Aim and objectives

In 2015, in partnership with the Quality Improvement Division (QID), University Hospital Kerry (UHK) commenced a programme seeking to value staff voices through Staff Listening Sessions and encourage creative problem solving through a quality improvement and Front Line Ownership (FLO).

Project Description and methodology

Sixty nine staff from all disciplines in University Hospital Kerry participated in listening sessions designed and facilitated by the Quality Improvement Division. The Executive Management Board (EMB) agreed to support and act on the top three suggestions for improvement.

Staff Listening evaluation methods

A commitment was given by the QID team to record the feedback of staff including feedback from the discussion (which was captured as completely as possible) and information written by staff on suggestion labels during the session. All feedback was recorded, summarised into themes for ease of reference and categorised under the five goals of the HSE Corporate Plan 2015 - 2017.

In collating the data, themes and sub themes were assigned based on the interpretation of the QID staff - this was solely to assist the EMB interpret the data more easily.

The key feedback from staff at these sessions was:

- Helping make a difference in the lives of those we serve and our working collaboratively with our colleagues are the greatest positives of our work. Please ensure we have sufficient staff to do our jobs safely and well.
- Help us to continue to learn so that we can continue to improve service delivery. Help us commit to a culture of mutual respect, kindness and compassion.
- To improve services, improve communication - keep us informed, listen to us and value our opinion.
- Ask us - we can help reduce waste and improve processes. Introduce flexible working. Happy staff - happy patients. And finally recognise the work of staff - say thank you and acknowledge us when we do a job well.

University Hospital Kerry - Staff Listening Sessions 2015 - 2016

A follow-up action planning session included the co-design of actions by staff and management and included engagement with patients and staff under five agreed themes: Communication, Culture, Flexible Working, Waste and Training and Education.

Key learning

1. Executive management team commitment is vital.
2. Establish level of organisational readiness in advance.
3. Identify processes to support devolved decision making and forums for seeking guidance.
4. Creating a space for staff from different teams to come together has helped improve teamwork and staff reported that being involved has a positive personal impact.

Challenges and supports

The Executive Management Board (EMB) supported the initiative in real terms e.g. staff release to attend staff listening sessions, action planning and FLO training was facilitated. A member of EMB acted as a sponsor for each of the group to raise issues at board level if required. The Quality Manager who was also a member of the EMB provided coaching and leadership support on site.

Some challenges included difficulties in groups having time to meet together. One group utilised What’s App and Twitter to communicate regularly. The methods used to communicate and engage with other hospital staff not on the groups included informal get togethers, canteen focused events, and conversations with staff. Coaching via teleconferencing was more feasible than videoconferencing due to IT restrictions and access.

Benefits / outcomes

Communications team: Introduced the ‘Hello My Name is’ initiative, completed a social network mapping exercise, and established a UHK choir ‘The Frontliners’

Waste team: Established a pilot for recycling in theatre and OPD (measurable reduction in waste for landfill), provided recycling awareness training for staff, patient men cards introduced to reduce food waste by introducing portion sizes (also meeting HIGA Nutrition standards requirements)

Culture group: ‘Happy Mondays’ and social events to improve staff culture, free staff draw with prizes from local businesses, improved car parking, raised awareness of staff uniform policy- clerical staff have now a standard uniform, staff outdoor seating area provided.

Training and Education and Flexible working time: Review completed of mandatory training and flexible working has been agreed with staff self rostering systems in place in most wards.

Conclusion

100% of staff who completed the evaluation form for Staff Listening Sessions recommended that they should continue and valued the opportunity to share their ideas. The time to complete the evaluation of qualitative data from the listening sessions was considerable and this approach, while insightful, is time consuming. The EMB acknowledged that the feedback from the staff listening sessions contained the opinions and perceptions of staff which would not be verified for accuracy. They were read in this context and deemed no less valuable.

While coaching is still available if required for FLO, most groups and initiatives are now self-sustaining with frontline staff deciding and implementing quality improvements required.

References


Gardner A, Gittensman L. If you don’t succeed the first 20 times, please try something different... Accidental Canada Quarterly. 2013; 4(2):1-11.


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