

Streamlining statutory and mandatory training

West London Mental Health Trust

West London Mental Health Trust used the benchmarking reports and the 5 Point Plan from the Streamlining Programme, to ensure the right training was being delivered to the right staff at the right time, freeing up staff to spend more time with patients.

The organisation

The West London Mental Health Trust (WLMHT) is one of ten mental health trusts in London, employing approximately 3,500 staff and a leading national provider of forensic (secure) and specialist mental healthcare. Its services include community and inpatient mental health services, providing care and treatment to approximately 20,000 patients in West London each year.

What we did and why

Working with the benchmarking report, the trust conducted a full training review, looking at the frequency and duration of training and who required it.

By comparing its results to other trusts, and by adopting and using Skills For Health's Core Skills Training Framework (CSFT), the trust worked with subject matter experts (SMEs) on learning outcomes to highlight where they were adding unnecessary and time consuming content.

The trust emphasised that it was not simply looking to save money, but to focus the SMEs on what learning outcomes were statutory and mandatory and those relevant to local risks.

Head of staff development, Ali Webster, said the exercise was extremely valuable because it helped us to look at mandatory training in a way they hadn't before.

"Using the baselining and benchmarking information proved to be the key to providing a rationale for change which benefited the trust and our staff," she said.

"We are confident that we got the right balance between reducing risk, maintaining the quality of training and achieving more for less."

The trust found that some of the training was not focused on refreshing the knowledge and skills of existing staff, but re-training content.

In addition, the trust also found that they were overtraining in some areas. For example, a full-day course in manual handling – patient handling was delivered to about 2,000 ward-based staff every year. After reviewing the learning outcomes and frequency against the CSTF guidance, they found they could deliver the essential learning outcomes in half the time, with tri-annual refresher courses.

While the Skills for Health CSTF focuses on ten core subjects, the trust took the opportunity to challenge the rest of the statutory and mandatory subjects and whether the frequencies, duration and training needs analysis were correct.

The trust also reviewed face-to-face training against e-learning and gave staff the option to access training information

through e-learning or face-to-face to improve everyone's understanding of the range of training interventions.

How we did it

The trust used an initial baselining exercise to understand the cost and time taken on statutory and mandatory training. Putting a value on the time spent training staff highlighted that while nothing was fundamentally wrong, improvements and fine tuning were required. Then the benchmarking provided a tangible comparison to what other trusts were doing.

Using the 5 Point Plan the trust then broke the project down into smaller, more manageable tasks and were able to dedicate small amounts of time and deliver results throughout the process.

Deliver essential learning outcomes in half the time

With an already strong compliant culture, they set targets through the programme to increase this progressively to 85 per cent and plan to increase this again later this year to 90 per cent.

Looking at travel times required for face-to-face training and the difficulty staff may have accessing this, they expanded e-learning where appropriate and put in place special days to support staff with e-learning which they named 'E-Learning Wednesday'.

Results and next steps

The changes to patient handling training alone saved 83 per cent of time previously spent on the training. This is equivalent to 37,500 staff hours over a three-year period, or 7.6 whole time equivalent (WTE) staff.

In medical emergencies training, changing a previously compulsory seven hours of training every year for 2,000 nurses from mandatory to personal development, released 12,250 clinical hours, equivalent to 7.4 WTE staff.

The trust and its staff are now confident they are delivering the right training to the right people at the right time. Staff are reporting

that they are now clear on what they need to do and when and managers now also understand the importance of compliance and are managing their staff to ensure they comply.

Tips for other trusts

- Be clear with staff about what is expected of them – get the training matrix right.
- Ensure that the learning outcomes are relevant and not unnecessarily added to by subject matter experts.
- Offer easy access to the training, through offering the option of e-learning and/or face to face.
- Adopt and refer to guidance in the Core Skills Training Framework.
- Ensure training completion is accurately recorded and that staff members can check this for themselves.
- Ensure that the training is valued by managers.
- Incentivise staff members to complete all StatMan training, giving those who do opportunities to access to additional development.
- Monthly monitoring of the mandatory compliance by the trust board on a monthly basis.
- Mandatory training compliance information for individuals is also visible within the PDR recording process.

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