

HMP YOI Styal – Using the quality improvement process to improve provision for women with complex needs

Summary of how this case study can be used

This case study examines how HMP YOI Styal used its quality improvement process to identify barriers to education, learning and skills for women with complex needs. Its solution was to create a Calm Centre and to deliver accredited holistic therapy courses.

It will support leaders and managers by demonstrating how quality improvement processes can identify problems. It will also describe a creative solution for supporting women with complex needs.

The Establishment

HMP YOI Styal is a prison for women over the age of 18. The prison accepts remand and sentenced women of all categories. It has an operational capacity of 460.

Background

Some offenders at HMP YOI Styal have complex needs including learning difficulties and disabilities and mental health issues such as self harming.

City College Manchester (now The Manchester College) is the OLASS provider. Its student focus groups and SPOC (student perception of course) forms indicated that many of these offenders were not having their learning and skills met. Data analysis confirmed that their attendance at the Learning and Skills department was low, accreditation outcomes were poor and they were not progressing onto other courses.

It was thought that these learners either did not like the courses on offer, were unable to cope with the demands of the courses on offer or found it difficult to work in the classroom environment available.

Approach taken

A multi disciplinary group was led by the HoLS and included representatives from:

- City College Manchester (OLASS provider)
- Toe by Toe (3rd sector organisation)
- Cheshire Libraries
- Health Care
- Psychology
- Chaplaincy

The aim was to determine the needs of the offenders and develop solutions. The group spent three months surveying need, determining and resourcing provision, securing accommodation and preparing accommodation.

Partnership and collaborative working

The multi disciplinary group included representatives from relevant external organisations as well as from internal departments. The members of the group shared the common aim of finding solutions for this particular group of women. Their varied knowledge and experience meant that creative solutions were generated and implemented.

Processes followed and developed

Once the group had surveyed need, it introduced the following provision:

- Skills for life (including toe by toe reading scheme)
- Creative arts
- Information communication technology
- Self care and beauty
- Massage and relaxation
- Hairdressing
- Reflexology

Each learner is assessed before they join a course and an individual learning plan is produced.

The new accommodation was called the CALM (Care, Assessment, Learning, Motivation) Centre. It has:

- An open plan design with zoned learning areas
- a breakout room
- a sensory room
- a library area
- an interview room

The CALM Centre is managed in a different way from the mainstream Learning and Skills unit:

- It is a day care centre where 30 women (with three specially trained staff) can learn and socialise in a safe, pro-social, motivational environment
- permission is given NOT to engage in activities Learners are encouraged to engage but this is voluntary
- the CALM programme is flexible and based on individual holistic needs
- learners choose their own pace of learning and level of engagement
- there is no exclusion policy
- one to one specialist support is available
- taster sessions/progression opportunities are available
- the Centre is open for six hours a day, every day except bank holidays.

Problems and how these were overcome

Initially the group struggled to work effectively together. This was solved by developing clarity around roles and agreeing partnership protocols, especially around the sharing of data and resources,

Finding and preparing the accommodation was also a challenge. The prison management was keen to find a solution and agreed to find suitable accommodation. The Department of Health and the LSC also made contributions.

Whilst the group was happy to suggest separate accommodation and to specify the type of environment needed, it could not implement the plan. This was solved by the appointment of a CALM Centre Manager.

Impact

The Calm Centre and Holistic Therapy courses have led to:

- Calmer atmosphere at weekends
- reduced self harm
- reduced adjudications
- more confident, competent learners
- less time spent in segregation unit
- improved progression into mainstream regime
- increased accreditation outcomes
- improved retention

Quotations from learners

“I do my nails, have my hair done and feel great. I am doing a computer course and will go into the main Education Department soon to do my CLAIT Course”

“When I feel out of it I can go into the sensory room and unwind, then when I’m OK again I can join in the activities”.

Lessons learnt – how can partnership working deliver quality improvement?

The engagement of partners from outside the establishment such as providers and across the establishment such as others involved in the support of offenders in self-assessment can provide the following benefits:

- Access to a wider range of data such as attendance, achievement and retention
- access to qualitative research such as the views of offenders
- a broader range of creative solutions
- a willingness to invest in solutions

Lessons learnt – what provision suits women with complex needs?

- A programme of courses that were suggested by the offenders
- Initial advice and guidance that looks at individual needs and sets achievable outcomes
- Emphasis on care and supporting offenders' personal and social needs
- Relaxed, safe and calm atmosphere designed to encourage, rather than insist on, engagement
- A flexible delivery model.

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