Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust

Paper Number  SFT 1899
Title  Lifelong Learning Strategy 2004-09 Progress Report

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update members of the Board on the progress being made by Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust on the implementation of the 5 strategic goals of the ‘Lifelong Learning Strategy 2004-09’

Executive Summary

Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust continues to:

- Prioritise learning which improves patient care by meeting service needs and the promotion of an improvement culture.
- Promote access to learning and development which supports the needs of the individual and those of the organisation.
- Value the diversity of learning opportunities both work based and classroom based within the Trust and in partnership with other learning organisations.
- Support the equality of access across staff groups to education and learning to support fitness to practice.
- Recognise that for lifelong learning to be effective in contributing to patient care, it must also be part of a process that links learning and development with patient needs, organisational needs and service plans.

Action Required by the Board

To note the progress made towards the achievement of the Lifelong Learning Strategy

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Head of Learning & Development
Background

The Strategy for Lifelong Learning was extended to 2009 at last year's Board Meeting as it was felt that the 5 strategic goals were still valid.

The 5 strategic goals of the strategy continue to:

1. Ensure the Trust has the systems, processes and resources in place to meet learning and development needs
2. Make learning and development more accessible to all staff
3. Ensure that the Trust provides a high quality learning environment for pre-registration learners and actively works in partnership with Higher Education and Further Education institutions to ensure high quality programmes
4. Maintain and extend skills and careers
5. Develop effective leaders and managers

The strategy recognises that:

- Managers and staff share responsibility towards education, training and development.

- Staff are entitled to work in an environment which equips them with the skills to perform their current jobs to the best of their ability, developing their roles and career potential, working individually and in teams in more creative and fulfilling ways.

- Access to education, training and development should be as open and flexible as possible with no discrimination in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, availability to part-time/full-time staff, or geographical location.

- There is a need to develop a culture in the organisation that genuinely values learning, actively promotes and invests in learning and builds it into everyday routines and practices.

And that:

- For lifelong learning to be effective in contributing to patient care, it must also be part of a process that links learning and development with patient needs, organisational needs and service plans.

Last year the focus of the report was on progress to date with goal 5 – Developing Current and Future Leaders and Managers.
Progress To Date

This year the focus has been goal 2 – **Make Learning & Development more accessible to all staff.**

Historically there has been inequality between staff groups to education, training and development, largely based on which staff groups have had access to training monies.

Most patient care is now delivered by multi-professional teams and yet we still educate staff in professional silos.

The Trust has worked hard since the Lifelong Learning Strategy has been in place to reduce the barriers to access funding for learning by pooling training budgets.

We still divide the education of clinical and non-clinical staff therefore missing opportunities for a more integrated approach to training and development.

**Infrastructure to Support an Integrated Approach to Learning.**

At the beginning of November 2007 the Clinical Staff Development Team (CSD) was moved from the Nursing Directorate to the Education Team. This has allowed us to look at providing a more integrated approach to education and learning combining medical, dental, nursing and midwifery, the education of allied health professionals, scientists, and the wider healthcare team (ancillary and administrative staff).

The Education Team have focussed specifically on 2 areas this year:

1. Promoting access to learning and development, particularly amongst staff in Bands 1-4 both clinical and non-clinical, and developing an infrastructure to support learners in the workplace.

2. Ensuring equality of access, across staff groups, to education and learning which supports fitness to practice.

**Promoting Learning for staff in bands 1-4**

Historically staff in these bands are the least likely to seek out learning opportunities. On the whole these staff have few or no formal qualifications, school was not a good introduction to learning and therefore many have basic skills needs (reading, writing, mathematics and use of a computer).

Many of these staff are employed by the Facilities Directorate, providing essential services to our patients. The Facilities Director is evangelical about learning and development which has meant the Education Team has been able to develop an innovative approach to learning and development aimed at meeting the needs of ancillary staff.
The principles of the approach are:

- A 12 month period of ‘hand-holding’ and guidance by a specially trained colleagues in the workplace.

- A clearly defined developmental programme, delivered in wards and departments, that will ensure the achievement of the Foundation Gateway.

- Sensitive assessment of basic skills, followed by appropriate work-based education tailored to individual needs.

- Encouragement to undertake a work-related competence-based qualification.

- Recognition and celebration of their success.

This approach is now being promoted as an example of good practice, not only in other departments in this Trust, but in other Trusts in the Strategic Health Authority.

As a result of our approach we have now been able to attract £250,000 of Learning & Skills Council funding, this financial year, to develop staff in bands 1-4.

**Ensuring Equality of Access to Health and Safety Training Across All Staff Groups.**

As in many organisations, the uptake of health and safety training has always been patchy.

Two years ago the Trust invested in a suite of computer-based, health and safety training packages. The rationale was to improve the access to training across all staff groups – staff could access training when they most needed it.

The packages sit on a Managed Learning Environment (MLE), which gives us the capability of monitoring training activity centrally.

Whilst initially we saw an increase in the uptake of health and safety training, we were able to identify areas where staff were still not completing health and safety training. As this is a risk to patients and the staff themselves a decision was made to target new starters at induction.

The Education Department worked with HR, Occupational Health, Information Governance and the Executive Team to redesign the induction process.
All staff come to the Education Department on their first morning at work where they are welcomed formally to the Trust by the Chief Executive (or a member of the Executive Team).

New starters then complete a day of learning and development activities, including some computer-based training packages, some practical sessions and some more traditional classroom based sessions.

At the end of the day staff have completed the most important health and safety training – infection control, lifting and handling, fire training, information governance and are deemed fit-to-practice. They are a registered onto the MLE which automatically sends them reminders about other health and safety training they need to complete in a given time span.

The net result is an improvement of health and safety training right across the Trust and the Education Team have an opportunity to show-case the facilities that are available to all staff in the education department.

At the recent NHSLA visit the Trust was commended for our approach to health and safety training, however we still have a number of areas of improvement.

**Emerging Themes for the Coming Year**

Managers and staff share responsibility towards education, training and development.

Demands are increasing for all staff to develop new skills as new ways of working are developed.

Managers in the Trust are expected to act as a coach, a mentor and an assessor of their staff.

Service plans are expected to reflect the learning needs of all levels of staff across all staff groups.

Investment in a range of development opportunities for managers and leaders is needed from Ward level to Board level to enhance our capacity to deliver continuous improvement and take the Trust from good to excellent.
References

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