



Case study

NHS Leadership Training.

NHS Employers

Implementing a leadership development programme to highlight the importance of supportive leadership in the NHS.

NHS Employers (NHSE), part of the NHS Confederation is the national support body for employers within the NHS. They support NHS workforce leaders through a range of practical tools, resources, expert advice and guidance, along with listening to employers to ensure their interests are represented in health policy and practice.

Operating as a not-for-profit organisation, NHSE helps the NHS to make sense of current and emerging healthcare issues by regularly collecting and analysing data, and using its expertise to support them in managing transition during health reforms.

There are four key priority areas which NHSE is focused on – pay and negotiations; recruitment and planning the workforce; healthy and productive workplaces; and employment policy and practice.

NHSE approached Zeal for help in creating and implementing a leadership development programme to highlight the importance of supportive leadership at all levels of the NHS.

How Zeal approached leadership training.

The overall aim of this initiative was to provide a leadership development programme which could be offered to NHS organisations across the UK as a practitioner training programme to increase:

- awareness of the importance of positive leadership behaviour
- the wellbeing of all NHS staff, through positive changes in leadership behaviour
- organisational health and wellbeing, through the implementation of this programme.

As a specialist in organisational psychology, Zeal Solutions has researched the importance of leadership in the workplace for many years.

By measuring leadership behaviour as part of overall workplace culture audits, Zeal developed a strong understanding of the traits and behaviours that good leaders possess, the impact they have on staff and organisations, and also those of less effective leaders.

Zeal developed a leadership development programme, based on the evidence they had gathered over the years and through engagement with managers and employees in the NHS to focus on key issues and enable the training to be as realistic and impactful as possible. This was delivered to identify suitable trainers in NHS organisations, and to give them the resources and confidence to deliver training in their own organisations.

Zeal also developed a series of written and video-based resources that support the training, providing realistic and effective job-related scenarios to maximise understanding and learning. The programme was made available in modules, so each organisation had control over how they could implement the programme locally and how it could be integrated with existing training.

Evaluation of the training to date has been extremely positive. Trainers have rated the programme very well, with 100 percent of trainers feeling confident about their delivery, being extremely satisfied with the way they were trained, and with the final product.

In addition, the evaluation has demonstrated a positive impact on the leaders who attended the training, as well as impacting positively on the staff who work for leaders who have been trained, as they now perceive the organisation in a more positive way.

Jennifer Gardner, Assistant Director at NHS Employers comments:

"The leaders we work with across the UK are highly-trained and experienced in their own specialist fields, but many aren't trained in how to support and manage staff and sometimes, that can be one of the trickiest parts of the job.

Whether it's having conversations about health and wellbeing, carrying out appraisals or talking about sickness absence, the impact of the line manager in these discussions is huge. With Zeal's help, we've been able to help some organisations to fill that gap and provide support to their managers and leaders to deal effectively with these situations.

The programme Zeal has designed for us has enabled us to provide realistic and relevant training, which reinforces our trainers' confidence in the programme and the approach.

The team at Zeal has a great delivery style. They are very engaging and able to provide trainers with a great deal of reassurance, confidence and fun whilst focussing on supporting staff and enabling them to be the best they can be. Trainers get a high-quality suite of materials with lots of support and resources in the background, which again gives them the confidence to go out there and deliver this training in their organisations."