

# Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission Report

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Supporting Social Care Practice

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Lead Director: Steven Forbes

Lead Assistant Mayor: Cllr Vi Dempster

Date: 28<sup>th</sup> August 2018

## Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
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- Report version number: 1

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 Over the last year Adult Social Care (ASC) has utilised many routes to engage front-line staff which includes Social Workers, Care Management Officers, Occupational Therapist and Team Leaders to hear from them about how they feel about their roles and working environment. To understand how this translates into the level of practice confidence and how this affects the experience of social care users.
- 1.2 This report summarises the key findings from four key activities undertaken to explore social work practice these are the Healthy Workplace Survey, Employee Engagement Survey, My Time Peer Review and Annual Health Check.

### 2. Summary

- 2.1 **The Healthy Workplace Survey 2017** gives ASC staff an opportunity to anonymously answer questions focused on the themes of Demands, Control, Management Support, Peer Support, Relationships and Role. A total of 343 ASC staff responded to the 2017 survey.
- 2.2 Overall there was a positive improvement across the board since the last survey in 2016 with the themes of Management Support, Peer Support, Relationships and Role seeing the most positive improvements.
- 2.3 This identified that ASC staff felt that their line manager encouraged them at work, dealt with conflict and positive working relationship was promoted. There was a strong sense of help, support and respect from colleagues. Responses showed ASC staff felt they had more control and choice on how they did their work particularly through the provision of flexible working.
- 2.4 The highest percentage of very negative responses to the survey were around choice in deciding what they did at work and the intensity of the work.
- 2.5 **Employment Engagement Survey** this was carried out by Organisational Development (OD) to understand levels of engagement and experience of employees across the council.
- 2.6 The survey sought employee's views on their work, teamwork and social, leadership and management, purpose, contribution and awareness, personal growth and indicators of engagement. Results were compared by specific department in comparison to the wider council. In ASC 51 staff

engaged in the survey,

- 2.7 Team and Management support featured strongly in what helps ASC do their best work with service users. They understood how their work contributed to both their team's performance and the council's vision and values. ASC staff felt trusted by their manager, that managers were open to new ideas of working and they created an environment where staff felt energised and motivated. They also regularly received positive feedback.
- 2.8 In comparison to the wider council, ASC staff showed the lowest percentage of positive responses around personal growth. With specific areas of improvement around their ability to learn & grow, feeling their opinions didn't count and there was little opportunity to advance their career.
- 2.9 **My Time Peer Review** was conducted with Nottingham City Council in February 2018 this involved ASC Social Worker and Occupational Therapists from each Local Authority exploring how they have approached Wellbeing and Strength Based Approach with service users. The ASC practitioners ask questions about each Local Authorities approach, provided them with constructive feedback and took this learning back to their own authority.
- 2.10 This showed that ASC Staff felt well supported by their managers to make decisions around positive risk taking with service users and they felt confident in evidencing risk. They felt enabled to look at a wide range of wellbeing outcomes with service users, rather than dictating what should happen. Service users were also seen to be empowered and driving more outcomes than before.
- 2.11 ASC staff felt managers were forward thinking, listen to staff and there was a strong element of trust. They also felt there were lots of examples of staff engagement in ASC.
- 2.12 Areas of improvement were noted as being no consistent roll out of strength based approach, processes focused on deficits, external providers needing support to take positive risks and understanding ASC direction of travel.
- 2.13 **Annual Health Check 2017** reports on organisational culture as it affects social work practice. This was commissioned by the Local Government Association. The survey was completed drawing knowledge from the Principal Social Worker and sense checks with ASC staff.
- 2.14 The headline messages were ASC staff hold manageable caseloads, they received regular effective supervision, flexible working is supported and they have access to services which support their wellbeing.
- 2.15 There was a lack of Continued Professional Development opportunities for ASC staff.

### **3. Recommendation**

3.1 Scrutiny Commissioning are recommended to:

- a) Note the content of the report and comment on and endorse the progress made in improving the approach to social care practice within Adult Social Care;
- b) Express its support to the continued progress and change in practice culture that has occurred in Adult Social Care;
- c) Consider what further information could be provided which would assure the Commission that a positive change in social care practice continues to be embedded in adult social care services.

### **4. Report**

- 4.1 Common themes from these pieces of engagement work tell us:
- 4.2 Staff feel supported in their decision- making removing the ASC panel has improved the experience of how and when decisions are made about service provision for service users. This has significantly reduced the time it takes for decisions about care provision allowing for a much improved service user experience.
- 4.3 Projects such as the self-assessment pilot offer the opportunity for staff to work autonomously and to feel trusted. This also allows them to share outcome of assessments with service users without the delay of awaiting management approval. This pilot is now to be extended within ASC.
- 4.4 The shift in departmental culture in the last two years towards enabling staff to work flexibly through the provision of direct access has allowed staff more control in how they choose to do their own work. This then provides a more positive service user experience as staff can offer flexibility around appointments.
- 4.5 ASC staff gave very positive responses to management support particularly around the increase in confidence to make decisions around positive risk taking which has enabled ASC staff to do their best work with service users.
- 4.6 ASC staff feel more confident in their decision- making this has translated into an improved customer experience when accessing support through the front-door of ASC.
- 4.7 Overall there is a strong emphasis on peer support and staff engagement which is encouraged through practitioner and supervisor forums, celebrating good practice through our recent Celebrating Success event and publishing of ASC staff commendations.
- 4.8 Staff in ASC feel engaged. The common characteristics of an engaged employee is one that trust's their manager, enjoys working with people in

their workplace, feel's people they work with take responsibility for their work, consider the council's vision and values in the work they do and find it is easy to become absorbed in their work.

- 4.9 The strength based pilot has allowed staff involved to feel they have more control about how they do their work this has enabled them to have better, more positive conversations with service users with a strong emphasis on building an individual's strengths. Further roll-out of this work it is anticipated will see more positive outcomes for ASC staff and service users.
- 4.10 There has been little improvement in how staff feel about their choice in deciding what they do in their work and that work is very intensive. Developments in rolling out a more consistent strength based approach, a single assessment which includes Occupational Therapy and work being undertaken on Liquid Logic simplification it is anticipated will see more positive responses going forward. These will also provide service users with opportunity to develop their strengths, decrease the need for lengthy paperwork and reduce the number of visits where there is need for both social work and occupational therapy involvement.
- 4.11 The Lack of Continued Professional Development has been highlighted as a key area for improvement. The recruitment of a Learning and Development Manager for ASC has been completed this new role will help to deliver a comprehensive learning and development strategy for ASC.

## **5. Financial, legal and other implications**

### **5.1 Financial implications**

There are no financial implications.

Rohit Rughani, Principal Accountant, Ext 37 4003

### **5.2 Legal implications**

I have read through your report and can confirm that there are no direct legal implications arising from the contents.

Pretty Patel, Head of law, Ext 37 1457

### **5.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications**

N/A

#### **5.4 Equalities Implications**

Initiatives that help to improve support for staff and their wellbeing that in turn impacts on service users experience, should benefit service users from across all protected characteristics.

Surinder Singh  
Equalities Officer 37 4148

#### **5.5 Other Implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)**

#### **6. Summary of appendices**

None