

Executive Leadership Team Development

Context

The Chief Executive and Chair of the Board of Hampshire Hospitals Foundation Trust (HHFT) commissioned the HHFT Executive Leadership Team Development Programme out of a desire to take stock three years after the Foundation Trust was formed and to revisit the culture and leadership behaviours.

In particular, the executive team wanted to look at the effectiveness of their collective leadership in the face of increasing challenges and significant demands on the healthcare system as a whole, and on their hospitals. More specifically to:

1. Become the best acute care Exec Team in the country
2. Generate and optimise an environment of mutual respect and honesty
3. Clarify the Executive Leadership behaviours needed to lead HHFT and deliver the strategy
4. Work in a joined-up way, through creating clarity of role, improved communication and shared decision making
5. Work collectively and lead effectively to enable the right things to happen across the wider organisation

Activity

Our methodology and approach included a three-phased approach in a co-designed manner:

1. 'Discover through inquiry'
2. 'Develop together'
3. 'Delivery'

We used a series of diagnostic approaches with different stakeholder groups as well as individual interviews with each member of the team, and meeting observations. This gave us a rich source of behavioral data to share with the team so they could begin to reassess their leadership approach.

In the working sessions, we introduced dialogue models and used the high impact 'working live' methodology to observe and intervene whilst the executive team were working on a critical issue and away from the working sessions during their weekly operational meetings in the hospital.

With a new team member joining the team, time was spent integrating and creating new team rituals and norms. The team created new ways of working at their best, and identified individual commitments to new 'enabling' behaviours.

We encouraged the team to identify opportunities where they could experiment with new approaches and ways of working.

This group work is supported by 1:1 executive coaching sessions.

Connecting Across the System

At the same time as this programme was running another organisation was conducting a review of working processes and identifying areas for cost reduction and greater efficiency. It has been critical that these two programmes have been connected and shared information to best support the whole organisation at a systemic level.

Impact

The working sessions and programme so far has been accomplished in the face of huge workload pressures across the whole organisation with external NHS budgetary pressures and the increased pressures that winter places on all hospitals.

Impact and feedback from the Exec Team included:

- Beneficial to spend time together having conversations we don't normally have time for
- Developing a greater understanding of my place in the team and the strengths I can bring
- Our meetings and time together is more productive and effective
- Able to have more challenging conversations and talk about difficult things
- Listening more, before I speak
- Your facilitation style is both challenging and supportive
- You keep me real and focused.

Pulse Check Feedback from CEO – At interim point in Programme

What's the experience been like?

'Very positive, the right mix of challenge, honesty and listening. Not pink and fluffy!'

Where have we added value?

'Through your straightforward and honest assessment early on, to stop us in our tracks. Direct feedback delivered in a supportive way.'