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Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Tailoring induction to support
young people

The organisation

Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust provides a range of services, including accident and emergency, maternity, outpatients, therapies and children's health, for patients from the Crewe, Nantwich, Congleton, Middlewich and Northwich areas, as well as further afield. The trust has around 540 hospital beds and employs approximately 3,200 members of staff.

Challenge

Mid Cheshire recognised that making new starters feel welcome and prepared for starting work in their organisation is a really important stage of the recruitment process. When done well it can be fundamental to an individual's decision to stay in a role. The trust formed a task and finish group to find out what helps apprentices and young people feel welcome and supported to achieve the best start in their new roles. The group discovered that within their trust important information for new young starters wasn't being communicated effectively at induction. To address this issue the group decided to develop a tailored induction programme to support apprentices and young people joining their organisation.

Steps to success

At the trust, induction into the workplace is a transitional period

"I felt very welcomed during my induction. I also felt very level with everyone during the induction week and was not treated any different due to my age or being an apprentice."

**Mitchell Benson
Apprentice**

where young people learn about the working environment and are introduced to the arrangements and policies for employees. The programme of induction takes place over five days and is specifically tailored to make sure that young people are given a structured and supported start. Alongside the normal induction elements (corporate induction and manual handling training for example) young people are given additional learning on the following:

- communication skills
- transitional skills for example, what is considered acceptable clothing for work and the policy for using mobile phones
- sickness absence or lateness, when the trusts values are discussed and the impact on colleagues and patients is explained if new recruits do not turn up for work
- the day to day basics of the job role.

To develop the induction programme staff at the trust had conversations with staff at Mid Cheshire College and Barclays Bank and with young people. During these conversations they captured feedback on inductions people had delivered or attended, and asked what they could do to make their induction programme interesting and engaging for young people.

Following the conversations, a range of activities and information sessions were implemented into the induction programme. These include:

- Delivering information to the inductees using a range of engaging communication methods, such as drawing around each other and then drawing on the outline shape what they should and shouldn't wear to work.

“You all made me feel really welcome and comfortable as a new employee in the hospital and the monthly meetings really helped me develop my skills in the work environment. I felt supported by you 100 per cent and felt comfortable asking you questions.

**Olivia Farrington
Apprentice**

- Playing YouTube videos of good and bad practice within the NHS and discussing afterwards.
- Delivery of a talk on pay and pensions by a member of the payroll team, since this is an area that young people are less likely to be familiar with, particularly if it's their first job.
- Inductees meet and talk to the trusts chief executive officer to break down any barriers around the approachability of the senior team.
- Information on the bigger picture and context of where they fit within the organisation is shared, together with an explanation of why their role is important to the team and patients.

Another important element of the induction is a tour of the hospital. Inductees are buddied up with the previous cohort of apprentices for the tour. This method works since they are more likely to be shown what they want to see, and the inductees are able to ask questions of their peers.

A placement opportunity is also provided as part of the induction process. This is half a day, and takes place in the morning, which allows the new recruit time in the afternoon to raise any concerns they have, rather than worrying until the next day.

The final step of induction is a team building day, where all of the new starters tidy and weed a garden within the trust. There is sometimes a little resistance beforehand but inductees usually change their opinion by the end of the day. This activity is repeated three or four times a year. It allows young people to meet up with their peers and to have a network, and it also provides an opportunity for staff at the trust to evaluate how new young starters are getting on.

“It was significantly helpful being with the other apprentices all together as it gave us chance to get to know each other, discuss the apprenticeship between us all and get to know about each other’s area of work.”

**Emily Moreton
Apprentice**

The gardens are used by patients, and having the apprentices and young people maintain them reinforces the importance of caring for patients, and helps them to understand the contribution they make to the trust as a whole.

Barriers

Staff at Mid Cheshire Hospitals were able to overcome several small barriers to make a big difference. This included:

- Keeping sessions informal and giving young people responsibility. This helps to build confidence, gain respect, and encourages ownership of tasks. For example, asking young people how long they want for breaks rather than telling them how long they can take.
- Talking to young people like adults. If there are any issues, talking to them outside of the learning environment, and talking to them one to one works. It gains their respect and reduces the incidences of repeat problematic behaviors.

Outcomes

Apprentices have been well retained within the organisation. All 13 apprentices from the first cohort, and 14 apprentices from the second cohort are still employed at the trust. There have been very few issues with young people once they have started their job roles, and they are seen as an asset by their teams and managers. This is because the following happens during induction:

- The trusts values are introduced and embedded.
- Young people are encouraged to confidently communicate questions and concerns so that they don't escalate once in their job role.

“It was a new adventure and I felt part of a wider community. We all made an effort to help each other integrate in to our new surroundings.”

**Jack Hughes
Apprentice**

- An introduction to the bigger picture beyond their own job role at induction is key. Once young people get onto the wards they are ready to have conversations about their job, because they understand how they fit in, and their impact on the wider organisation.

To further improve the induction, staff at Mid Cheshire are building Myers-Briggs into the induction programme. This will help young people to understand their own personality, together with other peoples, and to see how this contributes to better team work and a greater understanding of patients' needs.

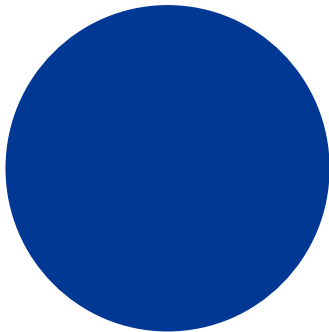
Top tips

- Do your research, gain feedback from young people about what they want in induction.
- Gain young people's respect by giving them responsibility during induction.
- Use various communication channels and activities to keep your audience engaged.
- Spend time sharing information that is less familiar to young people i.e. pay and pensions.
- Explain the bigger picture to young people about where they fit in, this will help them to understand how important their role is.
- Talk to young people like adults.

Contact us

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