

Unlocking staff potential at Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust

A Learning Advisor model approach to Skills for Life

Literacy, Language, Numeracy and IT Skills are important for all staff to enable them to provide good quality healthcare and develop within the workplace. It is important to consider innovative ways to embed learning support and guidance for staff at bands 1-4 who have traditionally not had a formal pathway to level 2 qualifications and further professional development.

Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust wanted to ensure that this group of staff were able to access the new Trust Managed Learning Environment that offered a range of mandatory computer-based training. This training covers Infection Control, Fire, COSHH, Moving and Handling, Customer Care, DSE, Equality and Diversity and Risk Management. The aim of the training was to provide underpinning knowledge, meet Knowledge and Skills Framework competences and reduce risk within the organisation.

A mapping exercise was undertaken within the Facilities Directorate which identified that staff would require support with IT skills and additional computers needed to be available. A project was designed to provide the following:

- Computer Learning Zones throughout the Trust which could be accessed 24/7 for staff to complete their e-learning.
- A Learning Advisor group – consisting of staff who had volunteered to support their colleagues from each area of Facilities.
- A project board to define training priorities and report back to the Trust Managed Learning Environment Board for monitoring of results and inform best practice for other Directorates.

Staff felt involved in the process of setting up the Learning Zones and defining the terms of reference for the Learning Advisor role. Time was provided within the Facilities Directorate for planning meetings to take place, training for the Learning Advisors covering IT and Skills for Life issues and training support for learners.

“ The Learning Advisors model works by unlocking staff potential at all levels to deliver excellent healthcare and enhance patient safety. This is achieved by raising awareness of Skills for Life and addressing learners’ needs in a way that will develop individuals and promote a culture of learning within the organisation. ”

Carol Read Lifelong Learning Facilitator, Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust

A key strategic objective of Skills for Health is to improve participation in learning and employability in the health sector workforce to improve literacy, language and numeracy and information technology skill levels. Enhanced LLN skills levels can benefit the health sector by helping staff to widen their competences and take on extended roles.

Benefits and Achievements

- 1,400 e-learning programmes completed by Facilities staff in the first month.
- Committed members of staff at all levels who are acting as Learning Advisors and supporting their colleagues.
- Motivated learners bands 1-4 with IT skills.
- A route to LLN assessment established and further LLN supported.
- Best practice shared internally and externally.

The project has also provided the opportunity for Learning Advisors to signpost individuals to the Lifelong Learning Facilitator who could arrange for LLN assessment, guidance and learning support to be put in place.

Following this pilot project, work is ongoing to cascade the information about the successful role of the Learning Advisors to others within the Trust and to external stakeholders through partnership work, presentations and open days.

The trust has built a solid foundation to engage with bands 1-4 staff who have previously missed out on gaining IT and LLN

skills. Partnerships have enabled staff to develop strategies that work in practice. The Learning Advisors group is constantly looking at ways to enhance performance and develop further. The project has addressed many barriers to learning for this specific workforce and has raised awareness of Skills for Life issues.

Organisations like Skills for Health continue to promote the benefits of LLN training with a range of interactive tools which have been developed specifically for the health sector, and support a competence based approach to learning and development.

Skills for Health is the Sector Skills Council for the UK health sector (the National Health Services, independent healthcare providers and voluntary organisations). Our purpose is to implement solutions that can deliver a skilled and flexible workforce to improve health and healthcare.

Use our interactive guides to find out more about LLN and how you can unlock the potential of your workforce at:
www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/lln