



Learning Disability Team Russells Hall Hospital, Dudley



Launching a Learning Disabilities Champions initiative in an Acute Hospital Trust

Aim

At the Dudley Group Foundation Trust we will increase the confidence of staff when working with patients with a learning disability by 80% within one year.

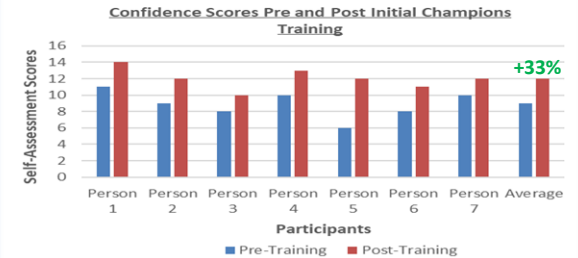
Improvement Methodology

People with learning disabilities often experience inequalities in mainstream healthcare settings – with an estimated 1200 dying avoidable deaths each year. There are a range of factors which influence how people with learning disabilities are cared for in a hospital setting including staff awareness and their understanding and ability to make reasonable adjustments. Upskilling the staff teams who are working on wards and in clinical areas will help to provide an increased awareness of the health inequalities faced by someone with a learning disability.

Champions will be recruited from existing employees of the Trust, consisting of nurses, doctors and clinical support workers from all wards and clinical areas. Training will consist of participation in a one hour face to face, group training session; informing of the reasons why Champions are needed on the acute wards, what their role as a champion will involve and they will be provided with resources to support them in their role. A clear set of standards will be introduced and the pathway to achieving those standards, with the support of the Learning Disability Team will be explained. The Institute for Healthcare Improvement, Model for Improvement will be adopted and PDSA cycles will be utilised to test the changes made.

Data

5 questions were asked where participants rated themselves on different aspects of their confidence using a Likert scale from 0-4, giving a score out of a total of 20. This was used in conjunction with a free writing feedback questionnaire to provide quantitative and qualitative data. The initial results from the confidence scale showed that participants had increased their confidence by an average of 3 points. This equates to an **increase in confidence of 33%** after the initial one hour training session. The feedback questionnaires further identified that the champions felt they needed more specific training and access to information regarding specific healthcare needs of someone with a learning disability in order to be effective in their role. The data certainly feels encouraging that 80% is achievable within the year; as long as the participants are adequately supported.



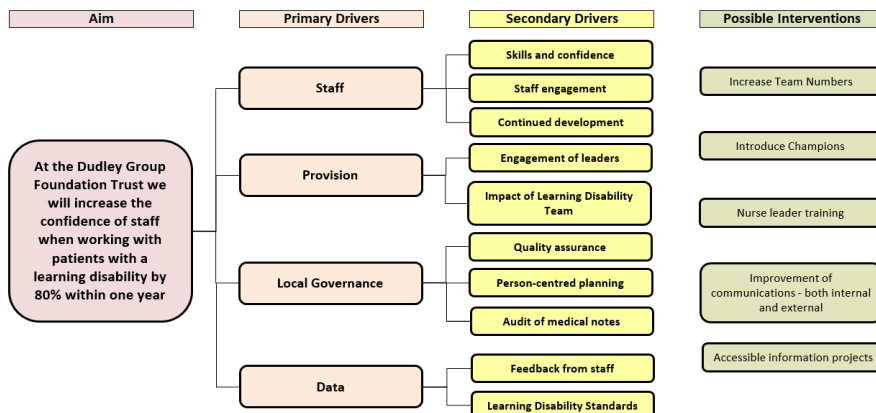
Tests of Change

Objective – How effective is the champions training at increasing the confidence of staff when working with patients with learning disabilities?



PDSA 1 – Champions were given pre and post confidence rating scales to complete. Further feedback forms also taken to help inform our future sessions. **PDSA 2** – A one-to-one session has been added, one month after the training session, in order to explore the participants training needs further. Qualitative data will be gathered about their experiences so far, reviewing feedback they have given following the initial training and confidence scores reassessed.

Driver diagram



Learning and what next?

Introducing learning disability champions on to the wards will directly benefit patients with learning disabilities by increasing the skills and commitment of staff who can act as a resource for their team, a point of contact and a link with the learning disabilities team. This will enable the vision and values of the team to stretch further than previously able, with engaged and committed staff to keep learning disabilities high on the agenda.

It is evident that the training undertaken had a significant impact on the confidence of the participants, one participant actually doubled their confidence. Whilst this is encouraging, it must be recognised that translating their initial feelings of confidence into actions on the ward will need much more support and involvement from the team. By utilising the PDSA cycles this has highlighted the importance of short and longer term feedback needed in order to have a true understanding of how effective the training has been. The feedback questionnaires have identified that participants feel they need the extra support so this must be explored and provided, whilst also encouraging the Champions to use their newly acquired confidence, skills and support from our team in order to implement changes needed.

It is important to acknowledge the varying learning needs of staff within this process and facilitating open discussions, including ensuring staff are comfortable to contact the team when needed. Maintaining an open line of communication will enable reflection of the champions learning needs and styles and any barriers to progression on the wards or clinical areas.

My initial aim for this project was to see an increase in confidence in a set group of staff, however I believe that by beginning to upskill a small group this will have a knock on effect with other staff throughout the hospital. By upskilling a small group every quarter, this would increase the reach of our team, its agenda and principles across the Trust. An upskilled staff team has a huge part to play in raising the awareness of the health inequalities that someone with a learning disability faces when they come in to hospital.