical and non-clinical, and from different work settings.

Many said that the application of tools and techniques learnt on the programmes have improved their job satisfaction, efficiency and productivity. In addition, positive benefits have been realised for the trust, with the identification of delegates for senior leadership roles.

Next steps

The trust will continue to review its leadership offering, aligning it to the most up-to-date theory and expectations, supporting leaders and future leaders to succeed in more volatile and complex environments.

Top tips

- 1. Horizon scan**
Run focus groups to determine what is missing from the existing processes around induction, education and development.
- 2. Network**
Engage with trusts on a local and regional basis to share learning and good practice around delivering induction, education and development.

3. Build relationships

Build relationships with the medical education team, and utilise their knowledge around the requirements for induction, education and development.

4. Seek support from the executive team

Involve the executive team in any induction, education or development programme to increase levels of staff engagement and gain credibility with the medical workforce.

5. Signpost

Signpost newly appointed consultants and SAS doctors to information on development and support. Highlight policies around raising concerns and health and wellbeing.

6. Evaluate

Undertake regular evaluation of the programmes and act upon feedback to make further improvements.

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