Delivering excellence in challenging times: NHS Health Scotland’s approach

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Description
This project aimed to improve NHS Health Scotland’s organisational performance so we could meet the challenges of delivering a new organisational strategy with reduced funding.

NHS Health Scotland’s funding in real terms (2016 prices)

Methodology
To achieve our aim, we needed the whole organisation to work better together. Therefore, uniquely among NHS Scotland Boards, we chose to use not only the Model for Improvement, which uses the Plan-Do-Study-Act cycle to support tests of change in real work settings, but also the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Excellence Model.

Unlike other quality improvement approaches, EFQM looks at the organisation as a whole and brings together the perspectives of customers, partners, staff, funders and the public to identify where change is needed. Using EFQM1 and the Improvement Service’s Public Sector Improvement Framework (PsIF) Guidance2 we:

- benchmarked performance against internationally recognised, high-performing organisations
- surveyed thousands of customers and partners to understand how they perceived us
- assessed our own performance in 2013, 2015 and 2017, involving more than 85% of our staff
- invited external assessors to review performance in 2013 and 2016
- trained 13 staff as EFQM assessors
- identified champions to lead improvement projects, forming a cross-organisational group to monitor progress.

Using the Model for Improvement we:

- trained 10% of staff to NHS Education for Scotland’s Quality Improvement Curriculum Framework3 Practitioner level
- delivered more than 30 improvement projects.

Aims/Objectives
Our project aimed to support the 2020 Vision by helping NHS Health Scotland deliver its strategy. A Fairer Healthier Scotland4 to reduce the persistent and unfair inequalities in Scotland’s health and therefore help people live longer, healthier lives.

We aimed to:

- show overall improvement by getting the ‘Recognised for Excellence’ award by 2016
- engage staff
- demonstrate our impact
- hear our customers’ and partners’ views
- find out what we were doing well and where we could improve.

Results/Outcomes
Results of the project:

- We became a top performing Board in most staff metrics.
- We gained an understanding of our strengths and areas for improvement by annually reviewing our approach to:
  - leadership
  - strategy and planning
  - people
  - partnerships and resources
  - processes, products and services.
- We were awarded ‘Recognised for Excellence’ by Quality Scotland in 2016, which showed ‘real’ improved organisational performance since introducing EFQM in 2013.
- We demonstrated organisational impact.
- We gained insight into our customers’, partners’ and staff’s needs, perceptions and satisfaction by actively seeking feedback to help drive improvement.
- We engaged staff in “building the will” to develop their knowledge and capability using improvement methodologies so they could make positive changes internally and externally. This included improvements to:
  - quality assurance processes
  - stakeholder involvement in policymaking
  - internal customer service processes
  - customer service processes for the general public when contacting NHS Health Scotland.

References

Further reading