

Case Study

Date: 2014

Region: South Coast NHS Trust

Overview: Review of Housekeeping service, provision and staff morale within the service across three sites.

The details: The Trust approached Donna Ockenden Ltd with concerns regarding the Estates and Facilities Division and specifically the areas of staff morale, sickness, absence, turnover, and allegations of bullying and harassment. The Division had a high number of employee relations cases and needed external, objective assistance to come up with recommendations to drive improvement.

Further to initial discussions in December 2013 Donna Ockenden Ltd was asked to start the review in summer 2014 and completed the review at the end of December 2014.

The purpose of the review was to establish the facts of the concerns, identify lessons which could be learned, highlight what would be expected to change and provide a clear report including recommendations.

The review was expected to take four to six months and cover three sites. The process would include staff briefings, workshops, walk and talks, one to ones, pairs and small group meetings with staff from all levels including management. Due to the fragmented nature of the shifts work by the team it was important to the Trust, Division and Housekeeping service that Donna was visible across all shifts, (around the 24 hour clock) and seven days a week. Donna worked alongside Housekeepers, domestics, domestic supervisors and visited all three sites on an around the clock basis.

Outcome: Findings included a general acknowledgment that communication across the Division was extremely poor. It was clear that there were significant operational problems which had been chronic for a number of years, however, staff worked to a very high standard and had pride in their work.

Donna Ockenden Ltd compiled a survey consisting of 14 questions which were drawn and adapted from the NHS staff survey and gained over 170 responses represented by all levels of staff.

Findings ranged from disrespect towards domestics, favouritism to certain members of staff and hit and miss operational processes for ordering supplies. Equipment was found to be insufficient and in poor repair. Positive feedback included respondents felt the Trust was a good place to receive care.

All of the recommendations made by Donna Ockenden Limited were accepted in full. Recommendations to the Trust further to the review were: urgent evaluation of equipment in current use and rolling replacement scheme, further training to staff including budget controls and accountability. An urgent letter to be written from the Executive Medical and Nursing Directors to all staff outlining unacceptable behaviour towards housekeeping personnel and repercussions of acting in an unprofessional manner. Overall there needs to be an improvement in the willingness to make things better and implement improved communication to discuss any issues across all levels.