

Linking LLN training to disability priorities and KSF

Dartford & Gravesham NHS Trust – embedding literacy training into deaf awareness courses.

No matter how well qualified or experienced they are, there are many people who could benefit from enhancing their literacy, language and numeracy (LLN) skills. Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust recognised the benefits of linking LLN training to wider health sector priorities such as disability awareness and the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF). A highly successful initiative centred on embedding literacy training into a deaf awareness programme which focused on communicating with people with hearing and/or visual difficulties.

Among those who signed up for the course were a ward clerk, a dental nurse, a nursing assistant, medical records staff, a manager and a nurse.

In addition to their shared interest in deaf awareness, they all wanted to improve their English language skills either by brushing up on spelling and grammar or improving communication where English was not their first language. Kent Adult Education Services identified a tutor who was keen to work with the Trust on this initiative and the course was funded under the National Employer Training Programme, Train to Gain.

The result was highly successful, with learners gaining a range of qualifications, including National Adult Literacy Certificate at Level 1 or 2, whilst at the same time, providing them with the opportunity to develop skills and knowledge that would contribute to the improvement in service delivery.

“ As a health care provider, it is important that our staff are aware of the communication needs of all patients, relatives and carers and that no group or individual feels excluded. This programme has provided us with a pool of staff who now have the skills and knowledge to use a range of processes to communicate with Deaf and Deafblind people. Completing the programme myself was a real eye-opener. ”

Stephen Mulvaney Assistant Director,
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A key strategic objective of Skills for Health is to improve participation in learning and employability in the health sector workforce through implementation with partners, of a strategy to improve literacy, language and numeracy and information technology skill levels. There are many ways in which enhanced LLN skills levels can benefit the health sector. For example, a raised level of awareness of LLN underpins the personal development review (PDR) process within the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework.

The Benefits

- Increased awareness of barriers to communication for Deaf and Deafblind people.
- Knowledge of tactics to overcome barriers.
- A pool of staff who can communicate with patients, relatives and carers with hearing and/or visual difficulties.
- Learners developed verbal and written communication skills and achieved accredited qualification.
- Learners enjoyed experience building confidence, re-engaging them in learning and encouraged to develop further skills.

The Trust saw how the delivery of LLN training contributed not only to a more confident and better skilled and qualified workforce, it also demonstrated clear links to several core dimensions of the Knowledge and Skills Framework, such as Communication, Personal and People Development, and Equality and Diversity.

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.

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 help develop solutions that can deliver a skilled and flexible workforce to improve health and healthcare.

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