

people development



An Assessment Centre Approach to Developing Team Leaders

The Client

North East London NHS Foundation Trust (NELFT) was applying for Foundation status and agreed five organisational development themes linked to a new model of care and a recently developed set of values. One of these themes was to implement management standards at team and ward level to ensure that front line managers were performance focussed and understood the cultural change required to be a Foundation Trust.

The Requirement

NELFT commissioned Zenon to define a role profile / competencies for their team leaders and ward managers and design an assessment centre approach to identify development needs and close competency gaps.

70 ward managers and team leaders were identified to be assessed. Zenon wrote briefing papers for their line managers, the Assistant Operations Directors, and held three face-to-face briefings for the staff to be assessed.

The Solution

Having agreed the role profile, which drew on the NHS Leadership Qualities Framework (LQF), with the Trust, Zenon designed and delivered five x two day bespoke assessment centres for the 70 ward managers and team leaders.

The Results

The reports delivered to the Trust included detailed development needs for each assessee, the overall development themes and the distribution of the level of skills across the participants. High flyers were identified as well as those staff who had significant

development needs which needed to be addressed urgently.

The participants were, understandably, apprehensive before being assessed, but the unique 'briefing' process and careful selection of the assessor team meant the feedback received was very positive. Almost all of the participants felt that it had been a beneficial experience and all left with specific, agreed development needs to discuss with their line managers.

NELFT implemented a management skills development programme which covered areas identified such as financial and strategic awareness and political astuteness. Key performance indicators were introduced to facilitate the management of performance. An additional benefit from the project is the ability to utilise the 'role-profile' as a recruitment tool for new entrants, ensuring consistency and cost effectiveness across the Trust.

A retrospective evaluation of the effects of the assessment centres has been carried out using anonymous questionnaires. 79% of participants felt the assessment was relevant to their development in their role. Line managers also felt the assessment centres had been worthwhile, saying that Team Leaders are now clear about what is expected of them and performance is easier to manage at all levels.

Martin Munro, the Director of HR and OD said *"It is clear that there has been significant cultural benefit from running the assessment centres."*



Jane Pepe, Director



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